

Planning Statement

The council's Children's Services are hoping that more of our cared-for children can live in the borough, when it is not safe for them to stay with their family. The council believe that every child deserves the right to a safe place to live, and is looking to open new homes for children that look and feel very much like a loving family home. The proposal is to open a home for up three children, aged between 8 - 17 years, who would be cared for by a small team of care workers.

The council has seen a rise in the number of families in crisis and a rise in the number of children coming into local authority care. Up to now too many cared-for children have been placed in privately run care homes, outside of the Borough. This can often means that they lose ties with their friends, families and schools. This comes at a very high cost to the council, it is not a good way of spending council money and is not what is best for the children. Children cared for by Rochdale Council are more likely to receive good quality care and it costs less.

The use of the home would be to place 3 looked after children with a core staff of 2 carers looking after the children 24 hours a day. There would be a handover of the carers who would do 12 hour shifts with a hand over of approximately 1/2 hour duration in the morning and evening. Also on site, on a 37 hour (standard working week) contract, an assistant manager and half of the working week a manager. There could be a situation for a short time (approx. half an hour) that 6 staff maximum could be in the home.

The purpose of the home would be to support the children to build their confidence, help them in developing life skills and prepare them for life when they leave the home to fend for themselves. This type of support has been found to be most effective in helping these children to have normal lives and not experience problems in later life.

This proposal will need a change of use from Class C3 (dwelling house) to Class C2 (residential institutions). To change the residential house of 15 Bankfield Lane into a children's home there will be some modernisation needed to the property. The existing kitchen which is the original kitchen in the property will be changed and upgraded to be more functional and fitting for a family setting. The downstairs wet room will be modernised and on the first floor the existing bathroom will be upgraded to a new 4 piece bathroom suite. There is no structural changes or layout changes needed in this property. As well as modifications internally there will be some fencing works to the external back garden of the property. There is fencing needed on the right hand side of the property to enclose the space fully. Furthermore, there will be statutory changes as well, a new rewire, new boiler and fire safety improvements to comply with the operations of a residential children's home. See drawing (for full description of all works proposed.)

Overall, I believe this proposal is the best for these children to have a more homely and stable place to live. As I have said this type of support has been found to be most effective in helping these children to have normal lives. Being a home environment will prepare them for life when they leave the home to fend for themselves. The end goal for this proposal is for the children to leave this home when they are a young adult being able to function and be a part of society and live independently confidently.