

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**Date of meeting**

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**Subject: Adoption West Proposals And Engagement (All Wards)**

**Cabinet member: To be appointed by the Leader of Council following his or her election by Annual Council on 16 May**

**Key Decision: Yes**

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**Executive Summary**

The development of Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) proposals is part of the national regionalising adoption agenda as set out in 'Regionalising Adoption' (July 2015), and further developed in 'Adoption; A Vision for Change' (March 2016). Proposals are also informed by the Education and Adoption Act 2016.

Through collaboration with five other local authorities and the voluntary sector Wiltshire Council has embarked upon developing a RAA which is currently known as Adoption West. An expression of interest was submitted in September 2015 to DfE and the funding secured has provided resources to support the project including project management, professional leadership and independent specialist legal, financial and technical advice.

Through development of an RAA we aim to:

- To improve adopter recruitment and adoption support
- To speed up matching and improve the life chances of neglected children
- To reduce costs

Following the last report to Cabinet (Insert date) a detailed implementation plan has been developed by the project group.

A decision is now required from Cabinet to approve the proposal to establish the Adoption West Regional Adoption Agency and delegate authority for approving the detailed implementation plans to the Corporate Director

**Proposal(s)**

To approve proposals for the establishment of the Adoption West Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) as outlined in this report and delegate authority for approving the detailed implementation plans, including financial, contractual and legal agreements to Corporate Director, Carolyn Godfrey subject to council policies and procedures.

### **Reason for Proposal**

The development of Regional Adoption Agency proposals is part of the national regionalising adoption agenda as set out in 'Regionalising Adoption' (July 2015), and further developed in 'Adoption; A Vision for Change' (March 2016). Proposals are also informed by the Education and Adoption Act 2016, as outlined in the 'legal implications' section of this report.

Wiltshire Council is a partner in developing Adoption West RAA along with five other Councils and four voluntary adoption agencies. The intention is to transfer a range of Wiltshire Council's current adoption service functions to Adoption West by April 2018

**Carolyn Godfrey**  
**Corporate Director**

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## Wiltshire Council

### Cabinet

### Date of meeting

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**Subject: Adoption West Proposals and Engagement (All Wards)**

**Cabinet member: Councillor -Laura Mayes  
Area - Children's Services**

**Key Decision: Yes**

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### Purpose of Report

1. To approve proposals for the establishment of the Adoption West Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) as outlined in this report and delegate authority for approving the detailed implementation plans, including financial, contractual and legal agreements to the Carlyne Godfrey subject to council policies and procedures.
2. Final approval will be subject to Section 151 Officer, Head of Legal Services, and relevant elected member sign-off of a fully costed business case, members' agreement, articles of association, commissioning contract, support services agreement, and licenses for premises.
3. The purpose for requesting approval at this stage is due to the timescales for achieving commitment from multiple local authorities, to provide certainty regarding each local authority's commitment prior to formal staff consultation and committing substantial project resources on drafting legal documentation and initiating support service commissioning.

### Policy

4. The development of Regional Adoption Agency proposals is part of the national regionalising adoption agenda as set out in 'Regionalising Adoption' (July 2015), and further developed in 'Adoption; A Vision for Change' (March 2016). Proposals are also informed by the Education and Adoption Act 2016, as outlined in the 'legal implications' section of this report.

### Background

5. The Adoption West project has developed from a steering group that formed in July 2013 to consider the possibility of more collaborative working to improve adoption and permanence service delivery across potentially eight local authorities. The remaining six local authorities are Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire,

and Wiltshire. Somerset and Swindon have joined other regional agencies during the process. Initial work was undertaken by commissioning leads from Gloucestershire and Wiltshire before engaging the Institute of Public Care (IPC) to complete more detailed work. IPC presented a commissioning plan to the Directors of Children's Services for the Adoption West area and on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2014 it was agreed that work should be undertaken to move towards a collaborative model of providing adoption services. Work began in April 2015 on activity to concentrate on and jointly commission a number of adoption service functions regionally.

6. Following the general election in May 2015 the context within which the Adoption West project was operating changed with the publication of 'Regionalising Adoption' (July 2015). In which, the government set out their proposals to move to Regional Adoption Agencies by the end of the Parliament in 2020 and invited expressions of interest from local partnerships. The paper included an emphasis on getting adoption/permanence right for harder to place children whilst ensuring adoption support is available and accessible to these adoptive families and set out three key aims:
- To speed up matching and improve the life chances of neglected children
  - To improve adopter recruitment and adoption support
  - To reduce costs (through quicker placements for looked after children)

It is also clear that the Department for Education (DfE) expect to see Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) and Adoption Support Agencies (ASAs) actively included in future delivery models and are 'particularly keen to consider models that have an element of cross-sector collaboration'.

7. Following market testing, an engagement event with voluntary sector providers and expressions of interest, it was agreed that 6 VAA / ASAs would be contributors to the design and development of Adoption West. The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and Adoption Support Agencies that have supported the development of Adoption West include:
- Action for Children
  - Adoption UK
  - After Adoption
  - Barnardo's
  - CCS Adoption
  - PAC UK

Following consideration of their national commitments to other regional agencies, Barnardo's and PAC UK withdrew from formal involvement in the Adoption West project in July 2016.

8. The Adoption West expression of interest was submitted in September 2015 and DfE agreed funding to begin in November 2015. Funding was agreed for resources to support the project including project management, professional leadership and independent specialist legal, financial and technical advice. Support and challenge to the project is also provided through an allocated coach offering guidance and acting as a link with the DfE. The project is

required to provide progress reports to the DfE on milestone delivery and spending, subsequent phases of funding are contingent upon meeting DfE reporting and project gateway requirements.

#### Phase 1 – project initiation, scope and define

9. During November 2015 to March 2016 the project formed the mobilisation team and governance arrangements, agreed the vision and key outcomes, defined the scope and gathered service data to inform proposals. An options appraisal process was undertaken of the delivery models below and a preference for option 2 agreed, following detailed consideration and legal advice.
  - Option 1 - Hosted by a single LA on behalf of a number of LAs (Single LA)
  - Option 2 - Joint Venture between LAs – a new public sector owned entity (e.g. Local Authority Company Limited by Guarantee)
  - Option 3 - Creation of a new VAA – possibly a joint venture (e.g. Flexibility for public & third sector ownership)

#### Phase 2 – project development and RAA design

10. The successful completion of phase 1 work resulted in the subsequent approval of plans and further funding from DfE. Following the completion of phase 1 each local authority cabinet or committee approved the proposed delivery model option of creating a new jointly owned local authority company at meetings during June to September 2016. This option was agreed because it will best enable us to deliver better outcomes for children, affording us greater flexibility and independence to pursue innovation and enterprise in how we deliver services. The option is further supported by legal advice evidencing the feasibility and advantageous procurement position of such a model. Within this model there is scope to include VAA / ASAs on the Board arrangements while maintaining local authority control.
11. In summary, this option was agreed by each local authority based on the following key strengths as outlined in **Appendix 1**:
  - A corporate joint venture between the participating authorities creates a new entity which offers a neutral platform which affords all participating authorities equal status within the arrangements and avoids the perception of control which the required role of a "lead authority" can create.
  - The structure allows governance arrangements to be straightforward with all partners represented on the Board of Directors (although the VAA / ASAs would have limited voting rights).
  - It will be easier to establish a new identity and brand distinct from the local authorities, providing a better platform to engage adopters, build trust and innovate while maintaining effective connections with LA children services teams
  - The procurement position is more favourable as certain exemptions are afforded if the RAA is local authority controlled and the essential part of the RAA activities is with the controlling local authorities

- Innovation and growth are better facilitated by this model. This may range from experimenting with new practice methodologies and trialling alternative evidence based practice models and programmes, through to embracing new technology and improving working practices such as team and service user communications.
12. In parallel with political decision making on the corporate delivery model, working groups of representatives from local authorities and VAAs continued to focus on practice development. Significant work has been completed to define processes and agree standardised regional ways of working under each of these work streams. Further details on the following work stream practice development themes is provided in **Appendix 2**
- Front door, marketing and adopter recruitment
  - The child’s journey and early permanence
  - Adopter assessment and matching
  - Adoption support and lifelong links
  - Special guardianship (Not proposed to transfer from 2018)
  - Adoption Panels, health and education services
  - Performance, quality assurance, workforce and business administration
13. Key stakeholders including council elected members, adopters, and staff have been engaged in the development of proposals. A wide ranging survey of adopters and subsequent adopter forums have highlighted key priorities, concerns and issues to be addressed in developing a regional adoption service and are summarised in **Appendix 3**. The views of adopters are integral to the future service design and will continue to be central to the operation of regional adoption services.
14. The implementation of the new RAA would follow substantial project work undertaken since October 2015. Funding of £241,774 has been provided by the DfE to develop our proposals, in particular to enable us to “scope and define” the operational model and organisational structure of the new RAA. In December 2016, the project was successful in obtaining commitment to a further £470,000 to implement the RAA.

#### Governance and accountability

15. The participating authorities will enter into a Members’ Agreement which clearly sets out the purpose of the collaboration and assigns roles and responsibilities to each of the participating authorities. It also deals with governance and issues such as dispute resolution.
16. In addition to the Members’ Agreement each of the participating authorities will need to commission services from the RAA and this will require a further Commissioning Agreement to be entered into jointly between the participating authorities and the corporate RAA or singularly between each participating authority and the corporate RAA. Draft heads of terms for the members’ agreement and commissioning agreement are included as **Appendix 4**

17. Each of the participating authorities will have a role to play in the Board of Directors of the Corporate RAA. Statutory company directors are required to have the necessary skills and experience to carry out their duties effectively and to do so in good faith and in a way that would be most likely to promote the success of the Corporate RAA for the benefit of its members as a whole. All members or officers of an LA expected to act as statutory directors will receive detailed and appropriate training and support.
18. Adoption is regulated by statutory provisions and administered through the courts in line with these principles. Adoption services are administered through agencies approved by the secretary of state and are subject to inspection by OFSTED. Proposals will consider the potential impact of the inspection requirements, acknowledging that DfE and OFSTED are working together to agree the best approach for new delivery models. The Adoption Leadership Board and Regional Adoption Boards provide leadership to the adoption system, improve its performance and tackle the key challenges it currently faces by supporting the collection, analysis and dissemination of timely performance data and the sharing of best practice. The proposed RAA governance arrangements are included in Appendix 5.

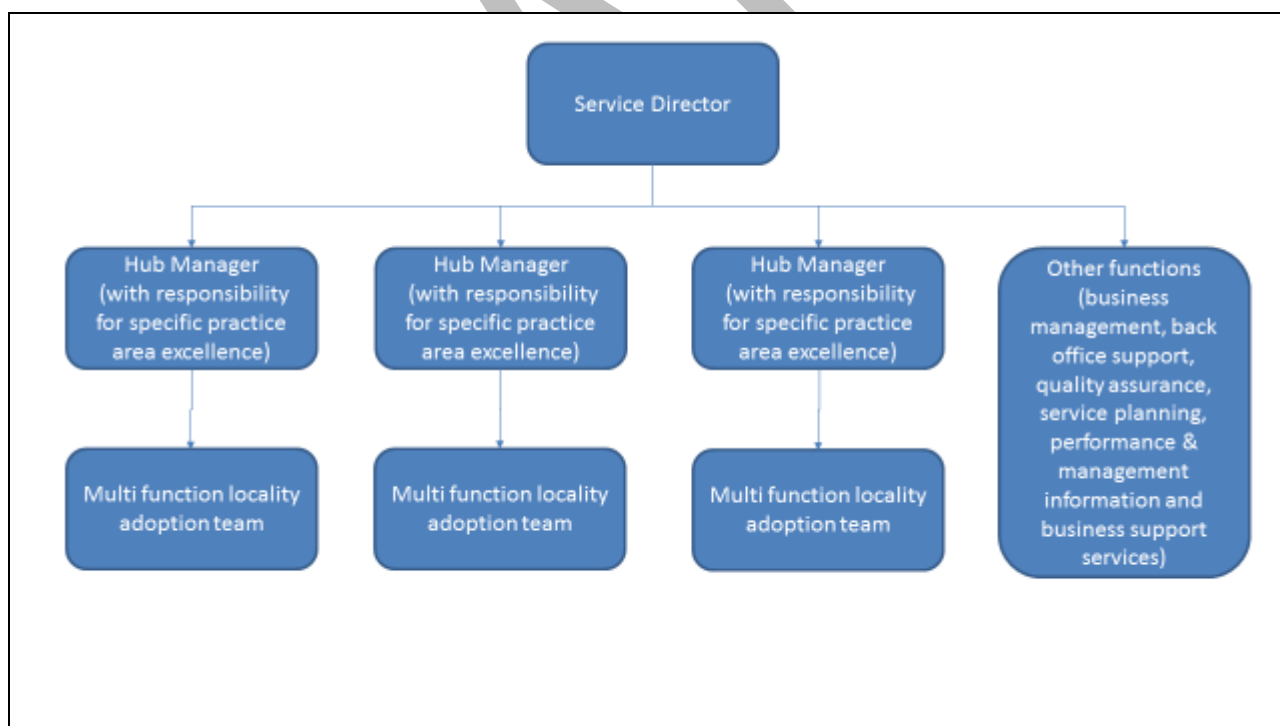
Human resources implications (staffing, organisational structure, employee transfer and pensions)

19. The proposed organisation structure operating model (**Appendix 6**) has been developed in collaboration with current employees and stakeholders during the engagement and development phase. The model proposes 3 geographic hubs in Gloucester, Bristol and Trowbridge based on the current office locations of the largest adoption services within the region. The hubs will be supplemented by remote and home working and flexible access to office accommodation in the other councils to enable locality working and avoid unnecessary travel.
20. The management of the regional adoption agency will be headed by a service director with overall responsibility for operations and strategic leadership and will be supported by hub managers that each hold responsibility for the consistent and effective embedding of a specific area of practice excellence as summarised in the 'outline organisational structure' below.
21. Staff equality data has been gathered and is analysed as part of a detailed equality impact assessment (**Appendix 7**) that will be maintained during development and delivery of proposals.
22. Initial advice has been taken regarding staffing implications relating to staff transfer and pensions. HR advisers from all local authorities meet regularly to consider staffing implications and will enact the detailed workforce change plans subject to councils approving proposals. A dedicated HR professional is being recruited on a temporary basis to lead on workforce change and to coordinate the activities of each local authority in this area.
23. It is anticipated that appropriate current employees of the LAs (**Appendix 8**)

will transfer to the new agency under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations 2006 to the regional adoption agency as responsibility for the delivery of all aspects of the Adoption Services are transferred. A due diligence review of the T&Cs which currently apply to employees has been undertaken to identify what T&Cs the regional adoption agency would inherit on any TUPE transfer. The regional adoption agency will consider how the variety of terms would fit in with its structure of T&Cs and identify potential issues and/or conflicts which may arise.

24. As the transferring employees who would transfer under TUPE from the LAs to the LA owned agency are likely to be members of or entitled to join the LGPS, the LAs will be obliged to ensure that when their employment transfers to the LA owned agency, appropriate 'pension protection' is provided for them. Discussions have started with each of the three applicable LGPS Pension Funds (Avon Pension Fund, Gloucestershire Pension Fund and Wiltshire Pension Fund) regarding the RAA also participating in the LGPS to allow the transferring employees to continue with their membership or entitlement to join following the transfer. The actuaries of the applicable LGPS Pension Funds will continue to be consulted as to the basis of any such transfers. The LAs will ensure that any potential negative effects on them and their participation in the relevant LGPS Pension Fund are minimised.

### Outline organisational structure



### Financial principles, modelling and funding

25. Funding for the new RAA will be provided by the partner LAs and the mechanism for agreeing funding is outlined below. This agreement has been reached following analysis of the approaches taken by other prospective regional adoption agencies, DfE commissioned independent advice and due



consideration of a number of potential models. The criteria considered for agreeing a funding formula included:

- historic and projected budgets and actual spend
- historic and projected numbers of children looked after and number of adoptions and permanence solutions;
- historic and projected volume of activity to be delivered;
- inter-agency fixed fee per adoption;
- a combination of the above

26. Current spend by local authorities on the services in scope of the proposed new agency is approximately £2.6m. Further detail on the breakdown of current budgets and spend is provided in **Appendix 9**.
27. Current spend includes a net income target for inter-agency placements that is consistent with historic performance but has a number of associated risks. The national market for inter-agency placements has been subject to significant interference in recent years with grant funding and other incentives potentially affecting performance and providing an uncertain basis for future modelling. Inter-agency placement income and expenditure will be monitored during 2017/18 to ensure the projected levels for future years remain realistic. Reflecting this risk, the funding agreement includes provision to review arrangements based on experience of operating.
28. The high level draft projected budget for the new agency is included as **Appendix 10**
29. As outlined in the draft Heads of Terms (**Appendix 4**) each commissioning authority will pay for the provision of the services during the Term in advance in the following percentages set out in the Table below. These financial contributions will be in proportion to current spending on the services as set out in a specification in the members' agreement.

Proportional current spend & proposed contribution to future regional services in scope:

B&NES	Bristol	Gloucestershire	N.Somerset	South Glos	Wiltshire
6.81%	33.96%	18.96%	11.52%	5.56%	23.20%

30. This formula will be reviewed based on operational experience with a view to transitioning away from a funding model based on historic spend and towards a stronger emphasis on local authority demand levels. During the first year of operations partners will work on an agreed formula for funding from 2020. Partners will track implications for the RAA and each LA, based on the latest activity level data and related performance information, throughout the operational life of the RAA. This initial funding model agreement is designed to promote stability for services and will be reviewed on this basis. A specific review may be triggered by a material change in liability based on demand fluctuations outside of tolerances defined within the members' agreement and commissioning contract.

31. Any anticipated deficits resulting from not generating targeted income or from unforeseen costs not budgeted for will be reported to the management and member boards according to contract monitoring arrangements defined in the commissioning contract. The level of deficit apportionment will be capped in distribution, under the formula at transfer, by 5% of net spend of the company (c. £130,000). Above this the reason for increase will be assessed and costs associated passed to the council(s) giving rise to those costs.
32. Any surplus generated from operating efficiencies and inter-agency fee income and expenditure will be retained within the company and either invested into future services or used to reduce subsequent charges paid by the local authorities to commission the services.
33. The plans for Adoption West RAA should not increase overall service delivery costs and will seek to deliver efficiencies and service improvements. These proposals will hopefully result in a projected net neutral cost position compared to current spend for all councils for the initial contractual period. Budget and service delivery performance will be regularly reported to member local authorities as set out in the commissioning contract and reviewed with regard to local authority demand requirements. The level of risk related to demand fluctuations and operational performance is broadly comparable to the current level of risk for each local authority. To mitigate potential exposure to demand fluctuations in other local authorities, tolerances will be defined within the members' agreement and commissioning contract as set out in paragraph 31 above. Wider potential liabilities are mitigated by insurances included within the business case costings.
34. Tax advice received suggests the new agency will benefit from similar VAT exemptions to local authorities due to being public sector controlled. VAT may be payable on procured organisational support service costs depending on the mechanism for securing these services and budget contingency has been identified to cover this potential additional cost. Further advice is being received regarding VAT recovery and the business case includes contingency for estimated potential costs. Legal advice to date has highlighted that given the nature of the services and the status of the RAA, VAT and state aid issues are not likely to be a significant obstacle. The member's agreement and commissioning contract will be structured to ensure the arrangements are VAT efficient.
35. Working capital will be provided through initial funding previously provided by partner local authorities, payments in advance and a facility agreement for working capital should the RAA require access to additional contingency funds under control of local authority members. The level of working capital and terms under which it may be accessed will be defined in the member's agreement for approval by member local authorities' heads of finance.
36. Insurances will be subject to further specialist advice and will be confirmed in finalising the regional adoption agency budget. Figures are based on initial quotes determined by the projected size of the organisation and the nature of services to be provided.
37. Any initial potential redundancy liabilities will be estimated and considered

with local authorities and will be underwritten on a shared basis by the partner LAs according to the proportions set out in the Members' agreement so as not to expose the new entity or any individual local authority to an unaffordable level of risk.

38. Local authorities have agreed to provide the regional hub office accommodation at no additional charge at this stage. This agreement is subject to the required space being limited to the existing footprint utilised by adoption services and reciprocal arrangements with local authorities that are not providing hub accommodation to allow staff to access office space on a flexible basis. The details relating to locations have been informed by analysis of service volumes and input from service users, staff and other stakeholders.

### Phase 3 – project delivery

39. There are a number of key areas that require ongoing work to enable a successful transition. A detailed project plan is in place to enable delivery of the approved corporate model and embed redesigned service processes and working practices for the proposed implementation date of April 2018 (**Appendix 11**). This covers activity related to workforce change processes, infrastructure set up and other implementation activity. It is anticipated that some service improvements identified may be implemented during the transition period to achieve incremental change and trial new ways of working ahead of a formal implementation date. A transition and change management plan is being developed to take the project into the next phase and to ensure maintenance and improvement in existing services during the change process. Related underpinning plans relating to risk management and communication are in place.

### Summary plan

Milestone	Date
Detailed service design and preparation for workforce change process	Jan-Apr 2017
Local Authority political decision making and VAA decision making on implementation of preferred model including outline service specification, budget and organisational structure	Mar-May 2017
Staff HR consultation, ongoing staff involvement and early implementation of process changes , build organisation infrastructure	May-Sep 2017
Implementation – workforce change process, launch organisational infrastructure	Sep-Dec 2017
Transition and change management	Dec-Apr 2018
Implement new delivery model	April 2018

Voluntary Adoption Agency and Adoption Support Agency (VAA / ASA) roles and considerations

40. VAA / ASAs will form an integral part of new regional working arrangements.

Further work will be undertaken to clarify the specific nature and extent of involvement of different agencies but partners are committed to engaging positively with VAA / ASAs and incorporating VAA / ASAs fully within any future RAA and as part of the wider permanence service mix. Partners anticipate thriving VAA / ASAs to be an essential part of the mixed local market of adoption service provision in the future and voluntary agencies will play a central part in defining their future role in further detail. Detailed consideration of the anticipated capacity and capability of a future RAA and other adoption service providers will be analysed in coordination with VAA / ASA partners and options considered that will ensure the continued strength of commissioned provision. Opportunities for expansion and diversification in the voluntary sector will be explored to address potential capacity gaps and growth areas by providing greater certainty and encouraging more collaborative working within regional arrangements to enable providers to develop new services and engage in longer term planning.

#### Service delivery and focus on operational practice excellence (**Appendix 2**)

41. The new RAA will focus on excellent practice and improved outcomes for children through ensuring that new processes, activities and structures reflect the objectives and enable the planned benefits of the new entity. Service excellence will be supported through effective governance and commissioning arrangements to ensure consistently high standards in operational processes and working practices. This will be sustained through appropriate governance and performance management arrangements. Service excellence will be central to all aspects of the next phase of developing proposals and the fundamental criteria against which decisions will be made. The development and delivery of proposals will continue to benefit from detailed input of adopters, the voice of the child and voluntary sector partners.
42. The project continues to look across all partners and beyond to ensure the best practice of current services provide a baseline from which to develop new practices. The preferred delivery model will provide further continuous improvement opportunities through:
  - greater freedom and flexibility to involve staff in governance and decisions
  - being a single purpose organisation that will not have to focus on other local authority priorities
  - create lean processes and removal of duplicated functions
  - the potential to develop tailored back of house functions appropriate specifically to the business of adoption / permanence
  - the ability to develop a culture and practices that focus purely around adoption and permanence support and the needs of the child / adopters.

#### Special Guardianship

43. The project governance group has agreed that there are clear benefits to the RAA providing functions relating to special guardianship assessment and support. Following thorough consideration of the scope and phasing of the

services proposed to transfer, a number of risks and further considerations relating to special guardianship services have been identified. Consequently it is proposed that transfer of special guardianship services follow further analysis and collaborative work with each local authority to understand the current variations in service provision and organisation with a view to transfer services from 2019. The local authority partners remain committed to the inclusion of special guardianship within a regional service and will develop plans for transferring these services in line with the planned timeframes for making further decisions about the future funding and commissioning arrangements for the regional agency.

#### Health provision

44. Initial engagement with Health service commissioners from the 6 Clinical Commissioning Groups has identified opportunities for more joined up working. However, current commissioning cycles and the complexity of disaggregating adoption and permanence related health services from wider children's services health provision may limit the potential for regional commissioning. Options are being discussed collaboratively to enable greater consistency of health provision across the region. Processes will also be established to coordinate demand, and manage the administrative and financial implications of more flexible health services regionally.

#### Education services

45. Links have been established with the Virtual Schools in each Local Authority to include them in the planning process for the RAA. Virtual School Head's are keenly aware of their responsibilities to children who are adopted, which is a recent increase in workload and expectations for their services. As with health provision there are potential opportunities for joined up working which could provide better co-ordinated and more timely education services to adopted children. Initial work is now underway to collate information across the six Local Authority Virtual Schools to better understand the current picture of educational provision and to identify opportunities to work together and develop joint processes. It is anticipated that there will be some cross authority collaboration between the Virtual Schools, including the RAA, that will ensure more consistent services to children and adoptive parents, and make more effective use of available resources.

#### Adoption Panel Arrangements

46. Outline proposals have been agreed to rationalise existing panel arrangements to ensure the process is as efficient as possible and resources are used most effectively on a regional basis. This will involve changes to local authority panels to combine resources and ensure administration, structures and timing reflect and support the outcomes to be achieved by regionalising adoption and permanence services.

## ICT options and considerations

47. No decisions have been reached regarding who will provide the new agency's IT systems. Options will be considered regarding the relative strengths and weaknesses of existing systems in use by partner agencies or alternative systems based on an assessment of services and associated technical requirements.
48. The new agency will require access to service user records from the 6 local authorities. Decisions will need to be made regarding how this access is achieved with options including a feed into a new system or links into each of the 6 systems.
49. Decisions will also need to be made regarding other business and IT services required and who will supply them including email, storage, finance, payroll, HR, provision of hardware. There are perceived benefits to a partner LA providing these services in which case they could be accessed via remote desktop protocol (RDP) or similar, providing a user with a graphical interface to connect to another computer over a network connection.

## Service user engagement (**Appendix 3**)

50. Significant service user engagement with adopters has been undertaken working with Adoption UK to facilitate surveys, focus groups and various forums to ensure proposals are informed by service users. Work is ongoing and will be embedded within the processes of the new organisation to ensure engagement of the principal stakeholders including:
  - Adopted children / adults
  - Adopters / Adoptive families
  - Birth families
  - Local Authority, Voluntary Adoption Agency and Adoption Support Agency Staff
  - Health service commissioners and providers
  - Adoption panel members
  - Education services

## Consultation

51. Staff have supported the process through an initial engagement event in November 2015, ongoing communication with service managers and the project team through operational team meetings, focused working group involvement and a further all stakeholder event in November 2016. Trade Unions have been informed of outline proposals and arrangements are in place for ongoing consultation as proposals are developed further. The adopter voice is provided through adopter champion representation within the governance structures and plans are in place for ongoing structured involvement of service users, including the voice of the child.

## Financial Implications

52. Financial implications are summarised under the 'Financial principles, modelling and funding' section above. The outline budget detailing projected costs (**Appendix 10**) and member agreement heads of terms (**Appendix 4**) setting out funding arrangements are fundamental to the next stage of the project and to informing decision making. As highlighted in the options appraisal, as the corporate RAA only has local authority members (shareholders), it will be a local authority company as such "controlled" by each of the participating authorities. Each local authority has a fiduciary duty to look after the funds entrusted to it and to ensure that the taxpayer's money is spent appropriately. For that reason, a local authority must carefully consider any trading venture that it embarks on. The 2009 Trading Order England requires the local authority to prepare a business case. The participating authorities (or their executives) should approve the business plan before trading starts.
53. For the purposes of the applicable VAT legislation, the corporate RAA will be providing "welfare services". This would bring the RAA within a VAT exemption. The consequences of the VAT exemption are twofold:
- The RAA will not be required to charge VAT to the participating authorities in respect of the welfare services it provides.
  - Since it will be making exempt supplies, the RAA may not be able to recover the VAT it incurs in procuring support services from third parties, such as finance, human resources advice and ICT. As such the potential costs of these services to the RAA should be factored into the full business case as part of the final decision making process.

## Legal Implications

54. The body of this report and specifically the Heads of Terms (**Appendix 4**) along with the delivery model options appraisal included in the previous report addresses the legal implications pertinent to the establishment of a local authority joint venture.
55. The Education and Adoption Act 2016 amends the Adoption and Children Act 2002 to include:
- 1) The Secretary of State may give directions requiring one or more local authorities in England to make arrangements for all or any of their functions within subsection (3) to be carried out on their behalf by—
    - (a) one of those authorities, or
    - (b) one or more other adoption agencies.
  - 2) A direction under subsection (1) may, in particular—
    - (a) specify who is to carry out the functions, or
    - (b) require the local authority or authorities to determine who is to carry out the functions.
  - 3) The functions mentioned in subsection (1) are functions in relation to—

- (a) the recruitment of persons as prospective adopters;
  - (b) the assessment of prospective adopters' suitability to adopt a child;
  - (c) the approval of prospective adopters as suitable to adopt a child;
  - (d) decisions as to whether a particular child should be placed for adoption with a particular prospective adopter;
  - (e) the provision of adoption support services.
- 4) The Secretary of State may give a direction requiring a local authority in England to terminate arrangements made in accordance with a direction under subsection (1).
- 5) A direction under this section may make different provision for different purposes.
- 6) The Secretary of State may by regulations amend subsection (3)

### **Human Resources Implications**

56. HR implications are summarised under the 'Human resources implications (staffing, organisational structure, employee transfer and pensions)' section above
57. If the decision is made to set up a Local Authority Trading Company then appropriate staff consultation and application of the workforce change procedure will follow. There are clear potential Human Resources implications for staff in relation to their employer, location and type of work, which will be addressed in future reports and processes as the project progresses. Relevant staff who perform adoption duties may transfer to the employment of that entity under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations. It is also possible to agree a secondment of staff to the new organisation and retain them on their existing terms and conditions, employed directly by their current Local Authority. If TUPE applies, appropriate advice will need to be sought by the new entity in relation to pension scheme considerations.
58. As the transferring employees who would transfer under TUPE from the LAs to the Local Authority Trading Company are going to be members of or entitled to join the LGPS, the LAs will be obliged to ensure that when their employment transfers to the Local Authority Trading Company, appropriate 'pension protection' is provided for them. It is anticipated that this would therefore be a case of the Local Authority Trading Company also participating in the LGPS to allow the transferring employees to continue with their membership of entitlement to join following the transfer. Issues which the LAs would need to consider include:
- whether the Local Authority Trading Company would participate in only one of the relevant LGPS Pension Funds or whether it participated in all of the relevant LGPS Pension Funds;
  - whether future staff employed by the Local Authority Trading Company were:
    - going to be provided with membership of the LGPS; or



- going to be provided with membership of an alternative pension arrangement which satisfies the requirements to be a 'qualifying scheme' in order to comply with auto enrolment requirements.;
- where future staff employed by the Local Authority Trading Company are to be provided with membership of the LGPS, depending on the Local Authority Trading Company's participation arrangements in the LGPS, which of the relevant LGPS Pension Funds those future staff participate in.

### **Environmental Implications**

59. The proposals are intended to provide sustainable long term solutions and environmental considerations will be factored into specific proposals relating to service delivery changes. There are no perceived explicitly environmental implications arising directly from this report.

### **Social Implications**

60. There are significant social implications arising from the successful implementation of the Regional Adoption Agency. Positive outcomes for looked after children, and specifically improvements in adoption and permanence services, are more likely to result in positive contributions to society. Timely and successful adoption / permanence solutions are important and can have far reaching consequences particularly in terms of the social impact on the lives of children, young people and their families.

### **Economic Implications**

61. Whilst there are no direct economic implications arising from this report or its recommendation, a thriving local market of voluntary adoption service providers is central to the development of the regional adoption agency and improved outcomes for service users.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

62. There are significant safeguarding implications in the transfer of adoption services from the Council to Adoption West. Adoption West will be required to register with Ofsted as a Voluntary Adoption Agency and in doing so will need to demonstrate that it is fit for purpose. This will include examination of the safeguards in place to protect children adopted through the service.
63. The member councils will agree a suite of key performance indicators against which Adoption West will be expected to report. These will include a range of indicators that will enable member councils to monitor the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in place.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

64. Actions included in this report target support for the most vulnerable young people and therefore will have a positive impact on equalities. Research and

data analysis has been undertaken to identify and agree actions to address potential equality impacts for service users and staff and the project will continue to explore and address equality impacts throughout the life of the project.

65. The implementation plans specifically aim to ensure that the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are complied with and all public bodies involved in the project are subject to the public sector equality duties, as will the new organisation. The project will continue to consider how the equality duties will be actioned by the new organisation.
66. Equalities considerations and monitoring is an integrated part of our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy process to help promote equality and discharge our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. Relevant information from these strategic processes informs the equality impact assessment (**Appendix 7**) for this project which is shared with decision makers to ensure they have adequate information prior to the final decision.
67. The data analysis includes results by protected characteristics to ensure that the actions outlined in this report are targeted to those areas that require it the most. Ongoing service user consultation and monitoring of equality impacts will inform the design of the project and result in specific actions to address any identified issues.
68. Overall, this work has the potential to significantly progress equality of opportunity and advance equality for all groups of vulnerable young people across the region through the identification of inequalities and clear action planning to address these, thus advancing equality of opportunity for all.

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

69. An initial Privacy Impact Assessment has been conducted and will be developed as part of a process which assists the council in identifying, minimising and addressing the privacy and information risks associated with any new initiative.

### **Risks, Mitigations & Opportunities**

70. A risk register is maintained as part of regular project management practice with mitigating actions identified to ensure the likelihood and impact of risks is managed proactively. Key risks identified include
  - **Risk:** Disruption during the period of transition and managers/staff becoming focussed on the change process rather than service delivery may lead to delays in plans for children. **Mitigation:** Thorough and effective transition planning agreed with service managers and flexibility to enable service delivery priorities to be managed. Plans to temporarily reduce the workload on adoption managers and staff, thereby enabling them to maintain direct service provision while in transition.
  - **Risk:** Adopters may lose confidence during the change process resulting in the potential for fractured relationships and breakdown in

service delivery **Mitigation:** Communications planning and involvement of adopters throughout the process. Adopter forums and newsletters disseminating information and gathering feedback. Service monitoring during transition to ensure no impact on service delivery.

- **Risk:** ICT system change may impact on service information, governance and records. Potential impacts include loss of personal information, delays in processes, safeguarding risk and cost of information security failures, undermining confidence in the new service and reputational damage. **Mitigation:** ICT lead officers involvement and collaboration in planning and developing appropriate solutions. Detailed information gathering and analysis prior to service implementation will reduce potential confusion and error. Privacy Impact Assessment process to identify, minimise and address the privacy risks associated with the transition and any changes to information governance.
- **Risk:** Potential for fragmentation and loss of good working relationships with child care teams in authorities, and disrupted links with health, education and other services. **Mitigation:** Engagement of child care teams in the project and specific input into service specification and process changes to ensure links are maintained. Engagement with all partner agencies, service providers and child care services will be needed to include them in the service plans and ensure robust systems are in place to maintain ongoing relationships into the future.
- **Risk:** Set up and running costs may be underestimated leading to unforeseen liabilities for partners and/or the new RAA. **Mitigation:** Financial analysis and modelling involving expert advice is included in the financial and transition plans. Sufficient time will be allocated to these activities and engagement of all partners in agreeing proposals to ensure estimates are understood by all and are as accurate as possible.

## RECOMMENDATION

71. That the [Cabinet/Committee] approve proposals for the establishment of the Adoption West Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) as outlined in this report and delegate authority for approving the detailed implementation plans, including financial, contractual and legal agreements to the [Director for Children's Services] subject to council policies and procedures.
72. Final approval will be subject to [Section 151 Officer, Head of Legal Services, and relevant elected member] sign off of [a fully costed business case, members' agreement, articles of association, commissioning contract, support services agreement, and licenses for premises].

Report Author:

(Name, title and contact details)

(Date of report)

### **Departmental Contact**

Terence Herbert, Associate Director Operational Children's Services

]

### **Background Papers**

Adoption West [Committee/Cabinet] Report ([June/July/September 2016])

Regionalising Adoption (June 2015) DfE

Adoption: A vision for change (March 2016) DfE

The Education and Adoption Act 2016

Adoption and Children Act 2002

### **Appendices**

1. Summary options appraisal and approved delivery model option
2. Outline service specification and practice definition
3. Service user engagement feedback summary
4. Draft Heads of Terms for the Members' Agreement and Commissioning Agreement
5. Governance arrangements
6. Service design model
7. Equality Impact Assessment
8. Staff establishment summary
9. Outline current combined budget for LAs services in scope
10. Outline future RAA budget
11. Adoption West Project plan

**APPENDIX 1** - Summary of strengths and weaknesses of the various delivery model options considered by each LA and agreed by Cabinets / Committees summer 2016 (option 2 agreed)

<b>Option</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Option1 - Hosted by a single LA on behalf of a number of LAs (Single LA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Easier to implement as utilising existing infrastructure</li><li>• Reduced impact on staff change</li><li>• Lower service risk during transition</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weaker engagement of VAAs</li><li>• Limited potential for culture change</li><li>• More likely to adopt processes of host rather than best practice of all partners and beyond</li><li>• One LA takes majority of risk and workload to transition</li></ul>

Option	Strengths	Weaknesses
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One LA takes on staff</li> <li>• Requires a willing lead LA</li> <li>• Requires other LAs to accept lead LA</li> </ul>
<p>Option 2 - Joint Venture between LAs – a new public sector owned entity E.G. Local Authority Company Limited by Guarantee <b><u>AGREED</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-designed processes and structures to improve quality and achieve outcomes</li> <li>• Opportunity for new identity and innovation</li> <li>• Leaner / more efficient operational delivery</li> <li>• Favourable procurement / tax position</li> <li>• Scope to include VAAs</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More complex transition than option 1, however could utilise LAs' infrastructure</li> <li>• Subject to greater financial control than option 3 (public sector finance regulations)</li> <li>• VAA involvement limited (but VAA desired outcomes achievable)</li> </ul>
<p>Option 3 - Creation of a new VAA – possibly a joint venture (e.g. Flexibility for public &amp; third sector ownership)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially stronger platform for innovation working integrally with VAA</li> <li>• VAA involvement and risk sharing</li> <li>• Financial freedoms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement and tax implications – increased cost</li> <li>• Complex / higher risk transition</li> <li>• Reduced protection for staff as external</li> <li>• Requires VAAs to invest in Joint Venture</li> <li>• VAA to accept staff/pension liabilities</li> </ul>

DRAFT

## APPENDIX 2 - Outline service specification and practice definition

### DRAFT REGIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE SPECIFICATION

#### 1. Background:

- 1.1 This schedule sets out the vision, objectives and details of roles and responsibilities to be fulfilled under this agreement by the Regional Adoption Agency and Local Authorities.

#### 2. An Integrated Adoption Service – the Vision

- 2.1 The local authorities in the partnership wish to build on the success of their existing services to improve performance in meeting the needs of those children who require permanence through adoption. This will be achieved by bringing together the best practice from each authority into an Integrated Service. Entering into a Regional Adoption Agency will allow the local authorities to provide a more cohesive, efficient and effective use of resources and development of practice.
- 2.2 All partners are agreed that collaboration should be underpinned by two guiding principles;
- a. That looked after children and prospective adopters are advantaged by doing so and
  - b. That a regional adoption service is demonstrably more efficient and flexible in delivering the service.
- 2.3 All partners share the ambition to improve performance particularly;
- a. In reducing the time that children have to wait for adoptive placements
  - b. In improving the experience for prospective adopters from initial inquiry, through the assessment process, panel approval and placement matching and the delivery of post adoption support services.
- 2.4 All partners agree that the joint aim is to improve the adoption system for children and adopters, and that this will involve systemic and cultural changes within local authorities, as well as the development of the RAA. The RAA in isolation will only be able to effect limited change making effective partnership working between RAA and LA staff critical.

#### 3. Key Objectives

- 3.1 The key objectives shared jointly by the RAA and partnering local authorities are
- a. To provide children with the right adopters at the right time, approving those equipped to meet the needs of children waiting.
  - b. To minimise changes of plan away from adoption
  - c. To reduce delay and improve timescales for matching and placement for all children – working with care planning processes in each LA to improve early identification / twin track planning and to achieve best practise and consistency across the region.
  - d. To improve earlier permanency planning using:
    - i. Concurrent Planning
    - ii. Fostering for Adoption
  - e. To take innovative approaches to placing ‘hard to place’ children. e.g.

- i. Linking children with adopters from enquiry stage onwards where appropriate
    - ii. Thoroughly preparing child and family for placement
  - f. To reduce the likelihood of placement breakdown through timely and improved matching, preparation and adoption support.
    - i. Providing a range of pre and post adoption support and intermediary services in conjunction with statutory and voluntary sector providers
    - ii. Establishing effective working links with key partnership agencies (e.g. schools and health providers)
  - g. To form strong and productive partnerships with:
    - i. Adopters
    - ii. Adoptees
    - iii. Voluntary sector providers
    - iv. Health and education
  - h. To ensuring that customer feedback and the views of service users are obtained and considered in the development and future operation of the service
- 3.2 All activity in the RAA will ensure compliance with requirements set by legislation, regulation, national minimum standards and local procedures. The RAA will operate under an agreed performance management framework, will be subject to inspection and auditing bodies, and will work closely with the National Adoption Leadership Board.
- 3.3 In the longer term it is anticipated that the new agency will, dependent upon agreed resourcing, extend its offer to support wider permanence options for children including Special Guardianship Orders.
- 3.4 The DfE have made it clear that they wish to see Voluntary Adoption Agencies and Adoption Support Agencies as integral partners in the regional agencies. Action for Children, After Adoption, CCS Adoption, The Centre for Adoption Support and Education, and Adoption UK are invited to join the partnership. The relationship with voluntary agencies will be set out in a memorandum of understanding and separate commissioning arrangements to sit outside this agreement.

#### **4. Outline specification of services and responsibilities**

- 4.1 The provision of adoption services is acknowledged to be the function of a complex system involving a number of agencies. Each part of the system has to play its own role and to work collaboratively with the others in order to deliver positive outcomes for children. The following table sets out the respective responsibilities of each agency under this agreement.
- 4.2 The Adoption and Children Act (2002) places a statutory requirement on each participating Authority and, therefore, the Integrated Service, to:
- a. Recruit, assess and support potential prospective adopters

- b. Work in partnership with the child's social worker in seeking a permanent placement for the child through adoption
- c. Assess, support and plan for children who are relinquished by their birth parents
- d. Assess, support and plan for children who have a parallel plan for adoption
- e. Assess and support parent/partner and family relatives who wish to adopt a child
- f. Assess and support those adults who are seeking to adopt from another country (inter-country adoptions)
- g. Provide counselling advice and information to adopted adults post 18.
- h. Provide Independent support to birth parents involved in proceedings.
- i. Manage and support Adoption Panels which make recommendations to approve prospective adopters and on the matching of individual children to adopters
- j. Provide professional advice on best practice and regulations to agency decision makers
- k. Provide a quality assurance role across the Integrated Service

## **5. Service collaboration and rationale**

5.1 Adoption West, formed as a local authority controlled company limited by guarantee will be commissioned to deliver the new Integrated Service and will bring together the adoption services of the following authorities:

- a. Bath and North East Somerset Council
- b. Bristol Council
- c. Gloucestershire County Council
- d. North Somerset Council
- e. South Gloucestershire Council
- f. Wiltshire Council

5.2 The following legislation forms the legal framework within which the new service will operate:

- a. Local Government Act 1972
- b. Children Act 1989
- c. Adoption (inter-country Aspects) Act 1999
- d. Adoption & Children Act 2002
- e. Children and Adoption Act 2006



f. Education and Adoption Act 2016

5.3 The legislation above is supported by the following guidance within which the new service will operate:

- a. Statutory instruments 2005 no. 389, children and young persons, England social care, England; The adoption agencies regulations 2005 as amended by Statutory Instruments 2013 No. 985, Children And Young Persons, England, The Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- b. Statutory Guidance on Adoption for local authorities, voluntary adoption agencies and adoption support agencies July 2013
- c. Adoption: national minimum standards July 2014
- d. Early permanence placements and approval of prospective adopters as foster carers; Statutory guidance for local authorities and adoption agencies July 2014

## **6. Eligibility criteria**

6.1 The Integrated Service will be responsible for providing a service to:

- a. Children who require adoption
- b. Adults who wish to adopt
- c. All adoptive families living in the region eligible for adoption support
- d. Adopted adults
- e. Facilitate contact between adoptive and birth family members
- f. Birth parents and former guardians eligible for adoption support
- g. Independent support to birth parents who risk losing their child to adoption

6.2 Aspects of these services may be externally commissioned.

## **7. Service delivery**

7.1 The Integrated Service will operate on a full time basis providing core services flexibly, as required by the needs of services users.

7.2 The Integrated Service will at all times, maintain a volume of service that is sufficient to fulfil all of its statutory duties as an adoption agency, as well as any specific requirements, targets and outcomes of this specification.

- 7.3 The Integrated Service will at all times maintain an appropriately qualified and skilled workforce that is sufficient to fulfil all of its statutory duties as an adoption agency, as well as any specific requirements, targets and outcomes of this specification.
- 7.4 The Integrated Service will have in place a detailed contingency plan to deal with workforce absence caused by planned leave, sickness and vacancies that is cost effective and causes minimum disruption to service delivery.
- 7.5 The Integrated Service will at all times comply with safe employment practice including statutory background checks, confirmation of identity, confirmation of entitlement to work in the UK, disclosure and barring checks, employment and personal references.
- 7.6 The Integrated Service will at all times put the needs of users at the heart of service delivery and maintain a system that ensures their involvement in service design and delivery, as well as decision making.
- 7.7 The Integrated Service will at all times maintain a system for the management of complaints and representations that complies with minimum standards for timeliness, transparency and information sharing.
- 7.8 The Integrated Service will at all times maintain a system for data protection and handling that complies with the Data Protection Act, as amended from time to time.

## **8. Performance measures**

- 8.1 Building on the key objectives of the Regional Adoption Agency, set out in section 3, the Integrated Service will develop a performance management framework and comply with the key performance indicators set and report upon performance in relation to these indicators to the Management Board of the RAA, the Adoption Leadership board and any other statutory body as required.
- 8.2 The performance management framework will include quantitative indicators which will allow performance on the above outcomes to be measured.
- 8.3 The performance management framework will also include qualitative feedback from adopters, service users and key professionals who have contact with the agency.
- 8.4 Additionally, regional good practice standards will be developed to clarify service expectations, measure outcomes and ensure that services provide good value for money.

## **9. Outcomes**

- 9.1 Outcomes in adoption have traditionally focussed on placement disruption and breakdown. The data collected is usually quantitative rather than qualitative. To ensure a culture of continuous improvement the new agency will move the focus of evaluation from outputs to outcomes by implementing a review system so that learning from disruptions and breakdowns is captured. This learning will then be used to develop a greater understanding of the factors which present a risk to placement outcomes.

## **10. Contract monitoring**

- 10.1 The Integrated Service will provide quarterly data submissions and associated reports to the Management Board. Additionally, in accordance with the terms of reference of the Management Board, the Integrated Service will be responsible for conducting an annual review of the quality of the service it provides. Mechanisms to monitor the quality and outcomes of the service will include:
- a. Effective line management, supervision, support and training of staff employed by the service
  - b. A set of regional policies, procedures and practice standards
  - c. A range of methods to obtain feedback on the functioning of the regional service from service users, local authorities and other stakeholders
  - d. Systems to audit the performance of the service against performance indicators and compliance with legislation and standards;
  - e. A system to monitor and manage complaints against the service

## **11. Ofsted inspection**

- 11.1 The RAA will comply with whatever inspection regime is in place from the start of the operational period.

## **12. Detailed division of roles and responsibilities in the new agency.**

- 12.1 Recognising the successful delivery of the new service will be dependent on a high level of joint working between LAs and the RAA, table 1 below breaks down the respective roles and responsibilities identifying where the agencies will have to collaborate in the best interests of children

## **13. Summary of proposed service provision, improvements and performance evaluation**

- 13.1 An outline of proposed service provision, improvements and performance evaluation is summarised in table 2 below.

## TABLE 1 – DIVISION OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1.1 THE CHILD

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
<b>Case Responsibility</b>	<p>The local authority will retain case management responsibility for the child until the making of the Adoption Order.</p> <p>The local authority will be responsible for all statutory functions including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory Visits</li> <li>• Management and supervision of contact between child and family members.</li> <li>• Supervision, administration and finance of foster placements and communication with foster carers (including Fostering for Adoption placements).</li> </ul>	<p>The RAA will provide specialist advice and support to assist LA staff to fully understand the adoption process, influencing and promoting best practice.</p>	
<b>Early identification of children requiring adoption</b>	<p>The local authority is responsible for identifying, at the earliest possible stage, the children who may require adoption and making them and their needs known to the RAA, providing relevant and timely information. The RAA aims to develop working practices with each LA to ensure close involvement in care planning in order to assist with the earliest identification and to provide external challenge.</p>	<p>The RAA will allocate a Family Finder to each child identified as possibly requiring adoption. Staff from the RAA will be involved in identifying children for early placement.</p> <p>Representatives of the RAA will be able to attend meetings in each local authority (such as legal planning meetings, looked after review meetings, care planning meetings etc) to better understand the needs of the children who may require adoption and, where appropriate, to begin</p>	<p>Detail for each LA to be developed in conjunction with care planning leads. The RAA will be asking for permission for the automatic right to attend these meetings.</p>

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
		to identify suitable adopters at an early stage.	
<b>Early Placement</b>		Where appropriate, and in agreement with the local authority, the RAA will make available a Concurrent Planning Service and a Fostering For Adoption Service for children who may benefit from the possibility of early placement with potential adopters. (Placements will depend on the availability of appropriate carers)	The fostering element of an FFA service will remain the responsibility of each LA. The LA will be responsible for supporting foster carers
<b>Twin Tracking of the children requiring adoption</b>	The local authority will track the progress of children in care proceedings or looked after under section 20 (Children Act 1989) so as to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of their potential need for an adoption placement	The RAA will also actively track all children who may require a plan for adoption or for whom initial information indicates that adoption may be required	
<b>Pre-placement Reports</b>	The LA will be responsible for the completion and cost of all reports prior to an adoption placement being made including Child Placement Reports.	The RAA will advise on and support the completion of the Child placement report and early profile of the child. The RAA will provide support and challenge to help ensure that CPRs are of a consistent high quality across partnership LAs. The RAA will be responsible for the early and any subsequent profile of the child (even before the CPR is compiled) & in identifying early matching considerations. This will include taking into account information and advice from post adoption support services on the potential needs of the child/ren once placed, and potential sources of future support. The RAA will	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
		also provide support to undertake more specialist assessments e.g. sibling assessments.	
<b>Assessment of needs</b>	The local authority will be responsible for assessing the child's needs in respect of a future placement and in ensuring that any required financial support for a future adoptive placement is available.	The RAA will provide additional information and advice on the placement needs of the child and the likely need for post adoption support services. It will be necessary for the RAA and LAA to work closely and collaboratively to ensure that the needs of the child can be met and that planned support is sustainable.	
<b>Medical Information</b>	The Local Authority will be responsible for obtaining all required medical information in respect of children who are being considered for adoption and ensuring all health assessments are completed within agreed timeframes		
<b>SHOBPA decision</b>	The Agency Decision Maker in each LA will be responsible for the 'Should be placed for adoption' decision. The LA will undertake a regular review of this decision and associated plans and keep the family finder in the RAA informed of changes.	The RAA will support the SHOBPA decision making process as requested, particularly in the provision of the above information. The RAA will need to give specific consideration to medical information in the identification of a possible match.	The RAA will have a quality assurance role in this process
<b>Family Finding Process</b>		The RAA will lead the tracking/family finding process in consultation with the local authority.	
<b>Communication during the family finding process</b>	It will be the responsibility of the LA to keep the CPR updated and to inform the family finder of any changes in the child's development or circumstances (e.g. change of placement).	A Family Finder will be allocated during the early stages of profiling and will keep a watching brief until it is clear that a SHOBPA decision will be made.	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
		The RAA will keep the LA regularly updated about progress on family finding.	
<b>‘Hard to Place’/Priority Children</b>	<p>The LA is responsible for identifying at the earliest opportunity where a child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aged four or over</li> <li>• From a BME heritage</li> <li>• Part of a sibling group of two or more</li> <li>• Has a disability or medical condition</li> </ul> <p>The LA will gather the relevant information, assess and forward to the RAA as soon as possible.</p>	<p>The RAA will either provide or commission a service for HTP children which may involve some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased publicity – DVD, Photos etc</li> <li>• Press and Digital Media advertising</li> <li>• Profile the child at specific events</li> <li>• Attempt to recruit carers specifically for the child</li> <li>• Provide additional training and preparation for potential carers</li> <li>• Advise on or assist with additional preparation work with the child.</li> </ul>	Some of these issues need addressing with each LA on a case by case basis.
<b>Note – It will be the aim of the RAA to identify a choice of potential adoptive matches for a child prior to the conclusion of Care Proceedings</b>			
<b>Preparation of the child</b>	<p>The LA will be responsible for preparing the child for an adoptive placement.</p> <p>The LA will be responsible for the preparation of the child’s Life story Book. This often needs to start early in the child’s looked after career and will contain information to which the LA has immediate access.</p> <p>The LA will be responsible for producing the Later Life Letter</p>	<p>The RAA will support the LA in the preparation of the child, particular in respect of the future placement.</p> <p>The RAA will develop or commission specific expertise in the preparation of children who are hard to place and who are being prepared using the a more ‘bespoke’ family finding model (see above)</p>	The RAA could compile life story books if resourced appropriately.
<b>Linking and Matching</b>	<p>The LA, by agreement, will meet the costs of introductions between children and carers.</p> <p>The LA will make the final decision regarding a</p>	The RAA will take lead responsibility for all aspects of the linking and matching process, but will always involve the LA in	

<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	suitable match and to place a child	the decision making process. The RAA will chair shortlisting, linking and formal matching meetings as part of the process.	
<b>CPR, DPR, APR, Matching panel</b>	The LA is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CPR</li> <li>• Delegation of Parental Responsibility report</li> </ul>	The RAA will be responsible for completing the Adoption Placement Report, apart from the section on the child. The RAA will organise the Matching Panel. .	
<b>MATCHING DECISIONS</b>	The Agency Decision Maker in each LA will be responsible for the Matching decision.	The RAA will support the process with information as required, including Panel Minutes	Panel and ADM meetings and processes will need to be closely co-ordinated to meet timescales and ensure all relevant information is available.
<b>ADOPTION ALLOWANCES</b>	Adoption allowances will be agreed and paid for by each LA. LAs will work towards a standardisation of adoption allowances policies regionally.		

## 1.2 ADOPTER RECRUITMENT

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Recruitment of adopters</b>	The LA will signpost any enquiries from potential adopters to the RAA. The LA will ensure that information relevant to potential adopters is included in its own marketing materials and on its website, clearly signposting potential adopters to the website of the RAA.	The RAA will be responsible for recruiting adopters appropriate to the needs of children waiting in each LA. Marketing information will reflect the fact that the RAA is delivering the service on behalf of partnering LAs.	
<b>Enquiries</b>		The RAA will provide a centralised	



	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
		enquiry process for the region to meet all statutory requirements. The RAA will provide written information to potential adopters and will hold a programme of information events. The RAA may signpost adopters to other agencies where they are not appropriate to the needs of the children which the RAA has waiting.	
<b>Stage One</b>	The LAs will provide all information required for statutory checks of potential adopters resident in the LA.	The RAA will undertake all Stage one functions	
<b>Stage Two</b>		The RAA will undertake all Stage Two functions	
<b>PAR</b>		The RAA will complete the Prospective Adopters Report (PAR)	
<b>Approvals</b>		The RAA will service the Adoption Panel. The RAA Agency Decision Maker will be responsible for all approvals	
<b>Post approval support and training</b>		The RAA will provide post approval support and training to approved adopters	

### **1.3 POST ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES**

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Adoption support plans</b>	The LA will consider funding requests for post adoption support services which are not included in	The RAA will provide or commission all adoption support services.	

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	the core offer. e.g. Therapeutic support	The RAA will undertake adoption support fund assessments and applications.	
<b>Referrals and safeguarding</b>	The LA will signpost all referrals for support from adoptive families to the RAA. Where a safeguarding referral is made to the LA the LA will conduct any appropriate section 47 enquiry and will allocate an LA Social Worker where thresholds are met, whilst simultaneously notifying the RAA of any referral involving an adopted child.		A referral pathway will be agreed. This will often involve CAMHS and other health services.
<b>Out-of-hours services</b>	All adopters will have access to the LA's Emergency Duty Team out of core hours.	The RAA will negotiate out of hours support for specific families where necessary subject to agreed LA funding.	
<b>Indirect / Letterbox contact</b>		The RAA will oversee Letterbox contact between adopted children and birth families.	
<b>Supervised &amp; Sibling Direct Contact</b>	Responsibility for direct contact requirements are to be decided based on analysis of current arrangements and RAA resourcing	Responsibility for direct contact requirements are to be decided based on analysis of current arrangements and RAA resourcing	
<b>Adoption allowances</b>	Adoption allowances will be paid for by each LA after undertaking the appropriate assessment.		
<b>Adoption Support Fund</b>	Depending on DfE guidance and potential alternative arrangements for administering the ASF, applications may have to be submitted by LAs	The RAA will be responsible for undertaking all assessments and funding applications to the Adoption Support Fund.	
<b>Access to Children's records and files</b>	LA to facilitate	RAA to provide / commission Birth Records Counselling	
<b>Therapeutic support to birth parent</b>		RAA to provide / commission	Legal requirement

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Birth parents support to prevent recurring proceedings</b>	TBC	TBC	
<b>Access to Adopter's records</b>	LA for historic cases	RAA for cases which it has managed	
<b>Intermediary Service to relatives of adopted person</b>	LA for historic cases	RAA for cases which it has managed	Relatives seeking information and contact with the adopted person

#### **1.4 SERVICE USER ENGAGEMENT**

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Adopters</b>		The RAA will engage with adopters individually and in groups with the aim of improving the services available	
<b>Adoptees</b>		The RAA will engage with adoptees individually and in groups with the aim of improving the services available	

#### **1.5 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & INSPECTION**

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Data provision</b>	Each LA will need to provide key data to the RAA on performance, as defined in the commissioning contract. Each LA to provide the RAA with data to enable the		

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	RAA to plan future recruitment and service provision and to set targets that will meet the needs of children with a plan for permanence.		
<b>Data analysis</b>		The RAA will produce a regular report to each LA on performance in a standard format. The schedule and format will be agreed by Board members.	
<b>OFSTED</b>	The future role of OFSTED in adoption is currently under review and future requirements are currently unclear.		

### **1.6 MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES**

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Service to step parents who wish to adopt		RAA to provide	
Intercountry adoptions		RAA to provide/Commission	

## TABLE 2 - SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SERVICE PROVISION, IMPROVEMENTS AND EVALUATION

### 2.1 Front door, Recruitment & Assessment

<b>Service provision and improvements</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RAA recruitment strategy will be prepared and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that recruitment of adopters is targeted on the children for whom the L/As are making adoption plans.</li> <li>• Extensive use of social media and on-line marketing, alongside more traditional advertising and promotional activity to ensure that there is wide coverage of the need for adoptive parents for a wide range of children.</li> <li>• Assessments of prospective adopters to be undertaken in a timely way to ensure that there is a sufficient pool of approved adopters to facilitate speedy matching, and that priority is given to those wishing to adopt children with additional needs or sibling groups.</li> <li>• Regular preparation training for prospective adopters to be provided to ensure that no delays occur in commencing/completing assessments. Use of in-house expertise to enhance training – DDP, Theraplay and Birth Relative support practitioners.</li> <li>• Post approval training to be provided to all applicants, with modules developed that can be delivered to other agencies with the potential to create an income stream.</li> <li>• Targeted recruitment activity focusing on Priority Children has been the core business of VAAs for many years and there is an opportunity to harness VAA expertise to achieve early placements for children.</li> <li>• VAA capacity to undertake priority assessments at short notice to be available.</li> <li>• Training could be commissioned from a VAA - either particular modules or complete training programmes to supplement those being provided by RAA staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Performance evaluation and monitoring</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA tracking systems, Permanence Co-ordination and IROs</li> <li>• Monitoring of source of all enquiries, and ensuring resources are targeted on the most successful approaches.</li> <li>• RAA case management system to track timescales on all assessments, with management oversight by Team Manager. Target Panel dates to be identified at the outset of all assessments, with flexibility to ‘fast-track’ assessments for children currently waiting. Additional capacity to be built in to Adoption Panel agendas to enable assessments to be considered promptly when they are completed.</li> <li>• Monitoring by Team Manager with additional training arranged as required. Training programmes to be regular evaluated by trainers, using service user feedback to ensure the content is relevant and appropriate.</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Child's journey and permanence planning

### Service provision and improvements

Better and more methodical early identification of children with likely adoption plans and early involvement of workers from Adoption West

- help to shape and target recruitment activity within Adoption West for individual children, and more generally by identifying trends in ages, family composition, level and type of need.
- allow for early identification of children for whom an Early Permanent (fostering to adopt) placement might be an option, to enable them to move to their permanent family at the earliest possible opportunity.
- ensure that the right level of direct work is undertaken with each child, dependent on their age and level of understanding, to help them to understand why they are in care, what needs to happen for decisions to be made about their future care, including a simplified explanation of the court process. The child's wishes and feelings about their current and future care can be ascertained as part of this process. Work on families can also be undertaken, to help the child to understand about different kinds of families- birth families, foster families and adoptive families. Also work to understand that families come in different shapes and sizes with a mum and a dad, two mums or two dads, or one mum or one dad. This can link back to the composition of the birth family, foster family or potential adoptive family. The direct work with the child is currently undertaken by the local authority child care social worker, who faces the competing and conflicting demands of tight court timetables and gathering evidence as to whether or not the birth family can safely care for the child, and undertaking the more planned and paced direct work essential to help prepare the child for a potential move to adoption. As a result, the direct work with the child is not always undertaken well, or in some cases at all, until the Placement Order is granted. This will be many months after a child first enters care, and when a child's anxieties and insecurities will be high. The better the child understands what is happening, the better prepared that he or she is for a move to their permanent family, and the greater chance of a successful transition and placement.
- enable work to be undertaken with foster carers and supervising social workers to ensure they are involved in and understand the family finding and matching process and time table, and the way transitions are managed. This will help them to support and manage the child's anxieties at this time.
- free up the local authority social worker to fully focus on the court work leading to the granting of a Placement Order.
- ensure that birth relatives have access to an independent worker from Adoption West from the point that adoption is the plan for their child, to provide them with support and to ensure that the fullest possible information about the birth family is gathered. This will help inform the Child Permanence Report, will help with family finding for the child and with the child's life story book. It will also potentially help to set the scene for future letterbox arrangements if the birth relatives are linked with Adoption West workers at this stage.

Supporting local authority childcare social workers

- Ensure more timely matching with support of focused family finding activity undertaken by specialist workers supporting LA social workers balancing the competing demands of child protection and court work as well as adoption work.

- Reduce delay in short listing potential families, arranging visits, completing paperwork for Adoption Panel for matching, and planning introductions. This is currently undertaken jointly with a local authority social worker, who is limited in availability by child protection work, court dates and deadlines.
- Provide continuity for the child, with the RAA worker undertaking the direct work with the child leading to the Placement Order continuing that work and also supporting the child through the matching process and introductions, through to placement and to Adoption Order.
- Continuity for birth relatives with a worker in Adoption West separate to the local authority social worker and already known to them.

#### Voluntary Adoption Agency involvement

- VAAs will continue to play an important part in providing families for children for whom Adoption West are responsible. VAA involvement on the Management Board will ensure that they have knowledge of and input to discussions about trends in the characteristics of children being referred to Adoption West to inform their recruitment strategy. They may be commissioned to recruit either a certain number of or type of placements each year for Adoption West.
- The level of support and type of adoption support services needed for any particular match is an important part of the matching and placement process. VAAs may also be in a position to offer specific practical or therapeutic support services for individual children and families post placement.

#### **Performance evaluation and monitoring**

- Tracking systems will be set up by Adoption West to monitor the journey of each child identified by the Permanence Coordinator as likely to have an adoption plan for permanence. These will monitor the progress of the child through the court and matching process through to placement and Adoption Order, and will be updated and monitored regularly in Adoption West team meetings and through supervision.
- These systems will enable Adoption West to provide the child's originating agency with data on an individual child's progress. Data will also be collected on disruptions prior to Adoption Order and children for whom an adoption placement is not achieved. Comparisons with performance prior to Adoption West going live is already available to measure performance against.
- Data across all aspects of adoption work is also collected and collated quarterly by the Adoption Leadership Board, with headline national trends identified alongside the availability of local data. It is anticipated that this will continue once Regional Adoption Agencies are set up. This will enable comparisons with national performance and trends.
- Reporting mechanisms back from Adoption West into each local authority for oversight and scrutiny by elected members every 6 months will also be set up, incorporating all of the data available.

## 2.3 Matching and Placement

### Service provision and improvements

- Early identification of children through the Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser role and advantages in combining the 2 functions in that role.
- Early linking of the RAA worker to prepare the child and start the family finding at the earliest possible point, also creating opportunities to identify children for whom an Early Permanent (concurrency & fostering for adoption) placement might be appropriate.
- Wider choice of prospective adopters from the RAA through more targeted recruitment
- Improved timescales for short listing and visiting potential families, improved standard of CPRs, and other reports for prospective adopters, Adoption Panel and ADM, as the RAA worker will have the expertise and be dedicated to the adoption process.
- Improved support plans due to the early involvement of the RAA
- VAA involvement on the Management Board
- Potential commissioning of assessments for harder to place children from VAAs or spot purchase

### Performance evaluation and monitoring

- RAA tracking systems
- Internal management scrutiny and oversight within the RAA
- IRO involvement in statutory reviews, QA and monitoring for each child
- Reporting mechanisms back into the LA about individual children, and overview and scrutiny by elected members
- Quarterly data submitted to the ALB



## 2.4 Adoption Support

### Service provision and improvements

#### Assessment for adoption support

- Specialist transitions work
- Comprehensive support to placements
- Comprehensive information about adoption support services made available through varied formats, including detailed information online
- Better promotion of adoption support services
- Rapid response team focused on timely response to advice and information requests
- Building on established working relationships with other agencies (e.g. LAs, CAMHS, Out of Hours) in particular in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation, missing children and safeguarding
- Maintaining contact for adoptive families (If desired) following the making the adoption order
- Development of 'buddy' services for adopters
- Provision of Independent Social Work services subject to agency capacity.

#### Adoption support planning, delivery and review

- Establishment of multi-agency specialist teams (including social workers, psychologists, educationalist and specialist trained adoption support practitioners) providing access to 'in house' specialist services for all adopters across all RAAs.
- Locally delivered specialist services, creating efficiencies in service delivery
- Provision of a menu of services to other agencies including therapy services, training (e.g. to schools) to enable the service to grow and develop.

#### Specialist areas of Adoption Support

- Economies of scale are expected to enable the provision of regular and additional training and support groups for all relevant parties involved in adoption
- Centre of excellence for the provision of cost effective specialist training
- Development of core training menu to adopters
- Providing a more accessible service across the region building on current good practice delivered by the VAA to two of the LAs
- Dedicated Post Adoption Central Support works to provide comprehensive contact service

- Development of a comprehensive contact service to LAs.

For all stages

- Building on good practice
- Offer training opportunities to students undertaking professional training
- Investment in staff to provide career satisfaction and stability of team membership
- ICT systems that enable the appropriate sharing of information to prevent duplication and delay and to ensure the most appropriate services are offered.

VAA involvement

- VAA involvement in the provision of specific adoption support services
- Integration of VAA staff with specialist adoption support skills / training, e.g. through secondment

### **Performance evaluation and monitoring**

- Reviews of Adoption Support Plans
- Operational performance measures including monitoring of waiting times for services where applicable and disruption rates
- Commissioning contract KPIs
- Regulatory inspections
- Service user feedback
- Increased demand for services
- Supervision and evaluation of 'associate' providers and commissioned services

## APPENDIX 3 - Service user engagement feedback summary



### RAA Service Development - Service User Engagement and Feedback Summary

#### Purpose

1. This document provides a summary of engagement and feedback received from adopters, adopted children, birth families, practitioners and other stakeholders with an interest in the development of a regional adoption agency.

#### Background

2. Given the reconfiguration of adoption services is a requirement of government policy, formal public consultation on whether to proceed was deemed to be of limited value. Due to the specialist nature of the service, targeted engagement with service users regarding how the re-configured service should be delivered was considered to be the most appropriate course of action.

#### Summary

3. Engagement and feedback from a broad range of stakeholders has been invaluable in shaping service design. Adopters have been passionate in expressing their views and are constructively engaged at various levels highlighting priorities and areas for improvement. The Adopter Voice programme is actively engaging 154 individuals in the Adoption West region, over 20 adopters have provided detailed input through face to face forums and working groups, 8 birth families have provided their feedback, and survey responses have been considered from over 350 adoptive families.
4. Key focus areas for adopters include the range and quality of adoption support, professionalism of staff, clarity of process and information sharing. Adopters consistently highlight the importance of support services to meet the needs of adoptive families and sustain placements. Identified benefits of regionally delivered adoption support services include greater flexibility and accessibility for certain services, joint commissioning opportunities, learning and experience sharing, strengthened peer to peer support, and a range of more efficient delivery options. Other areas highlighted by adopters include the assessment process where there are opportunities for increased adopter involvement, improved availability of training and a focus on adopter choice. The 'Adoptables' peer network of adopted young people has engaged a small group to gather views on what works, what doesn't work so well and how decision-makers can improve service, including how best to support adopted young people at school. Birth families have highlighted barriers to accessing services, issues around contact, life story work and information sharing and potential opportunities for improved support.

## Methods

5. Outline proposals for the development of plans to create a regional adoption agency and engage with stakeholders were approved by local authority political decision-making groups in the summer of 2016. A range of focused activity has been undertaken and continues to engage stakeholders to gather views and incorporate feedback into the design of the new service.
6. Engagement has included:
  - a. Adopter forums led by Adoption UK have been held across the region to explore specific aspects of service provision and the potential impacts of regionalisation. National feedback collected through the Adopter Voice programme has also been incorporated into service design. Over 20 adopters have engaged through forum events around the region and more events are planned.
  - b. A detailed survey of all aspects of current provision inviting views on how these services may be affected and improved by a move to a regional adoption agency. The survey was shared with all adopters on local authority and voluntary agency contact lists and was facilitated by Adoption UK. This survey built on insight from a more comprehensive survey analysis of adoption support completed earlier in the year.
  - c. Adopters are active members of a number of service development working groups and adopter champions are being recruited to provide ongoing input into detailed service design and delivery.
  - d. The 'Adoptables' programme facilitated by Coram and locally by CCS Adoption has also gathered views of adopted young people. Two events have been held and future engagement of adopted children and young people are planned.
  - e. Birth parent engagement has been facilitated by After Adoption through a range of appropriate methods, including surveys/follow up discussions and summary reports produced to inform service design.
  - f. Each local authority continues to gather regular feedback on the adoption services they provide and this will be incorporated into future service provision.
  - g. An adopter newsletter has provided updates to adopters of developments with the creation of a regional adoption agency.
  - h. Practitioners have been communicated with throughout the process by their team managers, team meeting updates, monthly newsletters, practitioner engagement events and involvement in practice development working groups.
  - i. Partners and wider stakeholder groups including voluntary adoption agencies adoption support agencies, related health service practitioners and commissioners, education services, panel members have all been engaged through core project activity to develop proposals and will continue to be involved in service design.

## Findings

7. Adopter Surveys:
  - a. According to a recent survey of our adopters, conducted September to October 2016, services provided were rated as very good or good by 38%, satisfactory by 32%, and poor or very poor by 30% of respondents.

Average rating for current adoption services	
Very Good	6%
Good	32%
Satisfactory	32%
Poor	21%
Very Poor	9%

- b. The range and quality of support services are clearly ranked as the most important aspects of an adoption agency. Furthermore, 50% of adopters rate the range and quality of support as poor or very poor, the most negative rating for any of the services that were asked about.
  - c. Key findings of a comprehensive survey of adoption support highlight the 'excellent knowledge, experience, commitment and support of individual allocated social workers and the quality of training and information'. However, significant weaknesses in provision are also highlighted, including:
    - 54% had not received an adoption support plan prior to placement
    - 31% had not received a life story book
    - 45% had not received a later life letter
    - 49% had not received all the support they required and 11% any of the help required
  - d. The survey also highlights that 83% of respondents had required post adoption support. Over half of the adopters had sought help with their children's behavioural and/or emotional issues and 43% had requested educational support for their adopted children.
8. Adopter Forums and project working group involvement:
- a. Clear information should be available at the front door (to explain the process and inform choice)
  - b. The Front door should also facilitate direct access to support (specialist workers, information and services)
  - c. Social workers and information should be open and honest up front so Adopters know what is expected of them
  - d. Consistency, reliability and professionalism of social workers is highly valued
  - e. Appreciation of individual circumstances, flexibility and adopter choice is important
  - f. Adoptive parents' involvement and specialist input should be provided during prospective adopters' preparation
  - g. The quality of Life Story work, later in life letters and contact should be improved
  - h. Panels are deemed to be costly and of limited added value to the process of assessment and matching
  - i. Developing the model of peer to peer support will be cost-effective and highly valued by adopters
  - j. Improved access to training for adopters and staff should be a priority
  - k. The link between local authority children teams and the regional adoption agency is essential
  - l. Support planning and resourcing should be based on an assumption of need
  - m. RAA s provide a good opportunity to improve data collection, analysis and action to support adopted children, young people and their families (through joined up cross-agency responses)
9. Birth Family survey and focus groups:
- a. Barriers to access include lack of knowledge about the service, not being told of the service at a time that they want to engage, not being given the right information about what the service offers.
  - b. Aspects of the service that are particularly valued include independence of the Service from Children's Services and the worker making a 'connection' with the birth parent
  - c. Issue identified with the inconsistency in information given to birth parents in the forms it is given and when
  - d. Many birth mothers struggled with the number of professionals involved as well as the changeover of staff and reported a sense of not feeling understood, valued or supported

- e. Inconsistency in how Social Workers collect life story information and while the majority of birth parents were clear that they had been asked for and had given information about their children they are often unclear about what happens to this information and what the purpose of giving this information is.
- f. Birth parents report a lot of difficulties in establishing what contact arrangements are post Adoption and highlight cases where contact should have been arranged but hasn't.

10. Practitioner engagement:

- a. Adoption teams have input into the development of the regional adoption agency through engagement with colleagues involved in project groups, direct involvement in practice development work groups, feedback through team meetings and wider stakeholder events.
- b. Staff feedback on specific proposals will also be incorporated into service design through formal staff consultation. Key opportunities identified by staff include developing consistent good practice approaches regionally, pooling of resources and joining up central functions, better accessibility and range of services for service users.
- c. Initial feedback on outline proposals for the reconfigured services has been positive while also highlighting the challenges to embed more flexible working, maintain links with local authority services and achieve positive organisational culture change

## **Future developments**

11. Learning from the experiences to date a number of the methods outlined above will continue to be used to test proposals and monitor feedback to ensure the quality of future service design and delivery. The project team and future management of the regional agency will also address current weaknesses in the areas of special guardian engagement, adult adoptees and continue to consider methods for gathering feedback from children and young people.

12. Specific planned future activities include:

- a. Repeat surveys to monitor changing perceptions / attitudes and assessment of services
- b. Specific polls on key subjects
- c. Follow up engagement with adopted children and young people – building on 'adoptables' events
- d. Social media engagement
- e. Further adopter forums planned
- f. Online forum development
- g. Regional agency website development
- h. Consolidated adopter contact list to facilitate standardised / consistent direct communications
- i. Special Guardianship engagement activity

13. The project and new agency once established will continue to engage proactively with all stakeholders and incorporate their views into the continuous development of high quality services.

## APPENDIX 4 - Draft Heads of Terms for the Members' Agreement and Commissioning Agreement

Bevan Brittan  | Lawyers for the public,  
private and third sectors

### Adoption West Regional Adoption Agency

#### Heads of Terms

v.5 08.03.2017

## 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The parties to the proposed **Adoption West Regional Adoption Agency ("RAA")** are proposing a corporate joint venture between the local authorities which will operate as the RAA.
- 1.2 These heads of terms represent the key commercial terms for the RAA structure. The intention is that once agreed the Heads of Terms provide an agreed common basis for the detailed documentation to be prepared. These heads of terms are not exhaustive or intended to be legally binding and the parties only intend to be legally bound to one another when they enter into formal contracts for that purpose.

## 2 DOCUMENTATION

- 2.1 The RAA will be based around the following principal documentation:
  - 2.1.1 members' agreement;
  - 2.1.2 articles of association;
  - 2.1.3 commissioning agreement;
  - 2.1.4 support services agreements;
  - 2.1.5 facility agreement for working capital;
  - 2.1.6 licences for access to premises.

## 3 MEMBERS' AGREEMENT

- 3.1 The members' agreement will set the rights of the authorities as members of the company and the obligations of the company to the authorities in their member capacity.
- 3.2 Each local authority member and the RAA will be required to sign up to the Members Agreement<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.3 Any new member will be required to enter a deed of adherence agreeing to be subject to the Member's Agreement)
- 3.4 The main terms will include:
  - 3.4.1 **Board Composition** – the board will have a minimum number of [6] and a maximum of [12], including.

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<sup>1</sup> It is not proposed that any VAA has a role as a member, i.e. owner of the company.

- (a) Each authority will have a right to appoint [1] director with the potential for multiple authorities to be represented by a single individual where agreed by all parties. Appointees from the authorities will be officers;
  - (b) [1] VAA representative(s) appointed to the board;
  - (c) [2] executive directors on the board;
  - (d) [1] front line staff representatives;
- 3.4.2 **Quorum** - The quorum for meetings will be [4] including all of the authority representatives.
- 3.4.3 **Remit of the Board** – the board will have the remit of implementing the business plan as approved by the owner authorities on an [annual basis] and will be required to refer any "reserved matter" back to the owner authorities for approval. Reserved matters will be articulated in the members' agreement.
- 3.4.4 **Funding** – the financial requirements of the company will be met by the payments to the company under the commissioning agreement. The owning authorities will not be required to invest any equity into the company.
- 3.4.5 **Surplus** – any surplus generated will be retained within the company and invested into future services [or to reduce subsequent charges paid by the authorities to commission the services]. There is no scope for profit distribution from the company.
- 3.4.6 **Term and termination** – the members' agreement will be co-terminus with the commissioning agreement for each authority.
- 3.4.7 **Dispute Resolution** – in the event of a dispute on the terms of the members' agreement the dispute will be referred to the following escalation tiers:
- (a) Board of directors
  - (b) Directors of Children Services of all authorities as representatives of the members
  - (c) [chief executives]

In the event the dispute is still not resolved it could be referred to mediation with agreement.

#### 4 ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

- 4.1 The company will be a company limited by guarantee.
- 4.2 The articles will dovetail with the members' agreement and be a document of public record. The presence of the members' agreement means there will be less emphasis / importance associated with the articles.

#### 5 COMMISSIONING AGREEMENT

- 5.1 Each of the six member local authorities will enter into a Commissioning Agreement with the RAA detailing the services commissioned to be delivered.
- 5.2 The main terms will include:



5.2.1 **Services** – the RAA will provide the services [as set out in a specification in the agreement] [and updated on an annual basis through the business plan]. [There will be no payment mechanism based on certain Key Performance Indicators].

**Payment** – each commissioning authority will pay for the provision of the services during the Term in advance in the following percentages set out in the Table below. These financial contributions will be in proportion to current spending on the services [as set out in a specification in the agreement]. Proportional contributions toward future costs based on current spend will be as follows:

Bath & North East Somerset	Bristol	Gloucestershire	North Somerset	South Gloucestershire	Wiltshire
6.81%	33.96%	18.96%	11.52%	5.56%	23.20%

5.2.2 **Performance Monitoring** – the RAA will report [quarterly] against agreed information. [Key Performance Indicators will be monitored and reported against]. In the event of agreed level of non-performance the commissioning authority will be entitled to require a remediation plan by the RAA to address the non-performance.

5.2.3 **Term and Termination** – the agreement will be for an initial period of [3] years. There will be no option of voluntary termination within that period. There will be the right to terminate in the event of a material breach including failure to rectify non-performance within agreed parameters.

5.2.4 **Employment and Pensions** – staff will TUPE transfer as a result of the commissioning contract with LGPS pensions continuing. The RAA will agree to be an [admitted body] to the [3] pension fund[s] - Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire pension fund – for the purpose of allowing on-going membership of the LGPS. The legacy authorities will retain liability for all pension risk associated with individuals they employed up to the point of transfer.

5.2.5 **Assets and Contracts** – contracts related to the service [will be required to novate to the RAA].

5.2.6 **Dispute Resolution** – the same dispute resolution applicable to the members' agreement will apply (see 3.4.7 above).

## 6 SUPPORT SERVICES

6.1 The following services will be provided to the RAA by the following authorities on a [cost recovery basis]:

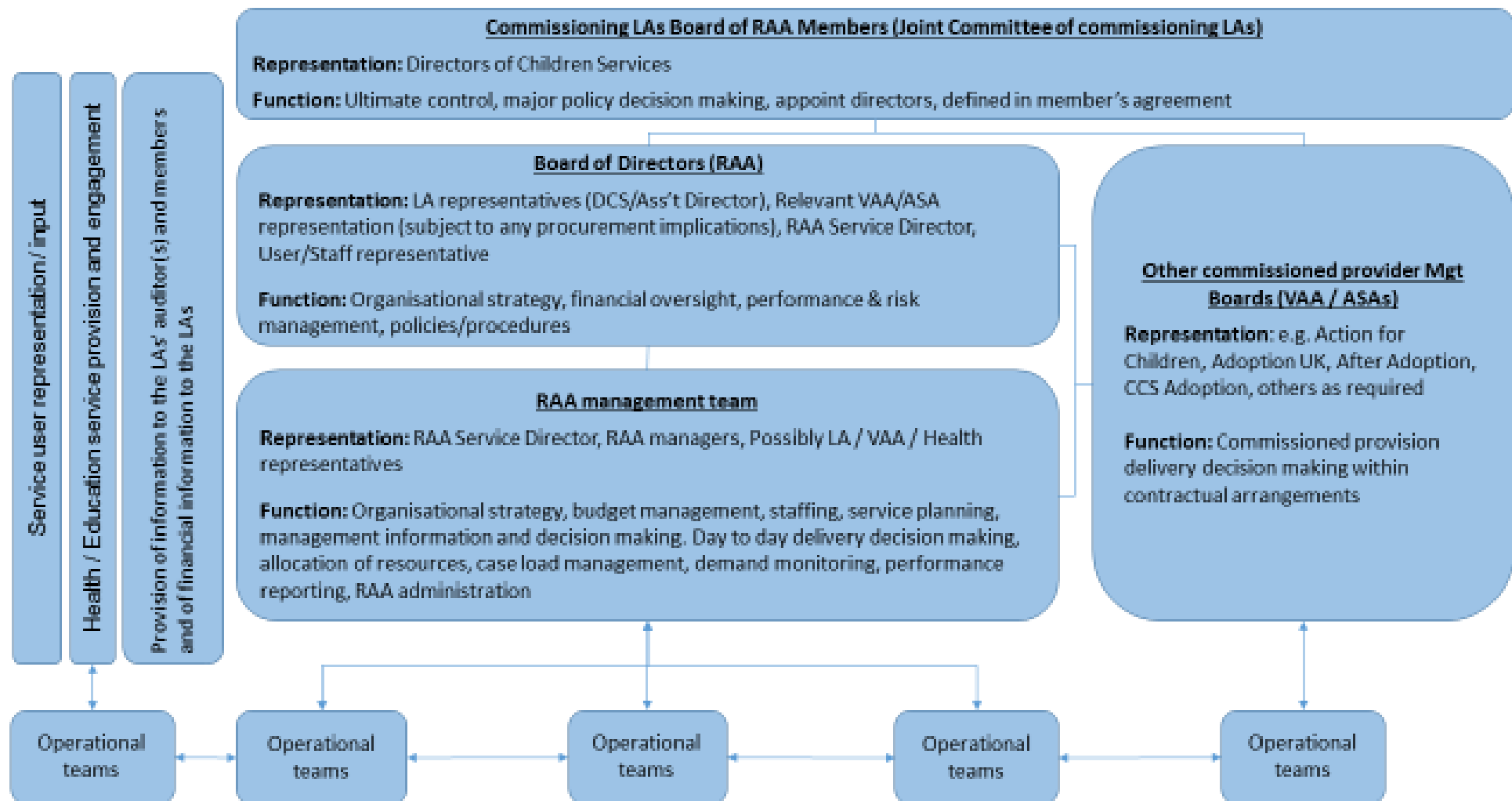
6.1.1 ICT by [ ]

6.1.2 HR [and payroll] by [ ]

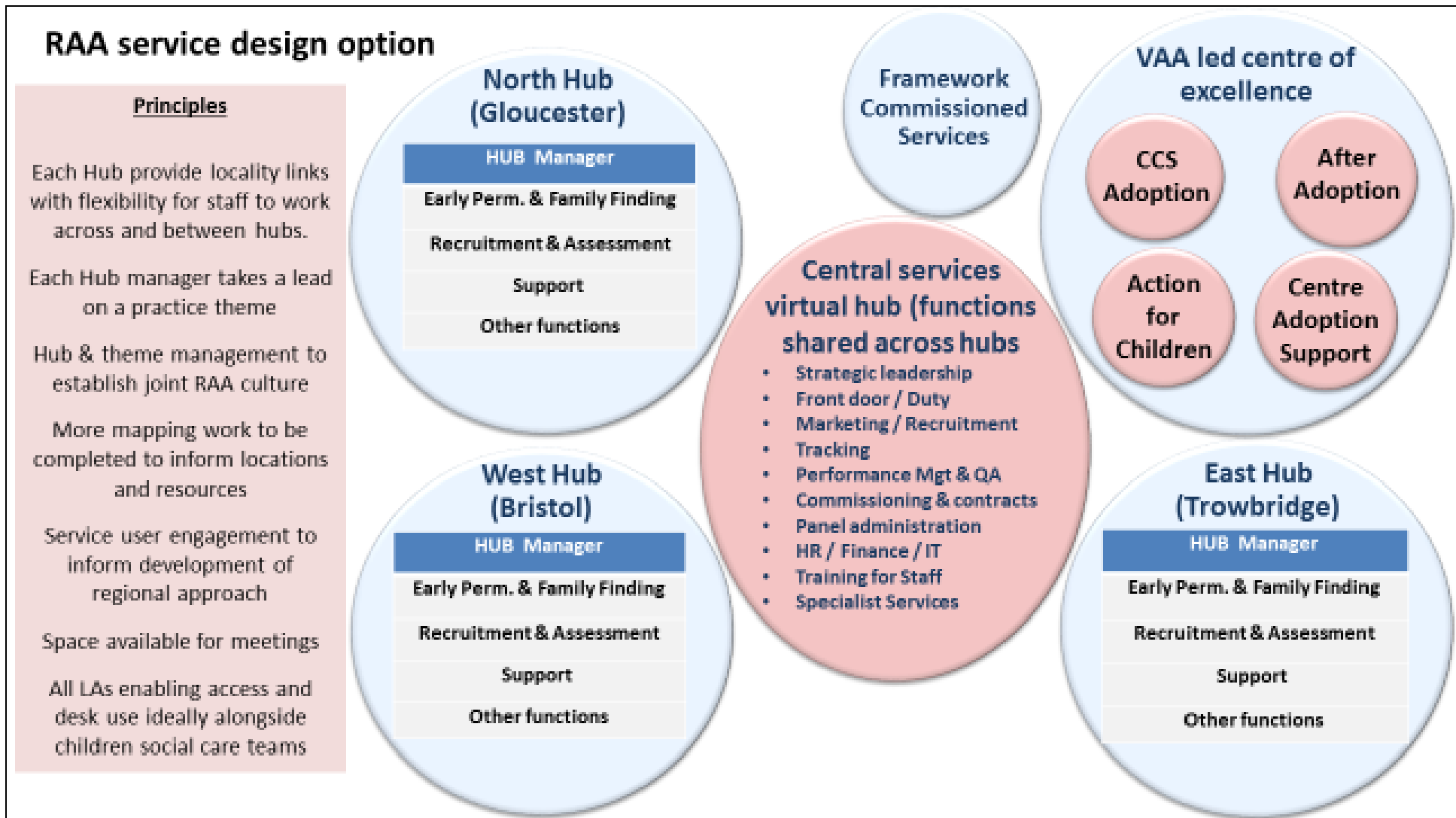
6.1.3 Finance by [ ]

6.1.4 Legal by [ ]

## APPENDIX 5 – Proposed governance arrangements



**APPENDIX 6 - Service design model**



## APPENDIX 7 - Equality Impact Assessment

### EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS (EqIAA) FORM

This form is in place in order to guide staff members through a robust EqIAA process. The council has a statutory duty to conduct EqIAAs and this form has been designed to take full account of the requirements of this statutory duty. Each question contained within this form **must** be **fully** addressed (unless otherwise stated). It is noted that all completed EqIAA forms are publicly available documents and therefore, it is important to respect this when inserting your text e.g. use minimal jargon, clear explanations etc.

Overall, the council has a duty to fully consider the implications for equality in respect of all its 'Functions'. The term 'Functions' needs to be understood broadly to embrace the full range of functions, activities, policies, procedures and decisions for which the council is responsible.

<b>Name of Function under consideration:</b>	Adoption and special guardianship services
<b>Is this Function 'Major', 'Minor yet likely to have a major impact' or 'Neither'</b>	Major
<b>Date(s) of completing the EqIAA:</b>	June 2016 December 2016
<b>Name and job title(s) of person(s) completing the EqIAA:</b>	Stuart Babbage (Adoption West Project Manager)

### SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

#### 1. What is the main purpose of the Function?

The project aims to combine the adoption and special guardianship services of 6 local authorities in the west of England (Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Wiltshire). Adoption and special guardianship services recruit, assess, approve and support prospective adopters, match children waiting for adoption with adopters and support adoptive/ special guardianship placements. Adoption West is likely to provide some functions in respect of SGO assessment and support but the degree to which that is encompassed into the RAA and what form this will take will be agreed as part of a second phase. Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) are made within private or public law proceedings and provide a legal framework for a child or young person to live with person's who are not their parent's. A Special Guardianship Order made in favour of a connected adult to the child confers onto that adult parental responsibility.

#### 2. List the main activities of the Function:

Adoption West RAA will bring together the recruitment, assessment, matching and permanence support services across the six local authorities and establish formal arrangements with voluntary sector partners in order to provide the following services. Where references are made to adoption / adopters this also relates to special guardianship orders / special guardians.

1. For the child/ren:
  - a. Family finding – shared responsibility with LAs and VAAs
  - b. Matching – providing a range of options for selection
  - c. Introductions
  - d. Specialist work to prepare the child for adoption
  - e. Supporting the life story work with the child (Pre-adoption life story work will be completed by LA with support, training, guidance from RAA)

- f. Development of staff through supervision and training
- g. Early identification of potential for adoption – tracking of needs
- h. Challenge regarding timescales to ensure swift planning for children
- i. Review and inform sibling attachment assessments and advise the LA
- j. Oversight of concurrent/foster to adopt placements
- k. There is also potential to develop the RAA role in providing quality assurance on aspects of the child's journey, providing a greater level of challenge to custom and practice and, providing concurrency services
- l. Counselling and support in accessing birth records and liaison with LA that holds the file

2. For adopters:

- a. Family finding for adopters
- b. Marketing campaigns
- c. Assessment of adopters
- d. Role in introductions, adoption support assessments, adopter training
- e. Court process for adoption applications
- f. Support and supervision of placements
- g. Matching
- h. Panel and ADM
- i. Recruitment activity
- j. Provision of information
- k. Preparation groups
- l. Feedback from adopters
- m. Work with adoption link / and other providers.
- n. Services for post adoption contact
- o. Step-parent adoption assessments
- p. The arrangement of inter-country adoption

3. Adoption support for families:

- a. Creation and review of support plans
- b. Re-assessment of support needs as required
- c. Creation of a menu of support and ability to tailor support and commission
- d. Create and maintaining clear criteria for support – tiered approach
- e. Advertising the availability of support
- f. Commissioning support (including bespoke packages)
- g. Provision of training
- h. Direct provision of adoption support
- i. Coordinate health, psychological and therapeutic support services
- j. Seeking innovation, new income streams
- k. Planning support based on the need – analysis and review
- l. Contact – including letter box
- m. Intermediary services
- n. Birth relative counselling and support
- o. Creating and supporting an adoption community
- p. Support to Adult Adoptees
- q. Complaints

#### 4. For the Regional Adoption Agency

- a. Strategic development and promotion of adoption including senior level influence with key stakeholders
- b. Relationship building and working arrangements / good practice with courts and other agencies
- c. Innovation and continuous improvement

#### 5. Outside of scope

- a. The child's journey up to the point at which the decision that the child should be placed for adoption is made (local authorities)
- b. Timely agency decision maker (ADM) decision making for children (local authorities)
- c. The provision of post adoption financial allowances (local authorities – based on single agreed approach across all LAs))
- d. Duty to fund post adoption support for children (local authorities – subject to consideration of forecasting and agreement on funding model)
- e. Storage and retrieval of a child's file (remain with the placing local authority, as with all children looked after files that LAs are required to retain, but initial contact and process managed with RAA involvement and support)

### 3. Who are the main beneficiaries of the Function?

- Children looked after with adoption and special guardianship as the plan for permanence
- Children who have been adopted or placed for adoption
- Prospective adopters and approved adopters / special guardians
- Birth relatives of children who are or will be adopted
- Adopted adults

### 4. How is the overall success of the Function measured?

#### Volumes / percentages:

#### Children

- Number of placement orders granted
- Number of children matched with adoptive families
- Number of children placed with adoptive families
- Number of children adopted
  - Aged under 5 / over 5 years old, Female / Male, BME, Disability, Sibling group
- Number of children with a placement order waiting to be placed
  - Aged under 5 / over 5 years old, Female / Male, BME, Disability, Sibling group
- Number of children with a placement order but not yet placed (18 months or more since entering care)
  - Aged under 5 / over 5 years old, Female / Male, BME, Disability, Sibling group
- Number of children with a decision but not yet placed

#### Adopters

- Number of adoptive families approved within 6 months of registration / after 6 months of registration
- Number of adoptive families matched within 3 months of approval / after 3 months of approval
- Number of prospective adopter registrations
- Number of prospective adopter approvals
- Number of adoptive families matched to children
- Number of adoptive families with children placed with them
- Number of adoption orders granted

## **Timeliness of placements, adopter recruitment process**

### **Children**

- Average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with adoptive family
- Average length of time spent waiting (since entering care) for those with a placement order not yet placed (days)
- Average time between an LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match to an adoptive family

### **Adopters:**

- Average number of days between registration and approval for new approvals
- Average number of days between approval and match for new matches
- Average number of days between registration and match for new matches
- Average number of days between enquiry and the start of Stage 1 for new approvals
- Average number of days for Stage 1 for new approvals
- Average number of days between the end of Stage 1 and the start of Stage 2 for new approvals
- Average number of days for Stage 2 for new approval
- Number of prospective adopters not yet approved
- Number of approved adopters waiting to be matched with children

### **Outcomes**

- Outcomes for adopted children (e.g. education, health)
- Adoption breakdowns
- Service user feedback / satisfaction

## **5. What equality monitoring systems are in place to carry out regular checks on the effects of the Function on equality groups? (NB. If no equality monitoring systems are currently in place, the need for implementing a monitoring system should be considered and details given in Section 4 of this form).**

Equality monitoring systems exist in each local authority adoption service with teams recording and reporting data about the children placed and the prospective and approved adoptive families supported. This is currently done in various ways by different local authorities. This project

## **6. What are your equality related performance indicators/measure of success for this Function?**

As outlined in section 4 above there are a number of equality related indicators used to measure the success of this function.

Essentially the equality related performance of the service will be measured by the:

- Numbers and percentages of children placed for adoption by age group, gender, ethnicity, disability and part of a sibling group compared to local populations and regional / national data. This includes an analysis of the numbers/percentages waiting to be placed and actually placed / supported.
- Numbers and percentages of adopters supported by age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability.
- Feedback and user satisfaction analysed by equality groups indicators

## SECTION 2 – INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

7. Use the following table to indicate where you think that the Function could have a negative impact on any of the following groups (i.e. it could disadvantage them), where you think that the Function could have a positive impact on any of the groups and contribute to promoting equality of opportunity or improving relations with equality groups, where you think there is no impact or where you are unsure of impact.

Equality Group	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	No Impact	Unsure of Impact	Reason(s)* (at this stage, list the reason(s) as identified by person(s) completing this EqlAA)
Women/Girls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service users - The RAA will aim to increase the potential for children to be adopted regardless of gender  Staff - The staff group is predominantly female. Any changes to service delivery through adoption west would therefore impact on this group. Extensive consultation is planned with all staff across the adoption west councils and will need to take into account any additional caring responsibilities of staff during consultation and engagement
Men/Boys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lesbians, gay men & bisexuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Service users - The RAA will continue the current efforts of LAs in recruiting, assessing and supporting LGBT adopters. Support services will be available recognising the specific needs of LGBT adopters.  Staff - The majority of staff have not declared their sexual orientation. The proposals will have a neutral impact on this group, the consultation will enable staff regardless of their sexual orientation to shape the adoption west plans.
Transgender people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service users - As above  Staff - No staff report they are transgender or have undergone gender reassignment. The proposals and consultation will have a neutral impact on this group.
White people (including Irish people)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service users - By expanding the immediate pool of potential adopters and improving processes, the RAA aims to increase potential matches and improve the timeliness of adoption for all children. This change will potentially have the biggest positive impact for BAME children who
Asian or Asian British people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Black or Black British people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Equality Group	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	No Impact	Unsure of Impact	Reason(s)* (at this stage, list the reason(s) as identified by person(s) completing this EqlAA)
People of mixed heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	historically have waited longer to be placed.  Staff - Staff in the adoption service reflect a range of BME backgrounds. The majority of staff are white British. The proposals and consultation will have a neutral impact on staff from BME groups.
Chinese people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Travellers (gypsy/Roma/Irish heritage)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
People from other ethnic groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Disabled People:</b>					
Physical impairment, e.g. mobility issues which mean using a wheelchair or crutches.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service users - By expanding the immediate pool of potential adopters and improving processes, the RAA aims to increase potential matches and improve the timeliness of adoption for all children. This change will potentially have the biggest positive impact for disabled children who historically have waited longer to be placed. Prospective adopters with a disability will be supported through the assessment, matching and support functions to reduce/remove any potential barriers to adopting a child.  Staff - a variety of consultation methods will be used to ensure that staff can contribute and would not be disadvantaged should they have any stated or undisclosed disability
Sensory impairment, e.g. blind/having a serious visual impairment, deaf/having a serious hearing impairment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mental health condition, e.g. depression or schizophrenia.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Learning disability/difficulty, e.g. Down's syndrome or dyslexia, or cognitive impairment such as autistic spectrum disorder.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Long-standing illness or health condition, e.g. cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other health problems or impairments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Older People	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service users - Prospective adopters of all ages (over 21) will be supported.  Staff - Staff are spread across the age bands, reflecting a balanced workforce in terms of age and experience. It is anticipated that the proposals for Adoption West and the planned consultation will not impact negatively on staff in terms of age.

Equality Group	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	No Impact	Unsure of Impact	Reason(s)* (at this stage, list the reason(s) as identified by person(s) completing this EqlAA)
Children and Young People	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service users - The service is focused on improving outcomes for children and young people looked after with adoption and special guardianship as the plan for permanence. There are risks associated with service changes but the planning and delivery will be driven by the need to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people.
Faith Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Service users - Applications are encouraged from prospective adopters of all religious and faith groups. Prospective adopters of all faiths will be supported through the assessment, matching and support functions to reduce/remove any potential barriers to adopting a child. Where birth parents are of active faith backgrounds the service will try to find families to reflect this.</p> <p>Staff - Numbers of those who declared their religion for each LA are too low to report however neither the proposals or the consultation will have a negative impact on this protected characteristic</p>
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Service users - Proposed changes do not affect this protected characteristic. Adopters are entitled to leave and benefits that are similar to pregnancy and maternity rights.</p> <p>Staff - The consultation proposals will need to take account of the fact staff may have caring or family responsibilities. The consultation will ensure that any staff who may be taking maternity leave are offered the opportunity to contribute and workforce change policies regarding this group will be followed.</p>
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Service users - The service will continue to support adopters / prospective adopters that are single/married/in a civil partnership/an unmarried couple (same sex and opposite sex).</p> <p>Staff - Numbers of those who declared their marital status are too low to report however consultation will have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic</p>

\* **Reasons Column:** – state clearly what the impact(s) is with reasons why.

**8. If you have indicated that there is a negative impact on any group, is that impact:**

**Legal?** Yes  No

**Intended?** Yes  No

**Level of impact** High  Low

**No negative impact has been identified:**

**9. Could you minimise or remove any negative impact - how?** (Enter N/A if no negative impact has been identified).

N/A

**10. Could you improve a positive impact of the Function - how?** (Enter N/A if no positive impact has been identified).

Yes – As identified in the table above there will be a specific emphasis on increasing the potential for adoption for children and young people from priority groups. This will be enabled through targeted recruitment, preparation and support for adopters. Improved and targeted recruitment will aim to increase the immediate availability of a wider pool of potential adopters. The integrated regional service will seek to continuously improve services for all children, adopters / prospective adopters. With reference to how this may benefit specific equality groups, improvements may include the development of a wider range of support services, possibly targeted for specific groups where there is a demand and this will be of value to service users.

**11. If there is no evidence that the Function promotes equality of opportunity or improved relations, could it be adapted so that it does - how?** (Enter N/A if appropriate).

The function does promote equality of opportunity but there will be the opportunity to gather and analyse data at a regional level to monitor organisational performance on promoting equality of opportunity or improved relations. This will form part of commissioning arrangements defined in a commissioning contract and member's agreement that will require regular performance reporting by the regional adoption agency to the partner local authorities. This reporting requirement will highlight performance in this area and drive future improvement planning.

**12. Any other relevant notes:**

N/A

## SECTION 3 – CONSULTATION & RESEARCH IN RELATION TO THE EqIAA

### **NB. Section 3 must be completed if:**

- The Function under consideration has been deemed ‘Major’ or ‘Minor, yet likely to have a major impact’
- Any negative impact has been highlighted in respect of any group listed in question 7.
- You are unsure about impact in respect of any group listed in question 7.
- Positive impact can be improved and there is a need to consult with stakeholders in relation to what can be done to improve the positive impact.

**If none of the above points apply, tick here:  and go to Section 4 of this form.**

**NB.** If this Section 3 requires completion and if no consultation or research has been conducted, stop completing this Form, carry out your appropriate consultation and research, then return to this Form to complete questions 13 to 15 - then continue with completing the remainder of this Form.

**13. What consultation has been conducted with groups and individuals from groups likely to be affected as well as staff, and what evidence has this provided about equalities impact?** *(Involvement and consultation are crucial to the EqIAA process. There is an explicit requirement to consult appropriate groups and individuals. No-one can give you a better insight into how proposed changes will affect, for example, disabled people, than disabled people themselves).*

The project has engaged with and received feedback from adopters/prospective adopters, adopted children, birth families, social work practitioners, health and education colleagues, voluntary adoption agencies and other stakeholders with an interest in the development of a regional adoption agency. Engagement and feedback from a broad range of stakeholders has been invaluable in shaping service design. Adopters have been passionate in expressing their views and are constructively engaged at various levels highlighting priorities and areas for improvement. The Adopter Voice programme is actively engaging 154 individuals in the Adoption West region, over 20 adopters have provided detailed input through face to face forums and working groups, 8 birth families have provided their feedback, and survey responses have been considered from over 350 adoptive families.

Key focus areas for adopters include the range and quality of adoption support, professionalism of staff, clarity of process and information sharing. Adopters consistently highlight the importance of support services to meet the needs of adoptive families and sustain placements. Identified benefits of regionally delivered adoption support services include greater flexibility and accessibility for certain services, joint commissioning opportunities, learning and experience sharing, strengthened peer to peer support, and a range of more efficient delivery options. Other areas highlighted by adopters include the assessment process where there are opportunities for increased adopter involvement, improved availability of training and a focus on adopter choice. The ‘Adoptables’ peer network of adopted young people has engaged a small group to gather views on what works, what doesn’t work so well and how decision-makers can improve service, including how best to support adopted young people at school. Birth families have highlighted barriers to accessing services, issues around contact, life story work and information sharing and potential opportunities for improved support.

Due to the nature of engagement it is not always possible to analyse responses by specific equality group, however, further analysis will be conducted on survey responses where equality data has been collected and specific questions will be asked with adopter forums to further identify potential equalities impact.

**14. What relevant research (data, reports, expert opinion etc.) has been conducted and what evidence has this provided about equalities impact?** *(The assessment should be underpinned by up-to-date and reliable information about the different group(s) likely to be affected. A lack of data is not a sufficient reason to conclude that there is no impact. Where there is no detailed quantitative data available, there may often be national statistics or qualitative studies on the area concerned. These can be supplemented by local informal consultation).*

The table below summarises recent adoption performance for local authorities within the adoption west regional agency and provides a comparison with the wider region and national data. Data for the Adoption West sub-region is broadly representative of local populations and reflective of national trends. Performance could be improved for placement of children with a disability however, due to the low volumes the actual figure is not reported. The National Statistics Code of Practice requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality. For confidentiality purposes, numbers from one to five inclusive are suppressed. Locally, reporting will ensure data is included for children with a disability so that monitoring can identify equality impacts.

Characteristics of adopted children								
Number of children adopted during 2014-15								
	Aged under 5 years old	Aged 5 years old and over	Female	Male	BME	Disabled	Part of sibling group	Priority group*
<b>ALL LAs IN ENGLAND</b>	<b>4,580</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>2,510</b>	<b>2,830</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>1,930</b>	<b>2,850</b>
	87%	13%	47%	53%	16%	4%	36%	53%
<b>SOUTH WEST</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>210</b>
	86%	14%	47%	53%	7%	4%	36%	47%
<b>ADOPTION WEST RAA</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>60</b>
	93%	7%	54%	46%	7%	0%	29%	43%

\*Aged 5 and over, BME, Disability, Sibling group

**National data on children looked after:**

**Gender**

- 56% (39,670) of children looked after on 31st March 2016 were male and 44% (30,780) were female.

**Age**

- 5% (3,540) of children looked after on 31st March 2016 were under 1 year old
- 13% (9,140) were aged between 1 and 4 years old
- 20% (14,090) were aged between 5 and 9 years old
- 39% (27,220) were aged between 10 and 15 years old
- 23% (16,460) were aged 16 and over

**Ethnicity**

- 75% (53,150) of children looked after on 31st March 2016 were white
- 9% (6,250) were of mixed racial background
- 4% (3,110) were Asian or Asian British
- 7% (5,150) were Black or Black British
- 3% (2,290) were from other ethnic groups
- 1% (500) were other (refused or information not yet available)

**Placements**

- 74% (51,850) of children looked after on 31st March 2016 were living with foster carers
- 11% (7,600) were living in secure units, children's homes or hostels
- 5% (3,810) were placed with their parents
- 4% (2,940) were placed for adoption
- 4% (3,040) were with another placement in the community

- 2% (1,200) were placed in residential schools or other residential settings

### **National data on children adopted 2015/16 and children waiting for an adoptive placement:**

#### **Gender**

- 53% (2,490) of children adopted during the year ending 31st March 2016 were boys and 47% (2,200) were girls.

#### **Age**

The average age at adoption in the year ending 31st March 2016 was 3 years 5 months, 2 months older than in 2015.

- 5% (230) of children adopted during the year ending 31st March 2016 were under 1 year old
- 72% (3,370) were aged between 1 and 4 years old
- 22% (1,020) were aged between 5 and 9 years old
- 1% (70) were aged between 10 and 15 years old
- None were aged 16 and over (to nearest 10)

#### **Ethnicity**

- 83% (3,880) of looked after children adopted during the year ending 31st March 2016 were white
- 11% (490) were of mixed racial background
- 2% (120) were Black or Black British
- 2% (80) were Asian or Asian British
- 1% (40) were from other ethnic groups
- 2% (70) were other (refused or information not yet available)

Of the children waiting for an adoptive placement at 30 June 2016:

- 29% were aged 5 years or over
- 16% were of BME heritage;  
6% were disabled
- 56% were part of a sibling group.

550 of those children waiting had been waiting for 18 months or more since entering care. Of those:

- 47% were aged 5 years or over
- 18% were of BME heritage
- 5% were disabled
- 62% were part of a sibling group

We know children of BME heritage, sibling groups, older children and children with a disability typically wait longest. The proposed changes include a commitment to identifying children with the most complex needs at a very early stage in their looked after journey and allocating resources accordingly. The system will aim to fully understand children's individual needs and deliver what works to help find and support quality placements for these children.

#### **National data on Adopters**

During the year ending 31 March 2016:

- 89% (4,190) of children were adopted by couples and 11% (500) by single adopters.
- 9.6% (450) of children were adopted by same sex couples (either in a civil partnership, married or neither) in the year ending 31 March 2016.

#### **Staff data**

All work force changes will be carried out in accordance with local authority policies and procedures and adjustments will be made to ensure all staff have equal opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on proposals prior to implementation of any changes. The data in the tables below will support the development of HR policies and work force development strategy for the regional agency.

**Adoption West Staffing Equality Impact Data**

	Gender		Ethnicity			Disability		
	Female	Male	White British	Non-White British	Not stated	No	Yes	Not stated
%	90%	10%	84%	5%	11%	80%	1%	19%
Total	82	9	64	4	8	73	1	17

Age	%
Under 20	0%
Age 20 - 30	14%
Age 30 - 40	17%
Age 40 - 50	19%
Age 50 - 60	33%
Age 60 - 70	13%
Age 70 - 80	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**15. What contributions does your function/activity make towards promoting community cohesion?** *(Evidence can be supplemented by your consultation activity conducted in questions 13 and 14 above)*

In order that adoptive parents’ backgrounds reflect those of our Looked After Children, advertising will target specific groups, contact will be made with local minority groups and consultation with stakeholders will continue to positively influence service development and practice.

## SECTION 4 – OUTCOMES

16. The evidence that has been collected under Sections 1, 2 and 3 of this form will need to feed into the decision making process regarding changes to be implemented **before** any final decisions are taken. There are four possible outcomes of this EqIAA – indicate which outcome below with the reasons and justification for this.

Outcome	Your response	Reason(s) and Justification
<b>Outcome 1:</b> No major change required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>(No action plan is required, complete the 'Reason(s)/Justification' column, enter N/A in question 17 then go to Section 5)</i>	The requirements of the new agency to improve equality impacts will be embedded within the commissioning contract and defined in the new agency's policies and procedures.
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Adjustments to remove barriers or to better promote equality have been identified.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>(Action Plan is required, complete the 'reason(s)/Justification' column and then go to Question 17)</i>	
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>(No action plan is required, complete the 'Reason(s)/Justification' column, enter N/A in question 17 then go to Section 5)</i>	
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Stop and rethink.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>(Action Plan is required, complete the 'Reason(s)/Justification' column and then go to Question 17)</i>	

17. List the actions you will take as a result of this EqIAA. These actions must be:

- Clearly planned using the action planning template shown at the end of this form, **OR**
- Clearly planned by adding the actions stated here to an action plan which you already have in place.

Actions will be recorded in project and service plans for the regional adoption agency

## SECTION 5 – EqIAA EVIDENCE

18. List and attach the evidence you have which shows how you have **systematically considered** equality impact.

Equalities data for service users (Children & Adopters) as gathered and monitored by each LA  
DfE: Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2016

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Adoption Leadership Board quarterly data reports: July to September 2015. [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Ofsted: Adoption agencies data in England year ending 31 March 2014 [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Notifications of private fostering arrangements in England: Year Ending 31 March 2015 [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Adoptions in England and Wales, 2012 [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)





## APPENDIX 8 - Staff establishment summary

### Adoption West - Local Authority Staffing Establishment Summary<sup>1</sup>

	Headcount <sup>2</sup>						FTE <sup>3</sup>				
	Total	Total (Perm.)	Adoption	Adoption (perm.)	SGO <sup>4</sup>	SGO (Perm.) <sup>4</sup>	Total	Total (Perm.)	Adoption (Perm.)	SGO (Perm.) <sup>4</sup>	Other (Perm.)
BANES	1	1	1	1	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.0	0
Bristol	19	19	15	15	5	5	15.4	15.4	11.4	4.0	0
Gloucestershire	28	18	28	18	0	0	24.1	14.1	14.1	0.0	0
North Somerset	13	13	9	9	4	4	8.8	8.8	6.0	2.8	0
South Glos	10	6	9	5	2	1	5.5	3.0	2.4	0.6	0
Wiltshire	30	25	27	22	8	8	25.0	20.9	14.6	1.8	5.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>79.4</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>5.1</b>

<sup>1</sup> This data is based on analysis of posts within each LA structure and does not necessarily correspond to financial information included in the current budget summary

<sup>2</sup> Headcount data includes multiple headcount where one individual may be in multiple posts

<sup>3</sup> FTE data is based on allocation of individual posts to adoption / SGO / Other functions

<sup>4</sup> SGO staffing data is subject to change based on future analysis of SGO practices and resources and does not currently include data for a number of SGO staff groups

### Full Time Equivalent (permanent staff delivering adoption functions) by role<sup>5</sup>

	Team Manager	Deputy Team Manager	Senior Practitioner	Social Worker	Social Work Assistant / Family Support Worker	Business Support	
BANES	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.5
Bristol	1.50	0.00	2.00	5.45	0.50	1.95	11.4
Gloucestershire	1.00	2.31	0.00	8.03	2.77	0.00	14.1
North Somerset	0.59	0.00	1.00	4.41	0.00	0.00	6.0
South Glos	0.50	0.00	0.00	1.50	0.00	0.40	2.4
Wiltshire	1.00	2.00	0.00	8.34	0.00	3.24	14.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.59</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>28.23</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>5.59</b>	<b>49.0</b>

<sup>5</sup> Non-permanent contracted staff are not included in this data, work is planned with HR and service managers to agree whether to include/exclude on a case by case basis

## APPENDIX 9 - Outline current combined budget for LAs services in scope

	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget
	Banes		Bristol		Gloucestershire		N.Somerset		South Glos		Wiltshire		Total	
<b>Salary Budget for Adoption Team &amp; Panel</b>														
Team Manager	0.3	20,000	1	59,080	1.00	55,013	0.60	34,675	0.5	28,314	1	54,900	4.40	251,982
Team Manager - Panel			0.5	28,955	0.50	27,348							1.00	56,303
Consultant SW Pract / Dep. Team Mgr	0.2	10,000	2	92,160	2.00	101,333	1.00	46,305			2	101,500	7.20	351,298
Social Workers	2	80,000	5.45	220,010	6.00	225,575	4.41	186,539	3.11	119,550	6.7	278,000	27.67	1,109,674
Social Work Assist / Family Supp't Workers			0.5	16,360	2.00	67,554					2.21	51,525	4.71	135,439
Business Support Officer (Admin)	0.25	5,000	1.27	44,046	1.09	18,812	0.60	15,000	0.2	5,084	1.77	40,400	5.18	128,342
Panel Admin	0.25	5,000	0.68	23,584	0.91	15,706	0.40	10,000	0.2	5,084	0.9	19,300	3.34	78,674
Marketing Officer					0.50	17,120							0.50	17,120
Agency Staff								8,488					0.00	8,488
Staff Turnover/Vacancy Budget				-21,200				-15,050		-5,334		-27,390	0.00	-68,974
	3.00	120,000	11.40	462,995	14.00	528,461	7.01	285,957	4.01	152,698	14.58	518,235	54.00	2,068,346
		6%		22%		26%		14%		7%		25%		
<b>Other Budgets for Adoption Team &amp; Panel</b>														
Travel		2,500		14,000		17,250		7,820		3,250		19,100		63,920
Office costs				2,130		5,938		1,510		2,570		11,400		23,548
Training		689		2,658		3,034		1,642		877		2,975		11,875
Adoption Panel support (Ind. Panel members)				33,980		46,199	0.30	15,500		14,625		24,500		134,804
		3,189	0	52,768		72,421		26,472		21,322		57,975		234,147
<b>Total Budgets for Adoption Team &amp; Panel</b>		123,189		515,763		600,882		312,429		174,020		576,210		2,302,493
<b>THESE BUDGETS ARE OUT OF SCOPE FOR APRIL 2018 IMPLEMENTATION. WORK WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO FURTHER ANALYSE SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP WITH A VIEW TO IMPLEMENTING CHANGES IN 2019</b>														
<b>Salary Budget for SGO Team</b>														
Team Manager			0.5	28,955	0.5	27,511	0.4	23,117					1.40	79,583
Consultant SW Pract / Dep. Team Mgr	0.6	31,643					0.81	40,628					1.41	72,271
Social Workers			3.5	137,580			0.61	25,023	0.999996	38,617	2.69	108,700	7.80	309,920
Social Workers - Family & Friends	0.6	24,822					1.00	43,486					1.60	68,308
Family Support Workers					2.0	64,272					0.74	17,175	2.74	81,447
SGO business support	0.2	4,431			0.5	8,630							0.70	13,061
Staff Turnover/Vacancy Budget				-6,995		0		-5,457				-6,200	0.00	-18,652
	1.4	60,896	4	159,540	3	100,413	2.82	126,797	0.999996	38,617	3.43	119,675	15.65	605,937
<b>Other Budgets for SGO Team</b>														
Travel & Office Costs		500				3,060								3,560
		500		0		3,060		0		0		0		3,560
<b>Total Budgets for SGO Team</b>		61,396		159,540		103,473		126,797		38,617		119,675		609,497
<b>Adoption Activity</b>														
Advertising & Recruitment		2,000		9,690		13,500				5,000		7,600		37,790
Preparation Programme		7,000				14,200		4,500						25,700
Adopter Training		2,000								5,000		8,279		15,279
External Assessment						10,100		11,100		5,000		4,038		30,238
Step Parent Assessment												13,417		13,417
Initial Payments / Settling in						16,200								16,200
Subscriptions / Licenses		5,461		14,690		21,000		14,500		15,203		15,500		86,354

	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget	FTE	£ Budget
	Banes		Bristol		Gloucestershire		N.Somerset		South Glos		Wiltshire		Total	
Other		70,131		40,850				28,499						139,480
<b>Adoption Support</b>														
Support Budget		13,408		38,410		50,564		3,500		29,890		21,047		156,819
Therapy Support												40,000		40,000
Adoption Support Fund Administrator														0
Adoption Support Office Costs									770					770
<b>Total Adoption Activity &amp; Support Costs</b>		<b>100,000</b>		<b>103,640</b>		<b>125,564</b>		<b>62,099</b>		<b>60,863</b>		<b>109,881</b>		<b>562,047</b>
<b>THESE BUDGETS ARE OUT OF SCOPE AND WILL NOT TRANSFER TO THE RAA BUT ARE INCLUDED FOR REFERENCE, WORK WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO SEEK TO RATIONALISE POLICY</b>														
<b>Adoption Allowance budget</b>		61,891		749,380		1,609,697		143,870		238,670		344,500		3,148,008
<b>Residence Order Budget</b>		109,760		1,269,290		331,146		260,210		237,920		117,700		2,326,026
<b>SGO allowances/payments budget</b>		100,000		1,269,290		1,802,020		485,120		671,790		1,026,600		5,354,820
<b>Total Allowances / RO Budgets</b>		<b>£271,651</b>		<b>£3,287,960</b>		<b>£3,742,863</b>		<b>£889,200</b>		<b>£1,148,380</b>		<b>£1,488,800</b>		<b>£10,828,854</b>
<b>Total Budget (Excl. IAF)</b>		<b>556,236</b>		<b>4,066,903</b>		<b>4,572,782</b>		<b>1,390,525</b>		<b>1,421,879</b>		<b>2,294,566</b>		<b>14,302,891</b>
<b>Total Budget (Excl. IAF, SGO, All'ces/RO budgets)</b>		<b>223,189</b>		<b>619,403</b>		<b>726,446</b>		<b>374,528</b>		<b>234,883</b>		<b>686,091</b>		<b>2,864,540</b>
<b>Inter Agency Fees Budget</b>		70,485		260,130		200,000		95,528		30,820		89,019		745,982
<b>Inter Agency Income Budget</b>		-100,000		-54,000		-450,000		-166,733		-101,000		-200,000		-1,071,733
<b>Total Inter Agency Fee Budgets</b>		<b>-29,515</b>		<b>206,130</b>		<b>-250,000</b>		<b>-71,205</b>		<b>-70,180</b>		<b>-110,981</b>		<b>-325,751</b>
<b>Inter Agency Fee Net position Actuals 16/17*</b>		94,500		138,667		-222,317		-77,000		-20,500		-131,798		-218,448
<i>* Used for alternative total below and to inform Option 1e &amp; 4e on 'FormulaOptions' sheet</i>														
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>		<b>526,721</b>		<b>4,273,033</b>		<b>4,322,782</b>		<b>1,319,320</b>		<b>1,351,699</b>		<b>2,183,585</b>		<b>13,977,140</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL (Excl. SGO, Allowances &amp; RO budgets)</b>		<b>193,674</b>		<b>825,533</b>		<b>476,446</b>		<b>303,323</b>		<b>164,703</b>		<b>575,110</b>		<b>2,538,789</b>
		7.63%		32.52%		18.77%		11.95%		6.49%		22.65%		<b>2,538,789</b>
														<b>Comparison to provisional RAA budget: -7,446</b>
<b>Alternative totals (excl. SGO, Allowances &amp; RO budgets) based on a. proportional redistribution of overhead budget and b. Inter Agency Fee Actuals 16/17 in response to independent audit recommendations:</b>														
<b>OVERALL TOTAL (a. redistribution of overhead)</b>		<b>172,839</b>		<b>862,071</b>		<b>481,287</b>		<b>292,444</b>		<b>141,237</b>		<b>588,910</b>		<b>2,538,789</b>
		6.81%		33.96%		18.96%		11.52%		5.56%		23.20%		<b>2,538,789</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL (b. IAF actuals 16/17)</b>		<b>317,689</b>		<b>758,070</b>		<b>504,129</b>		<b>297,528</b>		<b>214,383</b>		<b>554,293</b>		<b>2,646,092</b>
														<b>2,646,092</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL (a. &amp; b. above)</b>		<b>304,082</b>		<b>787,517</b>		<b>510,866</b>		<b>284,855</b>		<b>194,244</b>		<b>564,527</b>		<b>2,646,092</b>
														<b>2,646,092</b>

## APPENDIX 10 - Outline draft RAA budget

## RAA DRAFT BUDGET (Appendix 10)

	Budget 2018/19	Budget 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22	Budget 2022/23
<b>Salary Budget for Adoption Team &amp; Panel</b>					
Service director	91,898	92,817	93,745	94,683	95,630
Team Managers	171,556	173,271	175,004	176,754	178,522
Panel Advisors	113,258	114,390	115,534	116,690	117,856
Deputy Team Managers	152,057	153,578	155,113	156,665	158,231
Social Workers - assessments	579,830	585,628	591,485	597,400	603,374
Social Workers - family finding	248,499	250,984	253,493	256,028	258,589
Social Workers - Support	331,332	334,645	337,991	341,371	344,785
Social Work Assistant / Family Support Workers	99,913	100,912	101,921	102,941	103,970
Business management, marketing, support and panel admin	225,137	227,389	229,662	231,959	234,279
Staff Turnover/Vacancy Budget	-65,035	-65,686	-66,343	-67,006	-67,676
	1,948,444	1,967,929	1,987,608	2,007,484	2,027,559
<b>Other Budgets for Adoption Team &amp; Panel</b>					
Travel	44,744	45,191	45,643	46,100	46,561
Office costs (telephones,print,storage, waste, mail, furniture)	42,724	43,151	43,583	44,019	44,459
Training	11,875	11,994	12,114	12,235	12,357
Adoption Panel support	88,971	89,860	90,759	91,667	92,583
	188,314	190,197	192,099	194,020	195,960
<b>Total Budgets for Adoption Team &amp; Panel</b>	<b>2,136,758</b>	<b>2,158,125</b>	<b>2,179,707</b>	<b>2,201,504</b>	<b>2,223,519</b>
<b>THESE BUDGETS ARE OUT OF SCOPE FOR APRIL 2018 IMPLEMENTATION. ANALYSIS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN WITH A VIEW TO CHANGES IN 2019</b>					
<b>Salary Budget for SGO Team</b>					
Team Manager	79,583	80,379	81,182	81,994	82,814
Consultant SW Pract / Dep. Team Mgr	72,271	72,994	73,724	74,461	75,205
Social Workers	378,228	382,010	385,830	389,688	393,585
Family Support Workers	81,447	82,261	83,084	83,915	84,754
SGO business support	13,061	13,192	13,324	13,457	13,591
Staff Turnover/Vacancy Budget	-18,652	-18,838	-19,027	-19,217	-19,409
<b>Other Budgets for SGO Team</b>					
Travel & Office Costs	3,560	3,596	3,632	3,668	3,705
<b>Total Budgets for SGO Team</b>	<b>609,497</b>	<b>615,592</b>	<b>621,748</b>	<b>627,966</b>	<b>634,246</b>

**RAA DRAFT BUDGET (Appendix 10)**

	Budget 2018/19	Budget 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22	Budget 2022/23
<b><u>Adoption Activity</u></b>					
Advertising & Recruitment	28,343	28,626	28,912	29,201	29,493
Preparation Programme	25,700	25,957	26,217	26,479	26,744
Adopter Training	15,279	15,432	15,586	15,742	15,899
External Assessment	24,190	24,432	24,677	24,923	25,173
Step Parent Assessment	13,417	13,551	13,687	13,824	13,962
Initial Payments / Settling in	16,200	16,362	16,526	16,691	16,858
Subscriptions / Licenses	57,512	58,087	58,668	59,254	59,847
Other	111,584	112,700	113,827	114,965	116,115
<b><u>Adoption Support</u></b>					
Support Budget	156,819	158,387	159,971	161,571	163,186
Therapy Support	40,000	40,400	40,804	41,212	41,624
Adoption Support Office Costs	770	778	785	793	801
<b>Total Adoption Activity Costs</b>	<b>489,814</b>	<b>494,712</b>	<b>499,659</b>	<b>504,656</b>	<b>509,702</b>
<b><u>Overheads</u></b>					
Overhead (ICT, Finance, HR/Payroll, Audit)	163,285	164,917	166,567	168,232	169,915
Accommodation	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance & finance	22,368	22,591	22,817	23,045	23,276
Potentially irrecoverable VAT contingency	44,871	45,319	45,773	46,230	46,693
<b>Total Overheads</b>	<b>230,523</b>	<b>232,828</b>	<b>235,156</b>	<b>237,508</b>	<b>239,883</b>
<b>Total Budget (Excl. IAF, SGO, allowances)</b>	<b>2,857,094</b>	<b>2,885,665</b>	<b>2,914,522</b>	<b>2,943,667</b>	<b>2,973,104</b>
<b>Inter Agency Fees Budget</b>	745,982	753,442	760,976	768,586	776,272
<b>Inter Agency Income Budget</b>	<b>-1,071,733</b>	<b>-1,082,450</b>	<b>-1,093,275</b>	<b>-1,104,208</b>	<b>-1,115,250</b>
<b>Inter Agency Net Budget</b>	<b>-325,751</b>	<b>-329,009</b>	<b>-332,299</b>	<b>-335,622</b>	<b>-338,978</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>2,531,343</b>	<b>2,556,657</b>	<b>2,582,223</b>	<b>2,608,045</b>	<b>2,634,126</b>
<b>Comparison to current LAs budget (with annual 1% increase):</b>	<b>-7,446</b>	<b>-7,520</b>	<b>-7,595</b>	<b>-7,671</b>	<b>-7,748</b>

**APPENDIX 11 - Adoption West Project plan**

Refer to additional documents: Appendix 11 – Adoption West RAA PDF