



Derby City Council

COUNCIL CABINET

21 June 2017

ITEM 8

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and
Young People and Safeguarding

Regionalisation of Adoption

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Government legislated to regionalise adoption services in the 2016 Education and Adoption Act and Derby has been part of an East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency Project Governance Board (PGB) to oversee this process.
- 1.2 Lead Members across the East Midlands on the 2nd December 2016 endorsed a D2N2 (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire) model that will pilot the creation of Children's Permanence Teams in each Local Authority, that will specialise in progressing children's plans to adoption. Lead members requested that a pilot specification to be brought to their 23 June 2017 meeting.
- 1.3 Simultaneous to this a pan regional home finding and matching model is being developed to maximise the opportunities to match children with a plan for adoption and approved adopters across the whole East Midlands. This will bring particular benefits for Derby as we often have to place Derby children outside of Derby given our small geographical area and the risk of identification of children by birth families.
- 1.4 The Council is still awaiting publication of the March 2017 Ofsted inspection of 'services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers'. However the adoption service was pleased with the findings for adoption and the establishment of permanency teams was viewed as supporting the speeding up of the adoption process and further improving quality.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To endorse the commencement of a D2N2 pilot of a permanency team from July 2017
- 2.2 To receive an update report early 2018 with outcomes from the pilot and next steps for regionalisation and the implications for Derby's adoption services.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The implications for staff and the Council of piloting a permanency team for Derby

during 2017 are minimal. However after this pilot D2N2 and the other East Midland Local Authorities will have to decide whether to move to a model where one Local Authority hosts a regionalised adoption service. This will have HR, legal and financial implications for the Council which will require further Cabinet consideration.



SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The key reason for the delivery of adoption services is to provide the best possible outcomes for children, adopters and adoptive families. The benefits of regionalisation are to:
- Address performance and practice inconsistencies
 - To have a bigger regional pool of adopters and children
 - Enable the strategic development of adoption services, including in adoption support
 - Create a powerful regional voice for adoption and adopters to shape policy at a national level
 - Ensure a culture of excellence in adoption practice through strong Local Authority and Voluntary Adoption Agency partnership
- 4.2 Derby is part of an existing and successful East Midlands regional partnership that was allocated funding by DfE to assist in completing an option analysis to determine the regional delivery model and implementation plan. Lincolnshire County Council is leading this work on behalf of the region, supported by key staff. Derby staff has been actively engaged with this work at all levels. In background papers there is the national map showing regional adoption agency areas and the project governance arrangements.
- 4.3 Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members agreed in December 2016 to develop a pilot across two sub regional groupings; Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (D2N2) and the Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland (LLLLR). These areas are logical sub regional footprints around which services can initially be aligned.

- 4.4 Derby is part of the D2N2 pilot to test out the creation of a permanency team in Derby that works to the same model across D2N2. For Derby this will be three social workers who work across Locality teams, Children in Care teams and the Adoption team to ensure that there is no drift for children with their adoption plan. They will also share knowledge and experience of adoption with social workers who often have not supported children through an adoption process, which will improve the quality of reports for court and documents that children read later in life as adults.

A pan regional Homefinding and Matching model is being developed to maximise the potential for placing more complex children with adopters. The target for commencing Children's Permanence Teams and the Homefinding elements of the pilot is July 2017. If the pilot is successful the model will be recommended to Councils for implementation from April 2018 to meet Government timescales.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Initially a pan regional pilot was pursued across the whole East Midlands, however agreement on one model proved difficult to achieve and there was not agreement from all lead Members to the regionalisation plan. The East Midlands is the largest adoption region in the country and splitting into a D2N2 pilot provides sufficient children and adopters to meet Government targets for regionalisation.

There is an option to not comply with the legislation and for Derby to choose not to move towards regionalisation. This is not in the best interests of children or adopters as regionalisation will bring benefits for Derby and there is the risk of Government sanctions in relation to financial claw back of the project funding already received by the region.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Paul McMahon: Principle Lawyer Alison Parkin: Head of Finance Liz Moore: Strategic HR Manager Hazel Lymbery: Director Specialist Services
For more information contact:	Hazel Lymbery 01332 642669 hazel.lymbery@derby.gov.uk Regional map and project governance Appendix 1 – Implications

Background papers:	
List of appendices:	

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The costs of piloting a permanency team are met from within existing budgets; a decision to move to a Local Authority hosted adoption service model will have considerable financial and governance implications and will need to be considered by Cabinet in early 2018. Lead Members across the East Midlands have very clearly stated that regionalising adoption cannot cost any more for individual Councils than current expenditure.

Legal

- 2.1 The 2016 Education and Adoption Act amends the Adoption and Children Act 2002, so that local authorities are no longer required to maintain an adoption service within their area but may secure provision by other local authorities or registered adoption societies. Under the new legislation, the Secretary of State may direct one or more local authorities to make arrangements for all or any of their adoption functions to be carried out on their behalf by another local authority or adoption agency.

Personnel

- 3.1 To be determined after the Pilot

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- 4.1 To be determined after the Pilot

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 To be determined after the Pilot

Health and Safety

- 6.1 To be determined after the Pilot

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 To be determined after the Pilot

Property and Asset Management

8.1 To be determined after the Pilot

Risk Management and Safeguarding

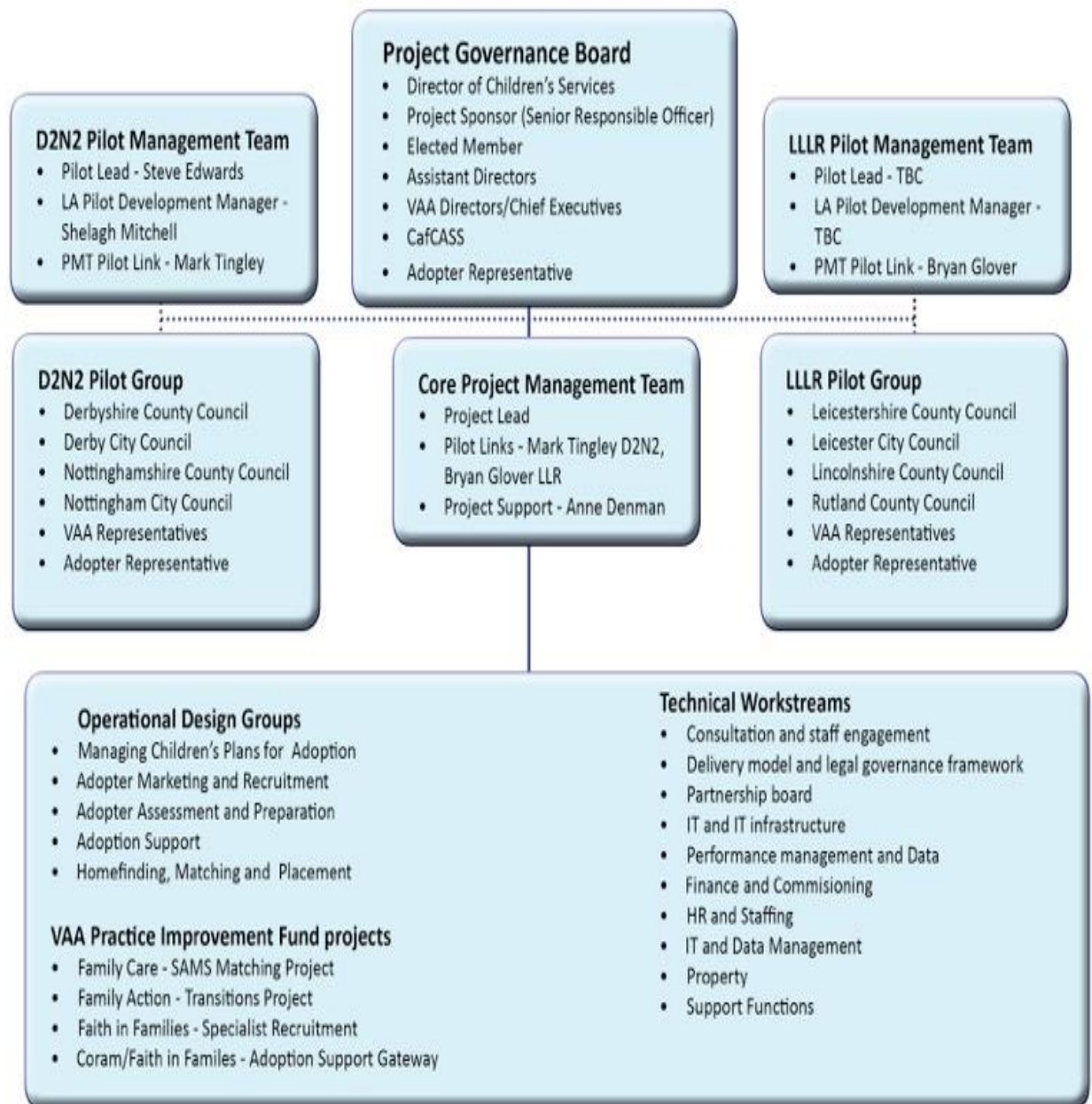
9.1 To be determined after the Pilot

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 The adoption service supports the Councils priorities of
- inspiring start in life
 - inspiring start in life by improving educational attainment
 - inspiring working life by improving skills and creating jobs

Background papers

APPENDIX 1: RAA PROJECT GOVERNANCE BOARD





Department for Education

Local authority areas currently involved in Regional Adoption Agency projects

(as at January 2017)

Status

- LA's in RAA Projects
- LA's not in RAA Projects

