

WEST YORKSHIRE ADOPTION JOINT COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 6TH JULY, 2018

Present: Councillor L Mulherin (Leeds) – Chair
Councillor: M Swift (Calderdale MBC), V Kendrick (Kirklees MBC) and
R Forster (City of Wakefield MDC)

Councillor H Hayden (LCC)

In Attendance: S Johal (LCC), J Jenkins (Calderdale MBC) and
J Grieve (LCC)

1 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

2 EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, in accordance with Regulation 4 of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as exempt on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information so designated as follows:-

“The Head of Service Report” – Appendix No.2 of the submitted report (See Minute No. 8 below) were deemed exempt from publication in accordance with Access to Information Rule 10.4 (3) (6a) as it included Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). In those circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. (Minute No. 8 referred)

3 LATE ITEMS

There were no late items

4 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests made at the meeting.

5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

6 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th January 2018 were agreed as a true and correct record.

7 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no issues raised under matters arising.

8 Head of Service Report

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report and provided a summary of the developments within One Adoption West Yorkshire since the last report in January 2018 which included:

- Staffing & HR
- Accommodation and Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Performance Management
- Interagency Budget (Confidential discussed in private session)

Members noted that staffing numbers remained stable, recent recruitment to posts would assist in covering the work left by vacancies. An area of concern was the Adoption Support Teams. It was reported that 3 members of staff had recently left the service with a number of others on long term sickness absence. Members were informed that the managing attendance team together with occupational health were working with individuals to address ill health in the service.

Referring to accommodation and service delivery it was reported that a number of staff were experiencing excessive travelling because the service was currently operating from 5 bases across the region. Members were informed the Senior Leadership Team were considering the following options

- Remain in the current arrangements
- Look at moving from 5 bases to 3 (so that the 3 teams in each area could be located together (as in the Leeds Office))
- Move to one central office location for everyone but for staff to have touch down space in each local authority area to maintain relationships with local authority staff

Members were informed that consultation with staff was currently ongoing and involvement with asset management in each area was progressing.

It was the view of the Member from Wakefield that there was a concern about staff moving out of Wakefield to Bradford and that it was understood that ongoing discussions were underway regarding this. Members accepted that one central office location was the preferred option but understood that finding a suitable location would be challenging and supported further discussions with asset management.

Information Technology (IT) continued to be problematic, accessing the local authority systems from a portal on a Leeds laptop was difficult due to the use of different systems across the region and priorities given to this by local authority IT teams. However, the IT Project Team was working with individual teams to progress this.

It was reported that Partnership Working was progressing well, child permanence report training for social workers across the region had been agreed and subsequently commissioned by One Adoption West Yorkshire. In addition training in respect of sibling assessments was also being commissioned to improve practice in these areas.

Performance Management was the subject of a separate report on the agenda.

Members noted the information around the interagency budget arrangements.

Commenting on the budget arrangements Members expressed concern about the interagency budget pressures and suggested that further details about this were required ahead of the budgets being set in each local authority.

In summing up the Chair said that the transition continued to progress but further development of the IT systems was required.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note and welcome the progress of the agency
- (ii) To support the further progression of these arrangements
- (iii) That further details about the interagency budget pressures be circulated to all Members of the Committee

9 Performance Report

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report and provided the fourth quarterly performance statistics of the regional agency which set out the reconciled figures over the period of the year.

Members were informed that work had been undertaken to establish the key performance criteria which would form the basis for practice improvement for the agency and this had been built upon over the period of the year.

The Head of Service suggested that adoption support was one area that required more detailed consideration. There were a number of discussions nationally about the data requirements that would assist in measuring performance and the adopter voice forum was working closely with officers in developing this. It was reported that work had been delayed at a national level

but progress was still ongoing with a view to trial some basic information during 18/19.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note and welcome the progress of the agency
- (ii) To support the further progression of these arrangements

10 Annual Agency Adoption Report & Statement of Purpose

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which presented annual report of the One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY).

Addressing the report the Head of Service informed Members that it was a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services, that each adoption service produced a statement of purpose, including its aims and objectives, a description of the service it provides and the facilities that were provided. The Statement of Purpose also provides an outline of those requirements and how the service was managed and its fitness to provide a comprehensive adoption service.

Members were informed that children's service adoption services were inspected against those standards by Ofsted. The Statement of Purpose provided an outline of those requirements and also how the service was managed and its fitness to provide adoption service. The Statement of Purpose also shows the policy and performance framework that underpins the work and explains how the welfare of children would be met. It also demonstrates the systems which we had been set in place to recruit, assess, prepare and support adopters and to family find for children with a plan for adoption.

Members welcomed the report and the continued development of One Adoption West Yorkshire

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note that the Annual Agency Adoption Report & Statement of Purpose had been considered by the Executive Board (Leeds City Council) as host authority at its meeting on 27th June 2018
- (ii) To note the minor amendment to the Statement of Purpose and the Annual Adoption Report
- (iii) To continue to support the work of One Adoption West Yorkshire to ensure children receive the best possible support

11 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 18th December 2018 at 10.00am in the Civic Hall, Leeds.