

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL)	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
23 NOVEMBER 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of: Regional Adoption Agency	Nicola Curley, Interim Director of Children's Services		
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University		
Contact Officer(s):	Joanne Banks, Head of the Regional Adoption Agency	07442 046221	

ANNUAL REPORT - REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: <i>Head of the Regional Adoption Agency</i>	Deadline date: <i>NA</i>
<p>It is recommended that Corporate Parenting Sub Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Notes the report</i> 2. <i>Raises any queries with officers</i> 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to Corporate Parenting Committee to provide a summary of the Adoption Service for Peterborough City Council Children's Social Care as part of the scheduled work items

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an Annual Report on the business of the Regional Adoption Agency for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adoption.
- 2.2 This report is for Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.4.4.2 To receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children services and children's homes with a view to recommending any changes.
- 2.3 The Annual report supports the city council's Prevention, Independence and Resilience corporate priority.
- 2.4 This report supports all aspects of the pledge, and it relates to ensuring who are in a adoption placement is offered high quality permanence placements.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 This report is the first Annual Report of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adoption – the Regional Adoption Agency for Cambridgeshire County Council & Peterborough City Council. The Agency is responsible for adoption services on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council & Peterborough City Council. Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council collaborated to establish Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption, which is a hosted model, hosted by Cambridgeshire County Council and started from December 2020. The Regional Adoption Agency was created in response to the legal requirement that authorities regionalise their adoption services. The vision and ambition of the two Local Authorities is for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adoption to ***make a life-long difference to the lives of children for whom adoption is in their best interests.***
- 4.2 Since December 2020, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adoption has had responsibility for recruiting, assessing and supporting prospective adopters, for non-agency adoption work including partner adoptions and intercountry adoptions. We have also had the primary responsibility for family finding for all children with adoption plans from the two Local Authorities. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adoption is also responsible for providing support to all parties affected by adoption, including adopters, adoptive families, adopted adults and birth relatives as well as supporting the partner local authority special guardians.
- 4.3 This Report provides a summary of developments for the period 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, the first full operational year of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adoption. The report fulfils the statutory requirement that an annual report be produced.
- 4.4 The Report is divided into subsections covering: an overview of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adoption, Performance, Service Update and Staffing Update.
- 4.5 The aims of the service have continued to be:
- Having a key role in the early permanency planning agenda within both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire and being instrumental in the care planning for children who have a plan for adoption
 - Recruiting adopters who can meet the needs of the children with adoption plans (specifically older children, sibling groups and children with additional vulnerabilities)
 - Offering high quality support to adopters, birth parents and carers and all parties involved with the children
 - Ensuring a culture of continuous challenge, innovation and improvement
 - Providing an accessible service to all parties affected by adoption and special guardianship (adopters, adoptees, birth families, foster carers, guardians and children in their care)
 - Developing a coherent and robust ‘Local Offer’ that provides the right support, at the right time to Adopters and Special Guardians
- 4.6 The current structure for the Regional Adoption Agency has continued in line with the proposals in the consultation where there are four distinct teams dedicated to delivering key focussed activity.
- 4.7 Recruitment and Assessment:

This service area recruits, assesses and supports prospective adopters to meet the needs of children waiting in each authority in line with their developed recruitment and marketing plan. In addition, the service undertakes annual reviews as required, assesses and supports parents or

partners and family relatives who wish to adopt a child on a non-agency basis and foster carers who are seeking to adopt a child in their care.

4.8 Family Finding:

This part of the service continues to take the lead responsibility for all aspects of the linking and matching of children with adopters. The service also provides support and advice to the child's Social Worker about the adoption process, coordinates other family finding activities and crucially increases the opportunities for children to be adopted who are older, have additional vulnerabilities or who are within sibling groups. Tracking children with a potential or actual adoption plan and reporting on adoption timescales against national and local indicators also takes place within this part of the service.

4.9 Adoption and Special Guardianship Support:

This service area undertakes assessments of Adopter and Special Guardian support needs or commissions these if required, undertaking applications to the Adoption Support Fund for children. The team also takes lead responsibility for reviewing financial allowances provided to families to inform what future allowances should be provided. The core offer also includes social events for children and young people, social/training events for adoptive parents, advice and signposting for adoptive families, independent support and advice to birth relatives, counselling and information to adopted adults post 18 years and independent support to birth parents including a letter box exchange service.

4.10 Panel and Quality Assurance:

This service area administers and supports Adoption Panels which recommend the approval of prospective adopters, matches between children and adopters and provides professional advice on best practice and regulations to the Agency Decision Makers within both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. The Agency Advisor plays a key role in maintaining a high standard of practice and performance through the quality assurance of all services areas within the Regional Adoption Agency. The panel have remained a very active part of the Regional Adoption Agency and joining Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption Panels together we have 4 Panel Chairs with a broad range of panel members who have supported the continued success in approving adopters and adoptive matches.

4.11 During its first full year of operation, between 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adoption has:

- Matched **58** children,
- Placed **65** children,
- Supported **69** children to be adopted,
- Placed **17** children in Early Permanence Placements,
- Commenced **40** prospective adoptive assessments
- Approved **42** adopters,
- Matched **41** adoptive families with children,
- Supported families with **£230,000** worth of Adoption Support Fund packages of support.

4.12 The RAA continues to make good progress in relation to the development of practice, systems and processes that operate across both Local Authorities to ensure that children and young people receive a consistent and child focused intervention that brings about securing

permanence arrangements where adoption is considered to be in their best interests. Continued effectiveness in developing additional support services for adopted children, young people and adopters, as well as special guardians, remains critical to the growth of the RAA, as well as utilising the Adoption Support Fund. The RAA will continue to have a presence nationally at the RAA Leaders' group and represent the views of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents to ensure we keep abreast of national trends and influence policy and government strategy where we can.

- 4.13 It is important to recognise that as this is the first Annual Report, throughout the period there has been significant focus on joining up and aligning systems, processes and bringing the staff group together. Whilst undoubtedly challenging, the Agency can report considerable success in doing so and this can be seen throughout this report.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 NA

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 NA

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 This report is just for noting.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 NA - Please see the Annual Report
There are no alternative options to consider.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 No financial implication

Legal Implications

- 9.2 No legal implications

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 NA

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 9.4 There is a neutral impact indicated in this report.
The report contains no proposals, and therefore there are no decisions which will have an impact on carbon emissions.

Other Implications

- 9.5 This report relates to children who are placed for adoption, and then adopted.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 - Please see the Annual Report

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