
Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (Scrutiny Board 2)
Cabinet Member

03 October 2019
02 December 2019

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People - Councillor Seaman

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Children's Services

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title:

Annual Adoption Report 2018-19

Is this a key decision?

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive Summary:

The Annual Adoption Report documents the adoption activity in Children's Services for the year 2018/19. This includes a report of the activity of the Regional Adoption Agency, of which Coventry City Council is a part.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is requested to:

- 1) Consider and endorse the progress of adoption work across Coventry City for the year 2018/2019. This includes the partnership arrangements with Adoption Central England (ACE).

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached for consideration:

- Coventry City Council Children's Services Annual Adoption Report
- Adoption Central England (ACE) Annual Report
- ACE Annual Adoption Panel Chair Report.

Background papers:

None.

Other useful documents

None.

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

Yes – this report will be/has been considered by Scrutiny Board Education and Children's Services (2) on 3 October 2019. The recommendations of the Board have been fully implemented.

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

Yes – this report has been considered by The Corporate Parenting Board on 5 September 2019.

Will this report go to Council?

No.

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 An Annual Adoption Report is required by statutory regulation. This is an opportunity for the report to be considered by the relevant Council Governance processes. This includes the Cabinet member.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Cabinet member is invited to note the progress in this area of work for the year 2018/2019.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 Adoption work is open to continual consultation. Adopters are canvassed to offer their opinion in the development of services, and some are part of a mentoring scheme. This allows feedback on practise in 'real time'. This means plans and services are continually adjusted. Older adopted children also figure in the groups delivered through ACE. This includes an annual picnic for adopted children and their families. All these formal and informal processes contribute to the way adoption services are evolving.
- 3.2 An Executive Board oversees the work of ACE. This includes representation from Coventry City Council. This allows a Coventry perspective to be included in the work of ACE.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Adoption work in Coventry, including partnership work with ACE, will continue to be subject to annual oversight through an annual adoption report.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications

The legal host agreement between Coventry City Council and ACE includes comprehensive funding arrangements. Any changes to these arrangements must be agreed by the Executive Board (see 3.2), of which Coventry is a member.

The overall ACE budget is calculated based on anticipated activity levels and a target unit cost. Spend against the budget is monitored closely and as the partnership matures it may be that economies of scale emerge which enable this unit cost to be reduced.

Partner contributions to ACE running costs are based on adoption activity and are agreed on a two-year basis in order to provide financial stability both for ACE and for the contributing partners.

Coventry City Council's contribution to ACE in 2018/19 was £923,427.

5.2 Legal implications

National Minimum Standards stipulate that the executive side of the local authority, receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency every 6 months; 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; satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.

Regulations require that each local authority compiles a Statement of Purpose that must be kept under review. National minimum standards stipulate that the review must be at least undertaken annually.

6. Other implications

None.

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

6.2 Adoption practise across the city complements the Council Plan in the following ways:

- Globally connected- being part of a Regional Adoption Agency raises the profile of Coventry City Council. This is particularly the case as ACE was one of the first Regional Adoption Agencies to go live
- Locally committed- adoption for some children improves wellbeing and opportunity. Working with ACE has improved the choice of adopters for children and, therefore, outcomes for them
- Delivering priorities with fewer resources- being part of a Regional Adoption agency has allowed a rationalisation of some adoption processes. Sharing services and working with neighbours in the sub region has allowed delivery of services with fewer resources. Finally, it means putting children at the heart of decisions rather than adults
- Managing performance- adoption performance is open to public scrutiny.

6.3 How is risk being managed?

There are no definitive risks associated with this report. However, adoption work in the city will continue to be scrutinised through various fora including:

- Children's Improvement Executive
- Corporate parenting Board
- Cabinet Member
- ACE Executive Board.

6.4 What is the impact on the organisation?

Adoption work is a key component of the city's Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

6.5 Equality and Consultation Analysis (ECA)

Adoption work is fundamental to promoting equality outcomes for some children. In addition, ACE has a focus on inclusion in recruiting a range of adopters. This includes work with another Regional Adoption Agency to recruit adopters with a Black and Minority Ethnic background. This is particularly important for Coventry where a range of adopters is required for our children. In addition, ACE has been particularly successful in recruiting adopters from the LGBTQ community.

The ACE Executive Board will continue to closely monitor any impact on equality issues on a quarterly basis.

6.6 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None.

6.7 Implications for partner organisations?

None.

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Director: Name	John Gregg			31 October 2019
Members: Name	Cllr P Seaman		18 November 2019	18 November 2019

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Appendices