

**18 September 2017****Agenda Item: 11****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR YOUTH, FAMILIES AND  
SOCIAL WORK****CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME –  
ADOPTION SERVICES RESTRUCTURE****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks approval of a revised Adoption Services staffing structure and for a report on progress to be brought back to the Committee in May 2018.

**Information and Advice****Adoption Service Review**

2. In order to meet £158,586 savings requirements in the Provider Services project (CFC404) a workstream was set up to review the Adoption Service, with a view to making staffing structures and processes as efficient and sustainable as possible without affecting the standard of provision, thus generating cashable and other benefits. This paper describes the proposed changes to the staffing structure for the Adoption Service.
3. The proposed staffing structure will reduce the overall Adoption Service establishment by 2.28 FTE (full-time equivalent) and is summarised below:
  - 2.5 FTE County Adoption Team Social Worker posts will be deleted. Two Social Worker posts have been held vacant since 2016/17.
  - 2.0 FTE Social Worker posts in Support After Adoption will be deleted.
  - 0.28FTE Team Manager post will be deleted; this post is currently vacant.
  - 3.6 FTE Adoption Social Work Support Officers (Adoption SWSOs) will be established. These posts will provide strong support to Social Workers by taking responsibility for tasks which do not need a social work qualification. These posts will report directly to the Team Managers.
  - the existing 1.1 FTE Recruitment and Project Officer posts (RPOs) will be deleted, and the post-holders will be enabled into the Adoption SWSO posts as part of the proposed restructure. Their current duties are adequately reflected in the SWSO job description. This will streamline the structure and underline the focus on support for Social Workers.

4. This proposal will effect a total saving of £143,324.
5. The remaining £15,262 will be delivered through the identification of ongoing efficiencies in such areas as Adoption Panel activity, the introduction of paperless panels and ongoing reviews of Adoption Financial Support.

## **Consultation**

6. A paper describing the proposed change was sent to all Adoption Service staff, and they were invited to respond via an online survey.
7. A letter was sent to Adopters describing the changes proposed and inviting responses via email.
8. Trade union representatives were also consulted about the proposals. The paper was also sent to colleagues in Placements, Permanence and Fostering teams, for information only.
9. The consultation was open for three weeks from Monday 12 June until Friday 30 June and elicited the following number of responses:

<b>Responder</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
County Council staff, County Adoption	5	36%
County Council staff, Support after Adoption	11	100%
Adopters	5	Approx. 0.1%

10. Those that did respond were concerned about the impact of loss of social work posts, however, they were reassured that the model of support officers is already working in other areas, with very positive feedback from workers, service users, and other professionals.

## **Risks**

11. There is a risk that reducing the number of Social Workers will reduce the support available to Adopters, and that this may result in an increase in adoption timescales and potential adoption breakdowns. In practice, the inclusion of Social Work Support Officers in the model will reduce the amount of time that Social Workers spend on administrative tasks and therefore should increase their capacity to spend time with Adopters and the children and young people they care for.
12. Workloads will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are manageable.

## **Other Options Considered**

13. One other option was considered. This model would have achieved savings but proposed too few Social Workers to achieve a safe and sustainable Adoption Service.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

14. The staffing model proposed will deliver significant savings as part of the Provider Services project, whilst continuing to provide an excellent service to Adopters, their families, and the children and young people they care for.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

15. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Implications**

16. The cost of the new staffing model, and the amount of savings it will deliver, are included in the report.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That:

- 1) the revised Adoption Services staffing structure is approved.
- 2) a report on progress be brought back to the Committee in May 2018.

**Steve Edwards**  
**Service Director, Youth, Families and Social Work**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Shelagh Mitchell  
Group Manager, Regulated Services  
T: 0115 97 74169  
E: [shelagh.mitchell@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:shelagh.mitchell@nottsc.gov.uk)

## **Constitutional Comments (LM 01/09/17)**

17. The Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the contents of the report.

## **Financial Comments (SAS 04/09/17)**

18. The financial implications of the report are contained within paragraphs 4 and 5 above.

**Human Resources Comments (BC 14/08/17)**

19. The staffing implications are highlighted in the report. The proposed reductions will not result in any redundancies. Any affected staff will be enabled using the Council's agreed employment procedures.

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

None.

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

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