



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Children's Services
LEAD OFFICER:	Director of Children's Services
DATE:	9 June 2016

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Children's Services
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
KEY DECISION:	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBJECT: Adoption Service Six Monthly Report – 1 October 2015 – 31 March 2016

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide information on the management and performance of the Local Authority's Adoption Service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:
Notes this six monthly report which is available on the Council website.

3. BACKGROUND

Standard 25.6 of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption requires the Local Authority Adoption Agency to produce a six monthly report to be received by the Council's Executive.

The standard states that the Council's Executive:

- a. Receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency every 6 months;
- b. Monitor the management and outcomes of the services in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users;
- c. Satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.

The report has been written to address the issues identified above, and it will be taken into account by OFSTED when inspecting the Service.

The report summarises the performance of the Adoption Service for the six month period from 1st October 2015 to 31st September 2016 and provides an overview of the work of the Service for this period.

4. KEY ISSUES

1. The regionalisation of adoption has continued to develop. The Project Team reported its findings from their research into how adoption services are being delivered currently across the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) to the Project Board. A decision has been made to develop a hub and spoke model though there are legal issues which have yet to be resolved. The team are holding further workshops to begin the process of working towards implementation of the plan. Despite the uncertainty surrounding adoption currently the team has remained motivated and enthusiastic and have participated fully in workshops and meetings to assist the Project Team.

2. There has been a small increase in the number of Should Be Placed for Adoption (SHOBPA) decisions in the last six months following a period when numbers have been low. There are currently 15 children waiting to be placed which is a reduction from previous years. The majority of these have placements identified. 11 children were placed for adoption in 9 placements during the six month period, 27 over the full year compared to 35 the previous year. 16 Adoption Orders were made during this period making a total of 30 for the year, again a significant reduction.

The reduction in the number of children waiting has been disheartening for many adopters as an increasing number are now waiting 12 months or more to be matched with a child.

The reduction in the number of children needing adoption placements has affected the number of prospective adopters coming forward to be assessed although there has been a slight upturn in the last quarter. There are 20 adopters waiting to be matched, 3 with matches identified. The service is now delivering training on 'Managing the Wait' which recognises the emotional impact of waiting for long periods post approval.

3. The Post Adoption Support team has 42 open cases, 12 of which are open for assessment and support. The Post Adoption Support Fund has improved access to therapeutic intervention for adopted children and the service has taken full advantage of the funding available.

Scorecard performance requires further improvement particularly in relation to achieving the 121 day target timescale between Placement Order and matching. In the last 6 months 6 children exceeded this timescale for reasons beyond the control of the service. The service continues to match 'hard to place' children.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

No policy implications identified.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications identified.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This report is required to meet statutory requirements as set out in the 'National Minimum Standards for Adoption.'

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

No resource implications identified.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

None.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	V0.1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Alyson Hanson – Service Leader, Placement Services
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DATE:	3 May 2016
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	
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