

**Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board**

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2017**

**Title of report: Adoption Regionalisation**

**Purpose of report:**

**To provide a brief update on the implementation of the One Adoption Agency as part of the government initiative for Adoption Services to be delivered on a regional basis**

<b>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	<b>No – key decisions were made by Cabinet in 2016</b>
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</a></b>	<b>No</b>
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for "call in" by Scrutiny?</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Date signed off by Director &amp; name</b>	<b>6.4.17 – Gill Ellis/Anne Coyle</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Assistant Director for Financial Management, IT, Risk and Performance?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Assistant Director - Legal Governance and Monitoring?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Cabinet member portfolio</b>	<b>Cllr Erin Hill</b>

**Electoral wards affected: All**

**Ward councillors consulted: None**

**Public or private: Public**

## 1. Summary

Since 2015, Kirklees has been part of an early adopter scheme with Local Authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber Adoption Consortium to consider how we can offer high quality adoption services on a regional or sub-regional basis.

This has progressed and between September 2016 and December 2016, Cabinet approval was given in the 5 west Yorkshire Local Authorities to establish a sub-regional Adoption Agency with Leeds City Council acting as the host for this agency.

The five Local Authorities have worked tirelessly together to ensure that staff in all 5 Local Authorities were fully consulted; there was engagement with the relevant Unisons; consultation with adopters and adopted children and young people and discussions regarding IT; Finance, HR matters, Information Sharing and Performance Data.

In addition, there has been engagement with Adoption Matters and Barnardos as representatives of the Voluntary Adoption Agencies in the region.

On the 1.4.17, this agency came into effect and for Kirklees, this means that:

- All prospective adopters that reside in the Kirklees area will be assessed, approved and supported by the One Adoption Agency. We have an Adoption Recruitment Team based at Riverbank Court made up of staff from across the 5 Local Authorities, assessing and supporting adopters that reside in Calderdale and Kirklees;
- Adoption Support to adopters, children and birth families will be provided by the One Adoption Agency. We have an Adoption Support Team based at Riverbank made up of staff from the 5 Local Authorities, providing adoption support to families who reside in the Calderdale and Kirklees area;
- Family Finding for all children who have a plan for adoption is being carried out by the One Adoption Agency. Family Finding for Kirklees children will be carried out by a Family Finding Team made up of staff from the 5 Local Authorities, based in Calderdale. This Team will work with Children's Social Workers in Kirklees to ensure that the right family is found for our children in a timely manner
- Kirklees Children's Services remains responsible for all of the looked after children who have a plan for adoption until an Adoption Order is made. The Agency Decision Maker in Kirklees will continue to consider any request for a child to be placed for adoption and any request for a child to be matched with adopters
- Kirklees Children's Services remains responsible for the performance against the Adoption Score Card and Ofsted will continue to assess our performance against the Score Card

Over the next three months, there will be a period of transition as staff in the 5 Local Authorities move to their new work bases; whilst they take on a new role and whilst new practices are put in place. In terms of Kirklees staff, the vast majority were given their first preference in terms of work base and role and we have retained a significant number of Social Workers and Managers from

Kirklees, now part of One Adoption, based at Riverbank. This has many benefits in terms of continuity and working relationships with staff in Children's Services.

We are the first sub-regional Adoption Agency to come into place nationally. There will be sub-regional adoption agencies later this year in South Yorkshire and North/Humber region.

## **2. Information required to take a decision**

No decisions are required from the Board – this is for information only at this point

## **3. Implications for the Council**

### **3.1 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)**

Positive implication – this is a positive step for adopters and adopted children who reside in the Kirklees area – they will be able to access Adoption Support via the One Adoption Agency and receive a tailored package of support including access to the Adoption Support Fund based on an assessment of need

### **3.2 Economic Resilience (ER)**

Positive implication – the aim of this new approach to delivering adoption services is to ensure that adopters are appropriately assessed, matched and supported and children have plans made in a timely manner, being matched to the most suitable adopted family with access to adoption support services as and when the need arises.

### **3.3 Improving Outcomes for Children**

Positive implication – the aim of this new service is to improve outcomes for children and to ensure that Kirklees looked after children who have a plan for adoption are matched with a family in a timely manner with wrap around support into adulthood

### **3.4 Reducing demand of services**

Positive implication – if adopters receive the right support at the right time; if the agency focus their efforts on identifying, assessing and approving the right adopters for the cohort of children needing permanence via adoption and if children receive the right support, this will reduce the demand on social care services and other services should adoptive placements be at risk of breakdown.

## **4. Consultees and their opinions**

Consultation has taken place with staff; adopters; children and young people – this new service is viewed in a positive light

## **5. Next steps**

To embed the new agency over the next 3 months and for Children's Services and its' partners to work closely with the new agency to ensure we improve our performance against the Adoption Score Card and more importantly, improve outcomes for children with a plan for adoption and those in need of adoption support.

**6. Officer recommendations and reasons**

To update the Corporate Parenting Board in three months' time on progress

**7. Cabinet portfolio holder recommendation**

To endorse the Officer's recommendation

**8. Contact officer**

Linda Patterson, Senior Management – Improvement

**9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

None provided as item is for update only

**10. Assistant Director responsible**

Anne Coyle, Service Director