

URGENT DECISION FORM



TO BE UPLOADED ON TO THE COUNCIL WEBSITE

Date: 30.10.2017	Ref No:
Type of Decision:	
Executive Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Key	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Key	<input type="checkbox"/>

Subject matter: REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY

This report seeks endorsement for the Council to become a formal and constituent member of the Adoption NoW Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) with effect from 6 November 2017, resulting in Adoption NoW becoming responsible for the delivery of the Council's statutory obligations with regard to adoption services. Adoption NoW is a partnership arrangement between ourselves, Bolton, Rochdale, Oldham, Tameside and Blackburn Councils along with Caritas Care and Adoption Matters; and is in line with the Government's Education and Adoption Act 2016, which requires local authority adoption services to regionalise by 2020, with planning to have started by 2017. The Adoption NoW RAA will build on the strengths of each of the individual partners and on already existing collaborative working arrangements. Learning from best practice and innovation in each of the agencies and from other Regional Adoption Agencies will be embedded in the practice of Adoption NoW. This will have a particular focus on improving the availability of adopters and addressing the current difficulties in placing harder to place children who may have more complex needs. In the medium term, it is expected that increased efficiency in the recruitment of adopters within Adoption NoW will generate cost savings for the participant Local Authorities, though the initial aim is to focus on improving quality of services.

We will be seconding existing adoption staff and associated business support into the RAA

Each of the six local authorities will agree a minimum amount to be paid into the Regional Adoption Agency ensuring the Regional Adoption Agency has sufficient monies to operate. In the first year this will be no less than the previous financial year's (2016/17) expenditure on adoption services. This equates to a year one core contribution (details provided within **Appendix 1 of report**) for the Council which will be pro-rated for the remaining period within 2017/18 from the proposed commencement date of 6 November 2017. In addition to the core contribution detailed in Appendix 1 each Council has also been requested to contribute towards the financing of three new positions with the Regional Adoption Agency (two Recruitment Officers and one Marketing Officer). The year one contribution for the Council will be £15,000.

It is not expected that benefits will be realised in the first year of operation but will be in the second.

A formal consultation process regarding the implementation of the Adoption Now RAA and inevitable changes for employees has been concluded and the Unions across the six local authorities have had the opportunity to meet with and raise issues with the RAA board representatives. Their comments have been incorporated into the design and operation of the RAA.

Reason for Urgency: The secondment and financial agreements have only just been agreed and so it was not appropriate to send to cabinet for a decision before this had been completed. There are no cabinet meetings before the 6th November 2017.

Equality Impact Assessment:

Does this decision change policy, Procedure or working practice or Negatively impact on a group of people.
If yes – complete EIA and summarise issues identified and recommendations – forward EIA to Corporate HR.

Decision taken:

- (i) That approval is given to the Council becoming a formal and constituent member of the Adoption NoW Regional Adoption Agency (Regional Adoption Agency) with effect from 6 November 2017 and that affected staff are supported to second into the Regional Adoption Agency noting the additional financial implications for the Council by endorsing such arrangement.
- (ii) That Council is recommended to approve the necessary delegations and discharge of its duties in accordance with the legal provisions set in the Local Government Act 1972 and Local Authorities (Goods and Services Act) 1970;
- (iii) That the Council Solicitor be authorised to enter into the necessary legal agreement to effect the new arrangements.

Decision taken by:	Signature:	Date:
Chief/Senior Officer	Karen Dalton.	01/11/17
After consultation with:		
Cabinet (if a Key Decision) or Chair or Lead Member (as appropriate)	Sharon Briggs	6/11/17
If it is a Key Decision, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to agree that the decision cannot be deferred	M.A. Court.	3/11/17
Nominated Opposition or Majority Group Member of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (if a Key Decision) or Opposition Spokesperson	Clive Pickstone via email ↓	3/11/17.
Leader of second largest Opposition Group	Jan [Signature]	6/11/17.