

The Executive

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2017

Present: Councillor– Leese in the Chair
Councillors Andrews, Battle, Flanagan, N Murphy, S Murphy, S Newman, B Priest
and Rahman

Also present as Members of the Standing Consultative Panel:
Councillors Bridges, Dar, Manco, Rowles and Stogia

Exe/17/072 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2017 as a correct record.

Exe/17/073 The Chief Executive, Joanne Roney OBE

The Chief Executive was attending her first meeting of the Executive since taking up her role in April.

Decision

To welcome Joanne Roney OBE to the meeting of the Executive.

Exe/17/074 Establishing a Regional Adoption Agency

A report from the Strategic Director of Children's Services set out the proposals for the creation of a Regional Adaption Agency that was to involve four neighbouring local authorities and two voluntary adoption agencies. The report explained the benefits to the Council of being a partner in this joint working proposal.

Stockport Council was to be the lead agency and 'host authority' in the proposed Regional Adoption Agency, with the regional agency being known as 'Adoption Counts' and with that overall brand followed by the respective local authority area, such as "Adoption Counts in Manchester".

The objectives for the agency were to be:

- To provide children with the right adopters at the right time, assessing, approving, and supporting adopters equipped to meet the needs of children waiting.
- To ensure that adoption is secured for children where it is assessed as being in their best interests.
- To avoid any unnecessary delay and ensure timely matching and placement for all children.
- To improve earlier permanency planning using:
 - Concurrent Planning
 - Fostering for Adoption

- To take innovative approaches towards placing 'hard to place' children, linking children with adopters from enquiry stage onwards where appropriate, and thoroughly preparing child and family for placement
- To reduce the likelihood of placement breakdown through timely and improved matching, preparation and adoption support.
- To ensure the service offers value for money over time through economies of scale and a regional approach to inter agency adoption.

The proposed structure for the agency was explained as being a 'hub and spokes model'. The 'Hub' - to be set up by April 2017 was to provide:

- a centralised marketing function;
- a centralised team to receive recruitment enquiries;
- a central register of children and carers;
- a data & performance management function;
- centralised administration of adoption panels;
- commissioning of larger contracts from other agencies;
- centralised tracking of children and carers;
- centralised linking & matching functions; and
- a strategic plan for the delivery of adoption support across the region.

And the spokes being three offices in each of the North, Centre and South of the region, also to be set up by April 2017 and providing:

- adopter preparation and approval;
- early identification of the children being looked after by each local authority and likely to require adoption;
- the capacity and skills to place children and support adopters; and
- adoption Support services.

The report set out the anticipated costs of operating this proposed service. This was to be £1.769m per year; being £1.868m gross cost less £99k income from use by the agency of office accommodation at Etrop Court. The overall cost would include seconded staff, the inter-agency adoption placements budget and 90% of the cost of the council's contract for adoption support services with After Adoption for the three last quarters of 2017/18, plus 10% business overheads. The budget being transferred would not include adoption allowances which would remain the council's responsibility. The number of full time equivalent staff to be seconded was 19.3 Adoption Service staff and 4.3 Business Support staff. The report explained that whilst there was an additional unbudgeted costs of £70k for this proposal in 2017/18, that cost was likely to be significantly outweighed by the benefits from reduced spending on inter-agency adoption fees that would otherwise be necessary.

Decisions

1. To agree the proposal for Manchester's Adoption Service to be included in the 'Adoption Counts' Regional Adoption Agency.
2. To note potential cost pressure of £70,000 for the Children's Services budget in 2017/18, further noting that this cost is significantly outweighed by the benefits from reduced spend on inter-agency adoption fees which otherwise

could be c£400,000 in excess of cash limit budget available, following loss of grant funding from the Department for Education.

3. To note the Partnership Agreement with Stockport MBC is yet to be finalised.

Exe/17/075 Delegation of Executive Functions to Council Officers

A report was submitted seeking approval for the delegation of various executive functions to officers of the Council; those functions being recorded at Part 3, Section A of the Council's 2017 Constitution. The report also sought approval for the delegation to officers of the Council's various executive functions set out in Part 3, Section F of the Council's 2017 Constitution.

The report explained the legal powers available to the Leader and to the Executive to arrange for the exercise of and delegation of executive functions within the Council. We supported the proposed delegations.

Decisions

1. To note the decision of the Leader of the Council to exercise his power under Section 9(E) (2) of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) to delegate the discharge of all of the Council's executive functions to the Executive;
2. To delegate to officers the discharge of all of the Council's executive functions recorded at Part 3, Section A of the Council's 2017 Constitution as set out in the Council's Constitution presented to Council at its Annual Meeting on 17 May 2017
3. To delegate to officers the discharge of all of the Council's executive functions recorded at Part 3, Section F of the Council's 2017 Constitution as set out in the Council's 2017 Constitution presented to Council at its Annual Meeting on 17 May 2017.
4. In relation to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers set out in Part 3 Section F of the 2017 Constitution, to agree that such delegations include those functions that are designated as "Executive Functions" and those functions that are designated as "General Functions" insofar as these are executive functions.