

## **Acquisition of a Property for Child X**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to purchase, refurbish and extend a property from the open market to be funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) New Build and Acquisition capital budget and part funded by Right to Buy receipts (RtB).
- 1.2 The property will be direct matched to an identified family with a child with very complex needs who are currently inadequately housed.
- 1.3 This property would form part of the Council's affordable housing stock and would be managed by Derby Homes (DH), the Council's Arm's Length Management Organisation

### **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 To approve the acquisition of an identified property.
- 2.2 To approve the subsequent refurbishment and extension of the property.
- 2.3 To approve that the cost of the purchase, all fees, refurbishment and extension are met from the HRA New Build and Acquisition budget.
- 2.4 To approve the incorporation of the property into the Council's affordable housing portfolio to be managed by Derby Homes.
- 2.5 To approve the direct match to an identified family with a child with very complex needs who are currently inadequately housed.
- 2.6 To approve the property designation as specialist housing in perpetuity exempting it from the Right to Buy.

### **Reason(s)**

- 3.1 To provide an affordable home to meet the needs of an identified family in housing need.
- 3.2 To adapt the property to suit the needs of a disabled child with very complex needs.

- 3.3 To use an existing budget for the delivery of the property.
- 3.4 To ensure the property provides appropriate, affordable accommodation to meet the needs of the identified family.
- 3.5 To ensure the property is matched to the family identified in housing need.
- 3.6 To ensure the financial investment in the property allows it to be used as specialist housing in perpetuity in accordance with Paragraph 7, Schedule 5 of the Housing Act 1985.

## **Supporting information**

- 4.1 Child X has a number of life long conditions that makes his needs very complex to meet. He will never be able to live independently and will always require 24/7 care and support with regular hospital appointments and emergency admissions.
- 4.2 Child X is fully dependant and non-verbal but is cognitively aware of his own environment and uses assistive technology via eye gaze. He has at least 2 carers at any one time and is totally dependent on his parents and formal carers to deliver his full-time care needs to maintain his wellbeing and daily living activities. In addition he has substantial nursing care to meet his medical needs. He is ventilated and has a gastrostomy which delivers his medication and food. He has vigilant, constant and repetitive suctioning and as he cannot regulate his body temperature care must be taken to ensure he does not get cold.
- 4.3 The family currently live in an adapted 4 bedroom property but Child X has physically outgrown the existing adaptations and the property cannot be adapted further to meet his needs. This property is owned and managed by a Registered Provider of affordable housing in the city.
- 4.4 Although the current property has an oversized through floor lift Child X no longer fits in it due to the recumbent nature of his wheelchair and the equipment he requires with him at all times. As a result he lives on the ground floor and only has access to a small bathroom which provides inadequate bathing facilities. Limited ceiling heights do not allow for proper hoisting provision resulting in manual handling concerns for the family and carers who work with him.
- 4.5 The limitations within the current family home make it very challenging to undertake essential daily living tasks, both for Child X and his family. There is a lack of privacy for the family who have to share their home with staff throughout the day and night which is having a negative impact on them.
- 4.6 Child X has lived in the family home since birth but safeguarding concerns are being expressed which are exacerbated by the physical restrictions of their current home. If Child X's needs cannot be met within their home then the longer term outcome will be the need for a residential care setting. There are no local facilities that would be suitable so his provision would be out of city, separating him from his parents and sibling.

- 4.7 Due to Child X's physical size the existing hoist system does not provide enough clearance to safely hoist him as required. As Child X will continue to grow the outcome in the short to medium term will be that he can no longer be hoisted within the home but moving and repositioning are essential to sustain his health and comfort and is crucial in delivering care. His skeletal system is fragile and vulnerable so care must be taken with his movement.
- 4.8 With the level of manual handling required due to the limitations of the existing hoisting system there are Health and Safety implications for family, staff and Child X. Provision of adequate housing will improve working conditions.
- 4.9 The family have been assessed and they have a discretionary allocation approved for an affordable home to meet their needs. They are the highest priority family but due to the very specific needs of Child X no property has been identified as suitable since the approval was confirmed.
- 4.10 The purchased property will contribute towards the affordable housing provision within the city.
- 4.11 When the family move, their current adapted property will be available for another family who need that type of affordable adapted accommodation. There are a limited number of adapted 4 bed properties within the city so demand is there from another family who need such a property.
- 4.12 Provision of adequate housing for Child X will have wider benefits including but not limited to:
- Provide privacy and dignity for Child X
  - Sustain a family environment for Child X
  - Improved support for Child X
  - Provide privacy for the family
  - Improved mental health and wellbeing
  - Improved working conditions for staff
  - An additional affordable home within the city
  - Release of an adapted property for another family in need
  - Avoidance of anticipated future costs

## **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 The proposed property and alterations have been discussed with the family and they have viewed the property.
- 5.2 There are multi agencies that work with Child X including NHS, CCG, Occupational Therapy and Child Services. These agencies have compiled the criteria that the property will need to meet and will be consulted throughout the design stage to ensure the property comes as reasonably close as possible to meeting all of Child X's needs.

- 5.3 The acquisition has been agreed with Derby Homes who will allocate and manage the property on behalf of the Council.

### **Other options**

- 6.1 To do nothing. If the inadequate housing is not addressed then, in the medium to long term, Child X will require residential care throughout the rest of his childhood and into adulthood. The cost of this provision would need to be met by the Council which will be an extensive financial commitment. This option has been discounted.

### **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 The open market has been monitored and any properties identified that could meet the criteria have been in excess of the normal purchase price applied to acquisitions.
- 7.2 Following an internal inspection and valuation of an identified property, a final offer was submitted and accepted.
- 7.3 The property will need extending to achieve the required ceiling height and room areas required. A figure has been determined based on floor area and expected works required.  
The property requires modernisation and improvements to ensure that it meets the Council's lettable standard.
- 7.4 In addition to the property purchase price and works cost there will be additional costs and fees:
- And will be funded by:
- Housing Revenue Account capital
  - Right to Buy Receipts (40%)
- 7.5 The acquisition will not produce an operational surplus or breakeven within the usual parameters so must be considered outside of the Council's normal financial criteria.
- 7.6 When Child X can no longer be supported within his current home alternative provision would have to be made for him to accommodate his needs.
- 7.7 Following acquisition and completion of the works to the property, it can be designated as specialist housing in perpetuity subsequently invoking Paragraph 7, Schedule 5 of the Housing Act 1985 exempting the property from the Right to Buy.
- 7.8 The acquisition of the property and any required refurbishment and extension work can be funded from the existing Housing Revenue Account New Build and Acquisition (HRA) budget.

## Legal implications

- 8.1 The purchase process will be subject to the Council's standard due diligence and undertaken by either the Council's in-house Legal Service or if this is not possible due to capacity constraints by external lawyers, appointed under EM Lawshare arrangements.
- 8.2 As a Local Authority there is a legal duty to people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds including any grounds relating to a disability.

## Climate implications

- 9.1 The property will be thermally upgraded and the extension will be built to a high thermal efficiency.
- 9.2 The improvements to be undertaken to the property will improve thermal and energy efficiency which will result in lower energy consumption.
- 9.3 There is no current Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for this property however following completion of the works we aim to achieve a rating C or above.

## Other significant implications

- 10.1 Provision of adequate housing will allow the family to remain as an established unit
- 10.2 Provision of adequate housing will improve the Health and Safety for the staff, the family and for Child X
- 10.3 The purchase of this property supports our strategic approach for collaborative working to identify vulnerable children who cannot be adequately housed within the City and to deliver best outcomes for them.
- 10.4 The purchase of this property supports the city's Recovery Plan which is centred around supporting improved outcomes in three priority areas that align to our Council Plan 2019 - 2023 priorities:

Our place – 'a city with big ambitions'  
Our people – 'a city of health and happiness'  
Our council – 'focused on the things that matter'

**This report has been approved by the following people:**

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Sophia Brown	25-08-2021
Finance	Amanda Fletcher	01-09-2021
Service Director(s)		
Report sponsor	Rachel North – Strategic Director for People and Place	01-09-2021
Other(s)		

Background papers:  
List of appendices: none