

COMMISSIONER NEWSAM'S MEETING

Thursday, 2nd April, 2015

A G E N D A

1. Whilst the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 do not apply to this meeting it is still proposed to determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with that Act.
2. Improvements to ICT use within Social Care - Progress Update and Recruitment Approval (Pages 1 - 10)
3. Extensions and Adaptations to the Homes of Foster Carers and Adopters (Pages 11 - 26)
4. Exclusion of the Press and Public
Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council)).
5. Improvements to ICT use within Social Care - Outcome of System Procurement Exercise (Pages 27 - 42)

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO COMMISSIONER NEWSAM

1.	Date:	2 nd April, 2015
2.	Title:	Improvements to ICT use within Social Care – Progress Update and Recruitment Approval
3.	Directorate:	CYPS and Resources

Having considered the report to the Commissioner is minded-to:-

Consultation has taken place with (e.g. other Commissioners, Advisory Cabinet Member, Members, Officers):-

Confidential Appendices

The Commissioner does / does not agree to the information contained in any appendix remaining confidential, for the reasons outlined in the report.

Urgent Decisions

The decision needs to be considered urgently for the reasons outlined in the report. The Commissioner does / does not agree to the report being considered urgently.

The Commissioner has consulted the following Commissioner(s) regarding the urgency of the decision:-

Commissioner Sir Derek Myers ☐

Commissioner Stella Manzie ☐

(only one Commissioner needs to be consulted)

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

1.	Meeting:	Commissioner Newsam Decision Making
2.	Date:	2nd April, 2015
3.	Title:	Improvements to ICT use within Social Care – Progress Update and Recruitment Approval
4.	Directorate:	CYPS and Resources

5. Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Commissioners on the progress of the Social Care Systems Improvement Project, setting out project timelines and funding requirements for the creation of the key posts in the project team.

6. Recommendations

Commissioner Newsam is asked to:

- **Note the progress in relation to achieving immediate process improvements in the use of the incumbent social care case management system.**
- **Note the progress in identifying a replacement case management system for Adult's and Children's social care.**
- **Note the progress in increasing the use of mobile technology by social workers.**
- **Approve the £719k capital investment to immediately recruit to the 10 key project roles.**
- **Note the likely further investment of around £686k. This funding is required to create a project team to deliver the new case management system.**
- **Note that a further report will be brought forward to seek approval for the selection of a preferred system including detail on funding requirements.**

7. Proposal and Details

7.1 Background

In late 2014 Malcolm Newsam (Children's Commissioner) published his second quarterly report following his appointment in the wake of the Jay and Ofsted reports. The Commissioner's report called for immediate improvements in several areas, one of these being the RMBC children's social care system. Specifically the Commissioner instructed RMBC must:

"Address the severe deficits in the ICS system as a matter of urgency and procure a replacement system"

Prior to this, on the 26th November 2014, RMBC's Cabinet had approved a proposal to create a strategic group to oversee three distinct workstreams which would address the issues raised by Professor Jay and the Ofsted findings. The workstreams are running in parallel:

- Workstream 1 – Immediate System and Process Improvements
- Workstream 2 – Social Care System - Market Testing and Procurement
- Workstream 3 – Greater use of Mobile Technologies

7.2 Progress to Date

A programme board (*The Social Care Systems Improvement Board (SCSIB)*) chaired by the Strategic Director of Children's Services has been created and has been meeting twice a month during 2015. Good progress is being made against each of the 3 workstreams, this is detailed below.

7.2.1 Workstream 1 – Immediate System and Process Improvements

The first of the workstreams has focussed on the continued roll out of increased functionality within the existing Northgate CCM system. Previously there was limited use of the functionality available within CCM, with the bulk of case recording instead being stored within the Electronic Social Care System (ESCR) product. Historically, social workers and team managers recorded the majority of their case information within the ESCR, supported by clerical staff. The clerical staff, rather than the social worker, undertook the largest part of direct in-putting into the case management system. This resulted in a large amount of the case information being held within ESCR and a relatively small amount of the case management functionality being utilised. This in turn resulted in case information being stored in too many locations, making it hard to retrieve when required.

The following progress has been made on the short term priorities identified post Ofsted:

Action	Status
Rotherham Dashboard MI tool has been enhanced to include further reports for CART – showing status of all open Contacts and workflow jobs in that team. Joint working with the P&Q Team ensured the real-time reports met service needs and is useful. Includes details about how long jobs have been open and how long is left until overdue. Awareness raising of the Rotherham Dashboard to CART and Duty took place on Monday 10 th November 2014. Rotherham Dashboard awareness has been built into training for all new starter training.	Complete
P&Q Team have established daily reports to senior managers to ensure good oversight of performance and build awareness of the dashboard.	Complete
The CYPS P&Q Team conducted a review of the existing CART and Strategy Discussion processes. From this a number of improvements were identified: • Developed a revised Referrals process which introduced the 'Contact Hub', dedicated to processing referrals and thereby improving 24hr decision making. This identified the need for an additional Management post and the structure of the CART Team has been revised to support this new process. • A list of common questions as an aide memoir is currently under development to improve information collection, ensure consistency across the 'Contact Hub' and support management decision making. • A dedicated room has been identified and is now in use for Strategy Discussions and a dedicated conference call facility has been set up for those unable to attend the meetings in person. • To improve efficiency and reduce duplication an online Multi Agency Referral form has been developed and is awaiting approval before being published on the Internet. • The Strategy Discussion process was revised to include more formalised and structured recording of the discussion, actions and outcomes. This was supported by the development of a new recording model created in conjunction with IT, which was presented on 17/12/14 to Social Care staff. Model now finalised and functionality in development environment. New procedure completed.	Complete
Roll out recording of strategy discussions and Sec 47 outcome record within CCM	Completed
Recording CP visits within CCM. Test in 2 teams (1 north, 1 south), w/c 26/01/15. Roll out across the service 09/02/15	Completed
Recording LAC stat visits within CCM. Test in 3 teams (1 north, 1 south, 1 LAC) w/c 26/01/15. Roll out across the service 09/02/15	Completed
Move to recording case specific supervision in CCM across the service	Completed
Move to recording the child's assessment and plan in CCM	Outstanding
Improved recording for children missing care -Recommendations made to officers regarding new reports to manage and monitor missing persons more accurately. Awaiting response from service.	Outstanding: Planned Completion 30/04/15
Staff at Safe@Last to have access to CCM to direct input return from missing reports. Technical solution identified and process established. Training of staff then to take place.	Outstanding: Planned Completion 16/4/15
Out of Hours staff to be retrained in line with the appointment of the new	Outstanding: Planned

Out of Hours Manager.	Completion 30/04/15
Data validation within Leaving Care indicates the recording is reasonably consistent with only a limited amount of retraining required for a few members of staff. Validation results fed back to service and awaiting response. CYPS P&Q Team are currently undertaking the development of the PMF but this relies on accurate data. Further work is required around recording practice to ensure that data is valid and is being recording in the correct fields / screens.	Outstanding: Planned Completion 30/04/15

Upon completion of the above work programme there will be a suspension of developments within the current Northgate product in order that the project team can focus on the implementation of the replacement system. It is anticipated that this change freeze for Children's Social Care will come into effect on mid April 2015. Exemptions to the change freeze will require approval from the Social Care Systems Improvement Board. A change freeze for Adults Social Care will be considered at a later date given that a number of developments will be required to meet legislative changes as a result of the Care Act.

Running alongside this was the infrastructure refresh of the ESCR platform which has delivered improvements in performance and the speed at which documents can be retrieved from ESCR. This work was completed at the end of January 2015.

7.2.2 Workstream 2 – Social Care System Market Testing and Procurement

Following the instruction from the Commissioner to replace the social care system, the SCSI Board created a detailed set of specifications for a replacement system. An important early decision was whether the Council would accept tenders from suppliers who wished to supply a system for only one of CYPS or ASC. Following discussion it was agreed by the Board that a quote would be sought for an integrated adult's and children's system and that RMBC will not accept tenders for just CYPS or just ASC. This would bring organisational benefits and make for easier integration with the NHS. It may be necessary for ASC to go live at a later date than CYPS – depending on resources.

This requirements list was issued to suppliers on February 11th as part of an invitation to tender using the Crown Commercial Services framework.

The deadline for receipt of tenders was March 9th 2015 with 4 bids being received. Colleagues from across CYPS, ASC, ICT, Finance and Procurement have been involved in evaluating the tenders and participating in supplier presentations. The table below sets out the procurement and implementation timetable.

Milestone	Date
Issue of ITT	11.02.2015

Queries raised and resultant amendments to ITT	28.02.2015
Return date for bids	09.03.2015
Bid evaluated by RMBC team	10.03.2015- 13.03.2015
Presentations	16.03.2015- 20.03.2015
Preferred Tenderer(s) confirmed	23/03/2015
Decision Award Standstill Period	30/03/2015
Planned Contract Award Date	01/04/2015
Implementation Phase 1 go live (Children's and associated Finance)	December 2015
Implementation Phase 2 (Adults and associated Finance)	April 2016

A report will be brought to Commissioners in late March to recommend a preferred bidder and confirm the procurement cost of the new system.

This work stream will create significant changes in working practice and will require a structured change management programme. In addition, in order to achieve the programme of work, additional financial and staffing resources will be required to deliver a new Children's Social Care System. This is discussed in detail later in this report.

7.2.3 Workstream 3 – Greater use of Mobile Technologies

The third workstream focusses on fostering greater use of mobile technologies by frontline workers within CYPS.

RMBC already routinely uses hardware and software to allow officers from across the Council to work in the field and to access back office systems from tablets or PDAs, both online and offline. This improves employee efficiency and reduces the need to return to base between tasks. Traditionally these ways of working have been eschewed by social workers in NAS and CYPS, as it was felt that the technology acted as a barrier between practitioner and client.

The specification that has been issued to suppliers (described above) includes a stipulation that the new social care system should include functionality that will allow it to be used by social workers when they are visiting clients.

In addition, we are currently trialling the use of smartphones by social workers. All social workers already have standard RMBC mobile phones (non-smart) but these do not allow for email, calendar, contacts or Intranet access. 30 smartphones have already been delivered to social workers and they are using the Good for Enterprise app to evaluate the efficiency benefits of having access to these resources in the field. In the event that the trial is a success, we will provide smartphones and Good for Enterprise to our remaining social workers (Adult's and Children's) – this will require investment in the region of £26k and will be the subject of a future report.

7.3 Recruitment to the Project Team

If we are to be successful in deploying the new system in the requisite timescales we will need to create a large project team to deliver the work. Based upon our experience in delivering other large system replacement projects and following consultation with colleagues in other Authorities who have completed similar exercises we estimate that the following posts will need to be created.

Job Title	Directorate	FTE	Grade
Programme Manager (Adults and Children)	CYPS	1	PO16
Project Support (PMO)	CYPS	1	E
ASC Project Manager	ASC	1	K
CYPS Project Manager	CYPS	1	K
Finance Project Manager	Resources	1	K
ICT Project Manager	Resources	1	K
System Application Design (Technical)	Resources	2	J
Finance Leads (Subject matter expert)	Resources	1.5	J
Junior System Config/Developers	Resources	1	F
Senior System Config/Developers	Resources	1	I
SW Practice Consultant (subject matter expert)	CYPS	1	K
SW Practice Consultant (subject matter expert)	ASC	1	K
Trainers (if training is not provided by the supplier)	CYPS	8	H
Business Process Reengineering Staff	Resources	2	H
Reporting and Data Preparation	Resources	1	I
Data Quality/Cleansing/Migration Staff	Resources	3	F
Performance Staff (Compliance and Validation)	CYPS	0.5	I
Performance Staff (Compliance and Validation)	ASC	0.5	I

This equates to 28.5 new staff in total at different times within the project – not all of these posts would be required for the full duration (trainers, for example, would come in towards the end). The total cost of funding these new posts will be around £1.4m over 3 years – this will be a mixture of capital and revenue funding as appropriate.

At the time of writing it is not possible to be entirely prescriptive about the human resources needed to deliver the project as the various providers will offer differing

levels of professional services and have experience of delivering similar projects and the resources required. There may be suppliers, for example, that will deliver all the training using their own employees meaning that RMBC does not need to recruit staff in this area.

In light of this it is proposed to begin by seeking approval to recruit to just a few key posts with approval for the remaining posts being sought at the same time as approval is given to purchase the preferred solution. The posts which we need to recruit to immediately are:

- Programme Manager (Adults and Children) (PO16)
- Project Support Officer (Band E)
- Adult's Social Care Project Manager (Band K)
- Children's Social Care Project Manager (Band K)
- ICT Project Manager (Band K)
- 2 x System Application Design (Band J)
- Junior System Developer (Band F)
- Senior System Developer (Band I)
- Reporting and Data Preparation (Band I)

Please note that the grades included here are estimates only and will be subject to ratification by colleagues in HR. The posts listed above are required to begin work as soon as possible and will be employed for between 1 and 3 years depending on the nature of the post. The total cost for these 10 posts is £719k over 3 years. When the tenders have been reviewed a report will be forthcoming to seek approval for investment in the remaining posts.

7.4 Other Costs

RMBC is contractually committed to the Northgate Social Care Case Management system until 30 April 2018. We may elect to cease using the incumbent system ahead of time but would still be committed to paying for it until March 2018 at £125k per annum. By the point at which the replacement system is live we will have 2 years remaining on the contract which equates to a potential nugatory investment with Northgate of £250k. RMBC Legal is considering whether it will be possible to seek early termination of the Northgate contract but early indications are that buy-out fees would outweigh the cost of seeing out the remainder of the contract.

8. Finance

The table below sets out the investment that will be required to deliver the improvements described in this report.

Item	Cost	Capital or Revenue?	Status
Recruitment to 9 key posts within the project team	£719k over 3 years	Capital	Approval sought via this report
Recruitment to the remaining project posts	£686k over 2 years	Mixed	Approval to be sought in a subsequent report
Purchase of replacement social care system of adult's and children's (inc. support and maintenance)	Approx. £2m over 5 years	TBD	Approval to be sought in a subsequent report
Purchase of smartphones and Good for Enterprise for social workers	£26k	Capital	Approval to be sought in a subsequent report
Incumbent System Support and Maintenance	£250k over 2 years	Revenue	Budget already in place

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The Programme Manager will be responsible for maintaining and reporting on the project risks. However, initial risks have been identified in relation to:

- The timescales to deliver the project are extremely tight and there is a possibility that the project will run over
- The procurement element of the project has been carried out in much shorter timescales than what would be advised for such a large scale procurement

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Social Care System enables ASC and CYPS to achieve objectives set out in both the ASC Service Plan and the Children & Young People Plan. It specifically supports the Corporate Plan priority of ensuring care and protection is available for those people who need it most.

Both Ofsted, Department of Health and Care Quality inspection frameworks rely on the data produced through the Social Care System to form the basis of their judgments and lines of enquiry.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Leaders meeting – Improvements to ICT use within Social Care – 4th November 2012
- Ofsted Report - *Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board* – November 19th 2014
- SLT/Deputy Leader Report – *Social Care System Procurement* – February 2013
- Cabinet Report - Improvements to ICT use within Social Care – 26th November 2014
- Children's Commissioner, Second Quarterly Report
- Consultation has taken place with CYPS, NAS, Procurement, Legal, Financial Services and Corporate ICT Services as part of the formulation of the long term social care system review.
- The continued enhancement of the Social Care System is one of the projects included in RMBC's Corporate ICT Strategy 2011 to 2015.

12. Contact Names:

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO COMMISSIONER NEWSAM

1.	Date:	2nd April, 2015
2.	Title:	Extensions and Adaptations to the Homes of Foster Carers and Adopters
3.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

Having considered the report to the Commissioner is minded-to:-

Consultation has taken place with (e.g. other Commissioners, Advisory Cabinet Member, Members, Officers):-

Confidential Appendices

The Commissioner does / does not agree to the information contained in any appendix remaining confidential, for the reasons outlined in the report.

Urgent Decisions

The decision needs to be considered urgently for the reasons outlined in the report. The Commissioner does / does not agree to the report being considered urgently.

The Commissioner has consulted the following Commissioner(s) regarding the urgency of the decision:-

Commissioner Sir Derek Myers ☐

Commissioner Stella Manzie ☐

(only one Commissioner needs to be consulted)

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO COMMISSIONER NEWSAM
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1.	Meeting:	Commissioner for Social Care
2.	Date:	2nd April, 2015
3.	Title:	Extensions and Adaptations to the Homes of Foster Carers and Adopters
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary

This report requests that further funds are made available to continue to provide home extensions and adaptations for foster carers and adopters in line with the proposal agreed by Cabinet on 25th April 2012.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that those persons or bodies with the necessary authority within the Council (Cabinet/Commissioners/SLT/DLT):

- 6.1 Approve further borrowing of funding of approximately £550k for each of the next three years, £1.65m in total, to continue to provide home extensions and adaptations to the homes of foster carers and adopters in line with the scheme originally approved by Cabinet in April 2012.**
- 6.2 Approve the use of funds borrowed in line with this scheme to part fund home purchases for foster carers and adopters where to do so would be more cost effective for the Council in meeting the needs of children than extending or adapting an existing home.**
- 6.3 Approve the new criteria set out within this report to be applied in determining which applications for extensions and adaptations will be approved and funded.**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Background

- 7.1.1** A Cabinet Report, 'Extensions and Adaptations to Foster Carer Property' (attached as Appendix 1) was presented and considered by Cabinet on 25th April 2012. The report set out a proposal to increase capacity within the in-house Fostering Service through funding extensions and adaptations to foster carer's homes that would allow carers to care for additional children and young people. The initiative was an invest to save initiative in that it was shown that the cost of funding extensions and adaptations would be more than offset by cost avoidance achieved as a result of a subsequent reduction in the use of high cost independent fostering agency placements.
- 7.1.2** Cabinet approved the scheme and associated funding of £1.12m. The funding was provided via a capital loan with repayments being made from within the Placements Service revenue budget. A total of 19 home extensions/adaptations have been successfully completed and funded under the scheme, providing additional capacity within the service.
- 7.1.3** Six additional home extensions have been agreed in principal on the basis that they meet the original invest to save criteria and there are other cases where a home extension is necessary to provide continuing stability for already placed children. However the original £1.12m funding agreed has been fully utilised on the 19 extensions so far completed and therefore meeting any additional need requires approval for additional funding.

7.2 Extending the Initiative

- 7.2.1** This report proposes extending the scheme through further capital borrowing of £550k for each of the next three years, £1.65m in total. This sum will be used to fund extensions and adaptations so far agreed in principal but for which no funding remains from the original capital borrowing, and to allow a limited amount of further applications to be approved over the next three years. Calculations in this report are based on funding for ten such approvals at a cost of £550k in each of the next three years.
- 7.2.2** There are currently six applications that are agreed in principal and for which initial drawings and planning applications have been made. The total cost of all of these if implemented would be £394K. It is proposed that the cost of these be met through the £550k funding proposed for year one.
- 7.2.3** There are several further foster/adoptive families where the provision of a home extension/adaptation is essential to meet the ongoing placement needs of children in placement. Work has not yet commenced to identify the costs associated with extensions to meet need in these circumstances as funding is not yet secured.

7.3 Criteria for Home Extension/Adaptation

7.3.1 Consideration of the provision of funding for home extensions/adaptations and part funding of new home purchases for foster carers and adopters will be given in the following circumstances:

- Where siblings are placed in a foster placement and the best plan for them is to remain placed together in that placement and where such a permanence plan cannot be implemented without the provision of an extension or alternative home due to an inadequate number of bedrooms.
- Where the best plan for a child is to be fostered permanently by the foster carer of a sibling of his or hers, but where this plan cannot be implemented without the provision of an extension or alternative home due to inadequate bedroom space
- Where an existing foster carer has opted to continue to offer a home to a previously fostered child under the Staying Put arrangements but in doing so no longer has bedroom space to take a foster placement AND the carer would be enabled by the provision of additional bedroom space to offer further foster placements to adolescents who might otherwise be placed in Fostering Plus placements or independent sector provision.
- Where the best plan for a child is to be placed for adoption with a sibling of theirs but this plan cannot be implemented without the provision of an extension or alternative home due to inadequate bedroom space.

7.4 Process for Approval

7.4.1 All applications for funding via this scheme will require approval by the Director of Safeguarding, having already been approved by the Service Manager/Head of Service for Looked After Children Provision.

7.4.2 In other respects, the process for moving from consideration of an application/proposal will follow that set out in the flowchart attached to the Cabinet Report provided in 2012 (attached to this paper)

7.5 Legal Implications

7.5.1 Any projects agreed will be subject to legally binding contracts between the carers and RMBC with a sliding scale of payback should the increased capacity not be delivered or in the event of placement breakdown or carers terminating their registration.

7.5.2 The payments referred to within this report are to be made pursuant to the Council's general power of competence, section 1 Localism Act 2011.

8. Finance

- 8.1 In April 2012 £1,029m was approved in order to deliver 21 properties. This funding was approved on the following basis

Impact on Budget	£'000
Year 1 Net Cost	785
Year 2 Cost Avoided	-709
Year 3 Cost Avoided	-709
Estimate of Net Costs Avoided over 3 years	<u>-633</u>

Nineteen properties have been completed. The following table demonstrates that the original net cost avoidance target had been achieved.

Actual Impact on Budget	£'000
Year 1 Net Cost	422
Year 2 Cost Avoided	-575
Year 3 Cost Avoided	-575
Net Costs Avoided over 3 years	<u>-729</u>

A further investment of £1.65m over three years would be required to cover an average of ten properties per year (30 in total). This would include an estimated £1.47m direct adaptation costs and £180k Asset Management Costs. An estimated cost of £550k would be incurred for this in each of the three years.

With an investment of £550k in Year one (assuming ten adaptations approved in this year) there would be an estimated £330k of costs avoided based on the assumption that the placement would continue and not result in a replacement in the Independent Sector. This is also based on the placement continuing at the lower average In House Fostering rate of £252 per week rather than the average Independent Fostering rate of £887 per week. Future years (borrowed over 60 years) would see a borrowing cost of £28k per year (based on the £550k invested) but with an overall Net Cost Avoidance of £302k per year. Over the three year period this Net Cost Avoidance would be £441k

Net Cost Avoidance 1 Year investment	Year 1 £'000	Year 2 £'000	Year 3 £'000	Total £'000
Adaptation Cost	550	0	0	550
Borrowing Cost	0	28	28	56
Cost Avoided	330	330	330	991
Net Cost Avoidance	-220	302	302	441

Based on the adaptation of approximately ten properties per year for the next three years this would require an investment of £550k in each of the three years. As identified above £28k borrowing costs would be incurred for £550k for the following year and over a 60 year period. Year three would see £28k for the £550k in year one plus an additional £28k for the £550k borrowed in year two. Year three would follow the same trend. The costs avoided would be £330k in Year one based on the ten placements, with Year two seeing ten new placements in addition to the continued cost avoided from the initial ten.

Therefore double the cost avoided at £660k. The trend would continue into Year three. Over a five year period this would result in a Net Cost Avoidance of £2.312m

Net Cost Avoidance 3 year investment	Year 1 £'000	Year 2 £'000	Year 3 £'000	Year 4 £'000	Year 5 £'000	Total £'000
Adaptation Cost	550	550	550	0	0	550
Borrowing Cost	0	28	56	84	84	251
Cost Avoided	330	660	990	990	990	3,962
Net Cost Avoidance	-220	83	385	907	907	2,312

9. Risks and Uncertainties

- 9.1** The key risk associated with not making funds available to adapt homes of foster carers and adopters is that children are prevented from moving to or staying with families who would otherwise be best placed to meet their needs for a permanent home and family. This would have a significant negative impact on their wellbeing and outcomes.
- 9.2** Not securing funds for home adaptations risks additional expenditure on high cost independent sector placements for the Local Authority
- 9.3** There is a risk that such funds could be misused in a way that would not lead to cost efficiencies for the Authority. To mitigate this risk, there is clear criteria for approval set out that allows for approval only where it is essential to meet the child's needs for permanence and legal binding contracts will be drawn up between the carer/adopter and the Authority.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

- 10.1** It is essential for childrens' outcomes that we secure permanence for them as quickly as possible. Funding of home adaptations to secure permanence for children in line with their best interests will contribute to improved performance by the service and improved outcomes for children.
- 10.2** We have a duty to place children with their siblings where it is in their best interests. Funding for home adaptations will help us to achieve this for children where the insufficiency of accommodation might otherwise have prevented it.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- 11.1.** See previous Cabinet Report dated 25th April 2012 attached.
- 11.2** Consultations have taken place with the Council's finance service and they have completed section 8 above.

Paul Dempsey, Service Manager, Family Placements and Residential
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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	25 th April 2012
3.	Title:	Extensions and Adaptations to Foster Carer Property
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary

The requests for extensions and adaptations generally come from two routes

- Foster carers who are able to increase capacity or who require an extension to provide greater living / bedroom space for their own children and those foster children placed
- Family members who can provide care for a child via a Residence Order or a Special Guardianship Order and therefore prevent the child remaining "looked after"

This report sets out the business case for investing in the 21 current applications in order to create additional foster care capacity and also improve the quality of life for current placements.

6. Recommendations

- That this report be agreed by Cabinet.
- To proceed with the 21 applications as listed above in the order given.
- That the 13 applications which would create additional capacity be prioritised.
- Further requests will be considered assuming the investment results in cost avoidance is over a period of less than 2 years.

7. Proposals and Details

In 2011, as part of the Placement Strategy, letters were sent to all foster carers asking them to consider whether they would like to consider an extension as a way of increasing overall capacity within the fostering service. In doing this consideration was given to the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the Children Act 1989 in that the limit for foster carers is no more than three in placement at any one time. Foster Carers reviews presented to Fostering Panel will make reference to foster carers skills and ability to increase capacity and the status of the application for an extension.

The Pathways to Care paper was presented at Corporate Parenting Panel, which sets out a transparent and robust process for decisions to be made about the feasibility of such requests and allows the Local Authority to retain some control over the building work by having designated contractors. The flow chart is included in appendix 2 and details the process for seeking planning permissions. The applications detailed in appendix 1 have all submitted the initial application and the building surveyors have been briefed. In some cases a site visit to discuss the feasibility has been undertaken. Therefore in respect of lead in time for the work to be commenced, some are further along the process than others and it will be a gradual process.

As a result of these initiatives there are currently (see appendix 1) 21 requests submitted for consideration.

These extensions or adaptations would give all a greater quality of life and support the placements continuing.

Of the 19 applications from foster carers, 13 would give the local authority greater capacity in terms of fostering placement , 6 would improve the quality of life and secure the placements long term.

Appendix 1 provides the level of prioritisation in respect of the work being completed. See the key at the bottom of the chart.

8. Finance

The combined cost of undertaking all of the adaptations proposed would be approximately £1.12m. This includes an estimated £911k direct adaptation costs, £118k Asset Management Costs, plus a cost of capital borrowing of approximately £91k

As a result of proceeding with these adaptations there would be an estimated £334k costs avoided this financial year based on the part year effect of 23 placements being paid at the lower average in house fostering rate of £285 per week instead of the average Independent Fostering rate of £878 per week. Future years full year effect of these avoided costs would be approximately £709k per year.

Assuming all of the adaptations went ahead in this financial year and in line with expected timescales the overall estimated Net Cost in the current year would be £785k. The total estimated costs avoided over 3 years to the end of March 2016 would be £633k.

Impact on Revenue Budget	£'000
Year 1 Cost	785
Year 2 Cost Avoided	-709
Year 3 Cost Avoided	-709
Estimate of Net Costs Avoided over 3 years	-633

9. Risk and Uncertainties

Any projects agreed are subject to legally binding contracts between the carer and Rotherham MBC with a sliding scale of payback should the increased capacity not be delivered or in the event of placement breakdown or carers terminating their registration

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

There is a statutory requirement within the Children Act 1989 that from April 2011, local authorities working with their Children's Trust partners must be in a position to secure, where reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for looked after children in their local authority area.

Although the sufficiency duty is placed on the local authority, Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires that the authority makes arrangements to promote co-operation with relevant partners (health, schools, police, probation, third sector etc) with a view to improving the well being of children in the local authority area. Section 10 also requires the partners to co-operate with the local authority

Benefits of complying with this duty are that children are placed within their local communities enabling them to retain identity and cultural links. Savings can be achieved in terms of the time and money to support families maintaining contact. Additional savings are achieved in respect of social worker / independent reviewing officer time and cost of supporting the child in placement.

11. Background and Consultation

Report to corporate parenting panel

Report to SLT

Report author:

Howard Woolfenden, Director Safeguarding, Children and Families

Appendix 1 Extensions

Carer	Increased Capacity	Improve Quality of Life	Cost (k)	Comments
C	Yes by 2		52	
T	Yes by 2		45*	
H	Yes by 2		45*	
W		Yes	48*	2 children placed with additional needs who currently have to share
N		Yes	45*	Foster Child having to share with carers own daughter
S	Yes by 1		45*	
W	Yes by 1		48*	
M	Yes by 1		45*	
W	Yes by 1		40*	
D	Yes		32	Can only take a baby currently
E	Yes by 1		40*	
S / H	Yes by 1		42*	Families Together Carer – able to provide for children with disabilities
L	Yes by 1		40*	
R	Yes by 1		45*	
M		Yes	45	Daughter having to share parents room
S		Yes	52	Carer having to share with her daughter
F		Yes	48 / 38	3 long term placements provided currently – 2 having to share
C		Yes	60	2 long term placements provided – boys currently sharing
T			26	Family and Friends – RO /SGO
M			45	Family and Friends – RO / SGO
K			29	Not clear if their own children intend to continue to share which would increase capacity – further work required with carers as to intention
			Est £911k	

Key

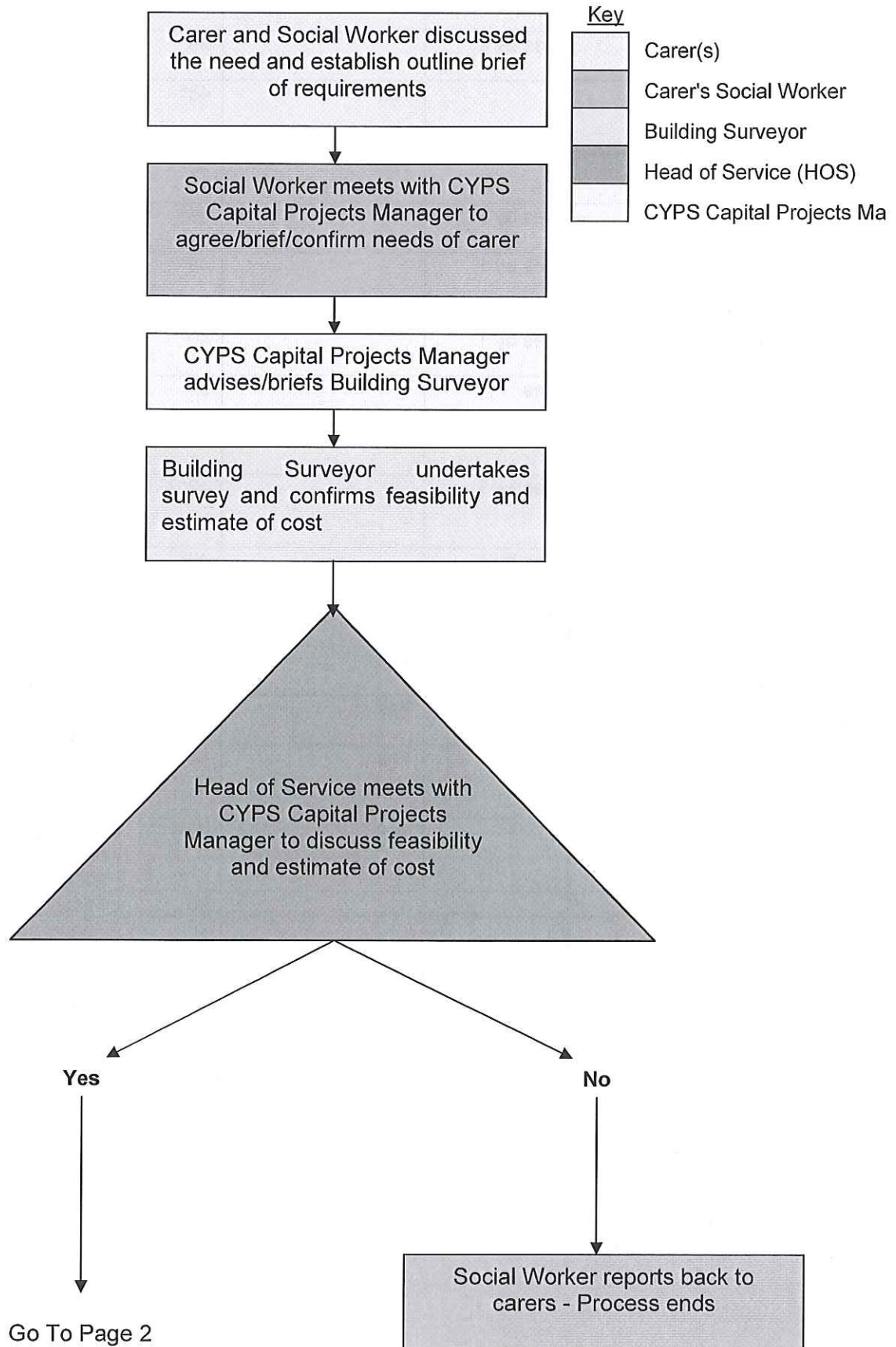
Figures in black – confirmed cost estimates

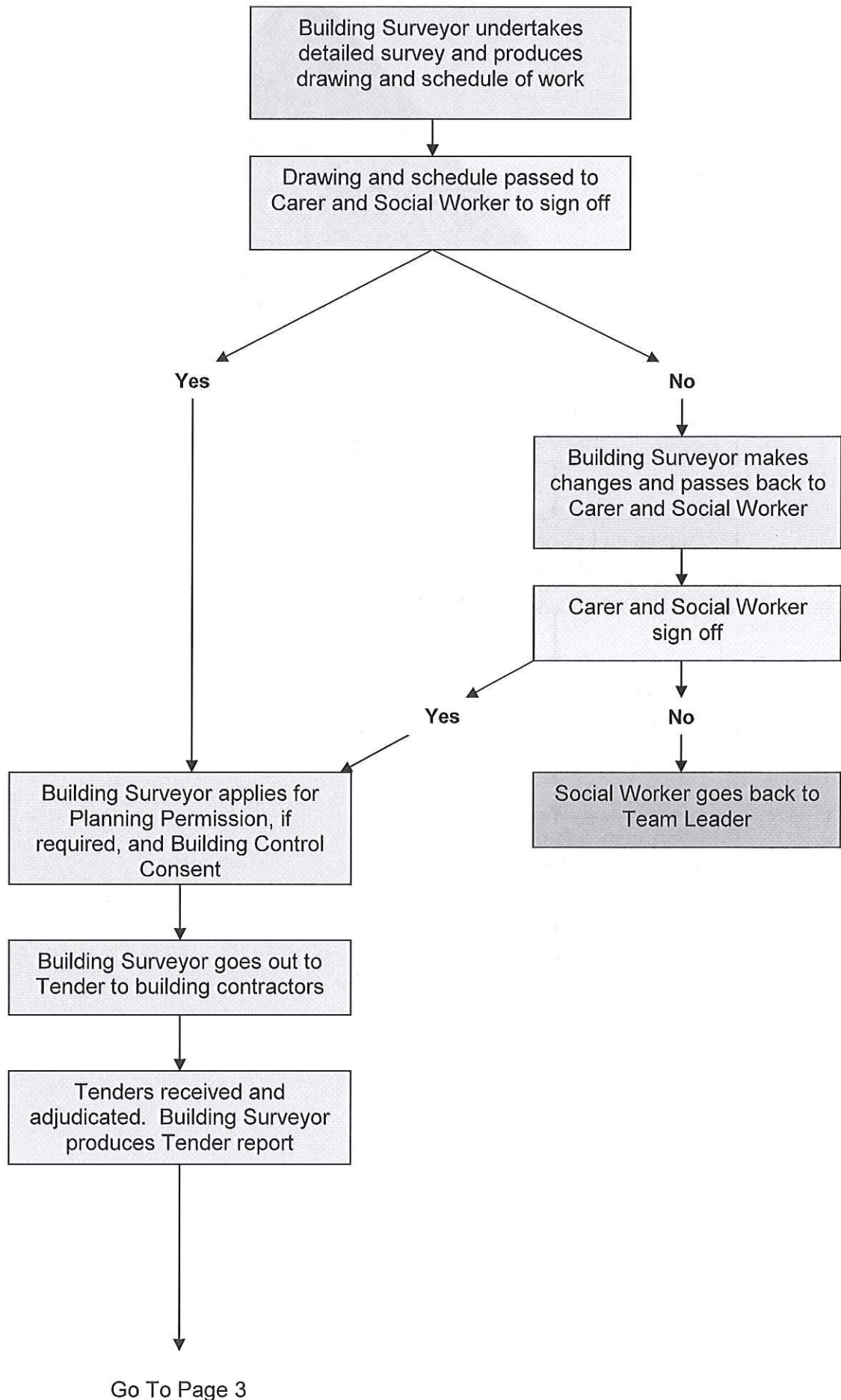
Figures in red – estimated cost following building surveyor

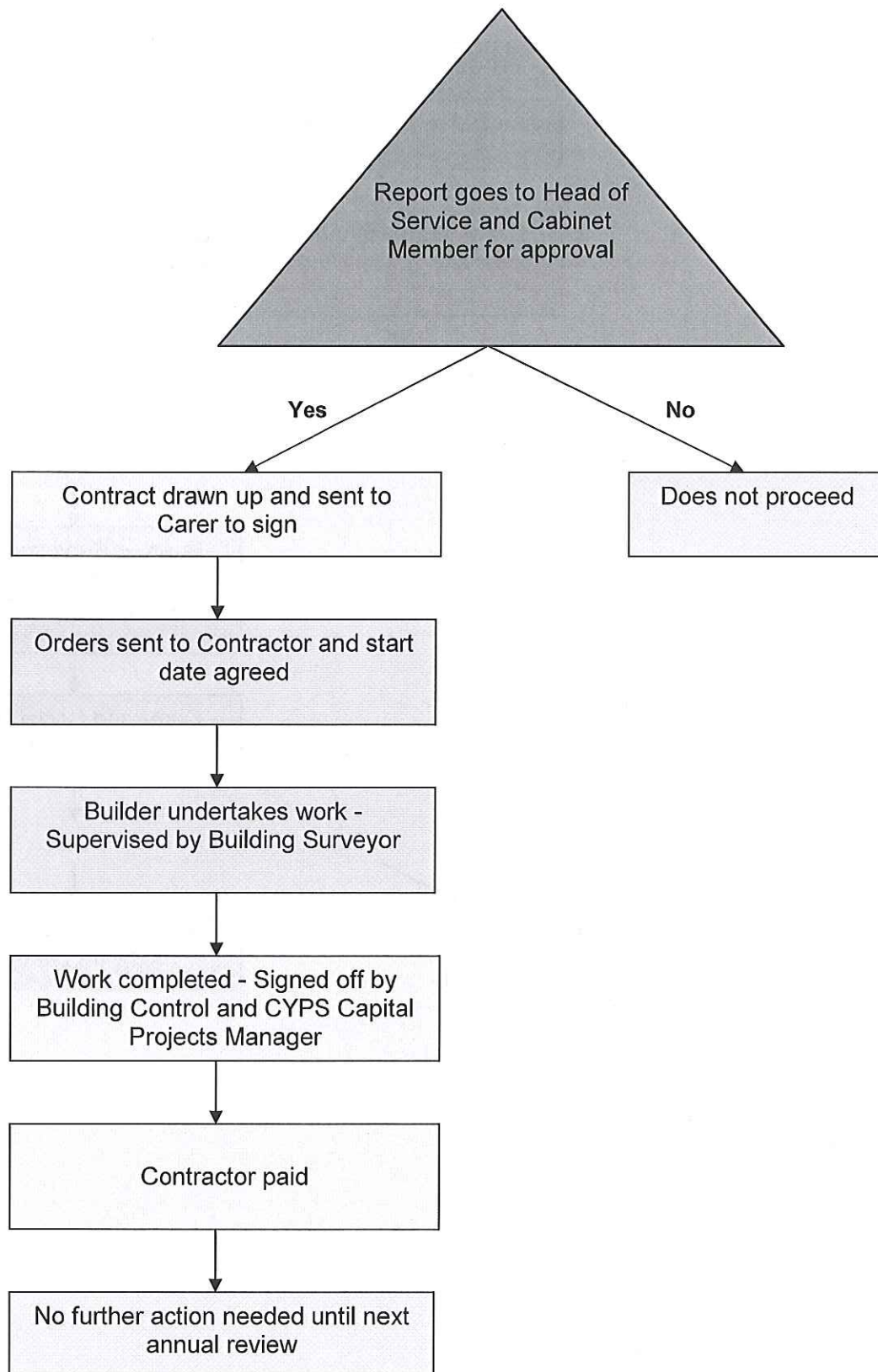
Figures in Red with * - ballpark figures of what we think it may cost

Appendix 2

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S SERVICE PATHWAYS TO CARE – PROCESS FLOWCHART - DRAFT	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
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LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S SERVICE

PATHWAYS TO CARE – APPLICATION FORM



Service:

Adoption

Fostering

Sections A – D (To be completed by Social Worker)

SECTION A – CARER DETAILS

1	Carer's name		
2	Carer's full address	Line 1: Line 2: Line 3: Line 4: Postcode:	
3	Carer's telephone number		
4	Is property owned or rented?	Owned	Rented RMBC Council Y / N
<i>Please Note: Grants are only considered for owned properties or RMBC council owned</i>			
5	Number of years carer with service		Carer's current fee level

SECTION B – CHILD DETAILS

6	Number of birth children at home		Ages and Gender	
7	Any other relevant information (e.g. any other related household members, specific needs of birth children)			
8	Number of children currently in placement		Ages and Gender	
9	Any other relevant information			
10	If proposal is to enable carer to take on more children, how many more		Ages and Gender	
11	Has this been approved by Panel	Yes	No	

SECTION C – NATURE OF REQUEST

12	Please tick which best describes what the funding request is for below:			
	Building alterations			
	Contribution towards house purchase			
	Vehicle purchase			
14	Number of existing bedrooms		Occupancy of each bedroom	Bedroom 1: Bedroom 2: Bedroom 3: Bedroom 4:
15	A requirement of the grant is that the vehicle is used for transporting children in care to school, activities, contact etc., i.e. no other claims for transport will be made. Please tick the box to confirm carer's agreement to this.			

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SECTION D – DETAILS OF REQUEST	
Please Note: <i>Grants for building alterations or house purchase will be considered up to a maximum value of £?????? per child.</i> <i>Grants for vehicle purchase will be considered up to a maximum of £??????</i>	
16	Amount requested
17	Why funding is needed Please include all relevant information and any relevant timescales
Name and signature of Social Worker	
Date	

Section E - For office use only						
SECTION E – APPROVAL DETAILS						
		Yes	No			
	Supported by Team Manager			Signature	Date	
	Supported by Service Manager			Signature	Date	
	Approved by Director			Signature	Date	
	Approved by Cabinet Member			Signature	Date	
	Amount approved					
	Any other relevant information					
Name and signature of Head of Service				Date		

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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