

**CORAM CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT**

*To:* **Children and Young People's Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **11 July 2017**

*From:* **Executive Director, Children Families and Adults.**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **n/a** *Key decision:*

*Purpose:* **This report fulfils a statutory responsibility to report to the Council on the service quality and outcomes in the adoption service**

*Recommendation:* **The Committee is asked to note the content of the report**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** Provision of adoption services is a key statutory requirement of the local authority. Adoption is an essential permanence option for Looked After children who cannot return to live within their birth family and provides legal and emotional security for children.
- 1.2** The Children Act 2004, Care Standards Act 2000 and associated Relevant Regulations and National Minimum Standards require Local Authority Adoption Services to report regularly on the operation of the service.
- 1.3** In August 2014 Cambridgeshire County Council entered into a contract with Coram to provide its adoption services, and a Voluntary Adoption Agency, Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption (CCA), was formed to deliver the service. CCA undertakes the majority of adoption service functions on behalf of the council, namely:
- Recruitment of sufficient and suitable adopters to meet the needs of Cambridgeshire children with adoption as their plan
  - Family finding and matching for children requiring adoptive families
  - Provision of adoption support for children placed for adoption, adopters and birth family members
  - Provision of services to adopted adults and those affected by adoption
- 1.4** The Council retained responsibility for two areas of adoption practice – Inter-country adoption and non-agency adoption (sometimes known as step-parent adoption)
- 1.5** The adoption contract value is £1.15million per year.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1** The CCA report is attached at Appendix One
- 2.2** Intercountry adoption  
Since 1 March 2017 inter-country adoption has been contracted (in conjunction with 5 neighbouring local authorities) to the Intercountry Adoption Centre (IAC). Intercountry adoption requires very specialist knowledge about adoption practices and country-specific information that is best provided by a dedicated specialist provider.
- 2.3** Non- agency adoption  
Non-agency adoption is any adoption for a child that is not instigated or organised by a local authority. An adult may make an adoption application directly to the court and has to notify the local authority of their intention to do so. The local authority is then required to provide a report to the court on the suitability of the arrangement and the adopters to meet the child's needs. In Cambridgeshire this work is undertaken by the Kinship Assessment team
- 2.4** In 2016-17 there were 45 enquiries of which 25 translated into adoption applications. 20 assessments were undertaken and adoption orders were made for 20 children.

There are 17 assessments awaiting allocation. This number has significantly reduced

during 2016-17 but this work has to take lower priority than court-ordered kinship fostering and special guardianship order reports for Looked After children whose cases are in Care Proceedings before the court.

### **3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

Report authors should evaluate the proposal(s) in light of their alignment with the following three Corporate Priorities.

#### **3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### **3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

There are no significant implications for this priority

#### **3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Providing sufficient adoptive families is essential to ensuring Looked After children have permanence options when they cannot return to their birth family
- Ensuring adoption is achieved in a timely way is a priority in enabling children to live within their permanent families at the earliest opportunity.

### **4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Resource Implications**

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- There are no significant implications of this annual report on resources however the following points are of note.
- The CCA contract has a cost of £1.15m per year for 5 years from August 2014.
- The contract seeks to provide an increasing number of adoptive placements from 35 to 40 increasing by one place each year of the contract
- The contract alone is unlikely to be able to meet the needs of children with a plan of adoption in 2017-18 because:
  - It has been identified that there are more children with adoption as the plan than the 38 that the contract provides for
  - The complexity of some children and sibling groups means that adopters recruited solely by CCA may not be able to meet this need, and adopters from the national pool will be required.
- Costs of placements from other local authorities or adoption agencies are £27,000 for a single child.
- The annual report sets out performance in 2016-17 and forms part of the contract and performance monitoring.

#### 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- CCA are contracted to provide adoption services on behalf of the Council until July 2019.
- The report forms part of the performance and contract monitoring arrangements.

#### 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Provision of adoption services is a highly regulated area and subject to scrutiny by both the Family Courts in respect of individual cases, and by Ofsted in inspection of Local Authority children's services.
- The annual report gives details of how CCA are meeting statutory requirements for practice and timescales
- CCA is registered with Ofsted as a Voluntary Adoption Agency with a judgement of 'Good'.

#### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

#### **SOURCE DOCUMENTS**

Source Documents	Location
None	