

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

**Executive
Forward Plan
Reference**

E2962

Adoption West Update

Date of Meeting	12-Apr-17
The Issue	<i>The report provides an update on the formation of a Regional Adoption Agency in conjunction with five neighbouring Councils.</i>
The decision	<p>RESOLVED (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Note the progress on this project; 2) Delegate authority for approving the detailed implementation plans, including financial, contractual and legal agreements to the Strategic Director (People and Communities) subject to council policies and procedures. Final approval will be subject to consultation with the Section151 officer, Head of Legal Services and relevant elected member following scrutiny of the fully costed business case.
Rationale for decision	<p>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 18th 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.</p> <p>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 this document, 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)

	<p>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'.</p>
Other options considered	<p>As per the report.</p>
The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision	