

## RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 17 July 2018

**Decision No:** (CAB 18/19 21092)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care
SUBJECT:	Provision for a Regional Adoption Agency ( Adopt South)
AUTHOR:	Dorenda Chapman

### THE DECISION

Having complied with paragraph 15 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules. These recommendations will :-

- (i) Approve the proposed model for delivery of adoption services as a Regional Adoption Agency.
- (ii) Approve the financial contribution to the Regional Adoption Agency of £1.387 M to be fixed for two years (2019/20 and 2020/21) and reviewed for 2021/22.
- (iii) Delegate authority to enter into the final interagency agreement to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Directors of Finance and Commercialisation and Legal & Governance and following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

### REASONS FOR THE DECISION

This report is submitted for consideration as a General Exception under paragraph 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the City Council's Constitution, notice having been given to the Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Panel and the Public. The Service has relied upon joint working to progress this report and did not appreciate the requirement for the item to be included on the Forward Plan. This was an oversight on behalf of the Service.

The proposal in line with Government policy and will ultimately support an increase in family finding for children whose plans are to be adopted. The model would be capable of expansion to cover other services such as Adoption Information Exchange, or to incorporate wider functions subject to further consultation and option appraisal / business case for increasing scope.

If this is delayed beyond July we would be out of step with our regional partners and there would be insufficient timescales to meet the consultation requirements to enable the proposed go live date of 1st April 2019 agreed by the Governance Board

and communicated to the DfE. Whilst this timescale has been known about for some time there has been a particular challenge for Southampton. In 2017 there were a number of changes of management representatives within the operational project group.

#### **DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

To remain outside the Regional Adoption Agency.

This would be challenged by the DfE under the Education and Adoption Act 2016 as The DfE are seeking for all authorities to enter into a regional arrangement for their Adoption Services.

Southampton's Adoption Service would be increasingly vulnerable within an already challenging market if they had to compete for adopters alongside a locally based Regional Adoption Agency. This could lead to further delay for those children awaiting adoptive homes. There may also be increased costs related to purchasing Inter- agency placements.

Full integration as an RAA with the cessation of the four Local Authority Adoption Agencies.

This was rejected as there were major implications for the transfer of staff, activity and services. The host partner would need to be willing to undertake the increased legal responsibility for staff and services.

#### **OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION**

None.

#### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

None.

**CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD**

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Decision Maker:  
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:  
Claire Heather

**SCRUTINY**

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*