

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Councillor Christopher Watt - Lead Member Children's Service	
DATE OF DECISION	On or after 6 th January 2011	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE
		E 2214
TITLE:	Response to Ofsted Inspection of The Council's Adoption Service	
WARD:	ALL	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
1. Ofsted Inspection Report 12 th November 2010 (Appendix 1)		
2. Bath and North East Somerset Council's action plan to respond to the findings of the Inspection (Appendix 2)		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This report presents the action plan compiled by the Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service to respond to the recommendations reported in the Ofsted announced three-yearly inspection of Bath and North East Somerset's Adoption Service.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Lead Member for Children's Service approves

2.1 The report and the action plan and instructs the Divisional Director for Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service to report on progress with the implementation of the action plan to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

2.2 And notes that the Inspection Report is now a public document.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The Adoption Services are provided within existing resources, including the Children's Services Adoption Grant for the provision of adoption support services and allowances.

4 THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Council has duties under The Children Act 1989 to provide services to children in need, including those in need of protection, and to looked after children. The Council has a duty to provide accommodation, and to make permanency plans, for all looked after children. For the majority of looked after children this permanency plan will be based upon a return to their birth or extended family. The Council had a duty to consider and promote adoption as the first option for those who cannot return. The Council has a duty to provide an Adoption Service.
- 4.2 Bath and North East Somerset's Adoption Service is provided by and is the primary responsibility of the Family Placement Team within the Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service. All other Children's Social Care teams contribute to the provision of the adoption services as do other Council Services and elected members through their roles as corporate parents.
- 4.3 The Adoption Service's main purpose is to make arrangements for the adoption of children and does so by providing comprehensive recruitment, training, assessment, approval and support services to prospective and approved adopters: preparing and matching adoptive parents and children: providing and co-ordinating adoption support services and information exchange. The Service also provides counselling for adults who are seeking information about their birth family.
- 4.4 Bath and North East Somerset's Adoption Service is provided in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Local Authority Adoption Services, and the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, the Adoption Act 1976 as amended, the Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983 as amended and the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003.
- 4.5 The Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983 and the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 are secondary legislation, with which a service provider must comply. Service Providers are expected to comply fully with the National Minimum Standards. The National Minimum standards form the basis for judgements by the Ofsted regarding notices to the Local Authority and reports to the Secretary of State under Section 47 of the Care Standards Act 2000.
- 4.6 Ofsted assumed responsibility for the registration and inspection of Adoption Services in April 2007, taking over from the Commission for Social Care Inspection, and had undertaken the previous inspection of the Council's Adoption Service in August 2008.
- 4.7 The attached report summarizes the findings of Ofsted in respect of the Council's Adoption Service – detailing the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. Ofsted uses inspection judgements that relate to

the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum standards for adoption services, as follows:-

- Outstanding – this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality.
- Good – this aspect of the provision is strong.
- Satisfactory – this aspect of the provision is sound.
- Inadequate – this aspect of the provision is not good enough.

4.8 The overall quality rating for the Council's Adoption Service is good, with the provision for helping children to achieve well and enjoy what they do and for helping children to make a positive contribution, judged to be outstanding.

4.9 Three recommendations were made to secure future improvements and actions have been taken to implement these within the timetable established by Ofsted. These are detailed in the Service Action Plan (attached as Appendix 2). Its implementation will be monitored by the Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service Management Group. Ofsted will review progress with these at their next announced inspection in 2013.

4.10 The Service has also taken steps to ensure that it builds upon the strengths highlighted in the Inspection Report.

5 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 Improving the life chances of disadvantaged teenagers and young people.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

6.2 The Report author and the Lead Member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issues and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 How the Service provides equality and diversity is assessed within the inspection, and judged by Ofsted to be good.

8 RATIONALE

8.1 The Council is required to respond to the Inspection Report and compile an action plan to respond to any recommendations

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None. The inspection report is a public document.

10 CONSULTATION

Trades Unions; Overview & Scrutiny Panel; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Stakeholders/Partners

10.1 Consultation has taken place with staff in the Adoption Services and across the Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service to inform the compilation of the action plan.

10.2 All prospective and adoptive parents will be provided with a written briefing about the inspection and the action plan.

10.3 The Inspection Report is a public document and will be made available where applicable to service users, prospective service users, carers, staff, children, parents of children, placing authorities and other interested parties.

10.4 The Trades Union was provided a copy of this report on 23rd December 2010, for information

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

Customer Focus; Young People; Human Rights

12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Council Solicitor) and Section 151 Officer (Strategic Director - Support Services) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	