

# EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member



## REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

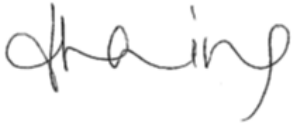
Executive Decision Reference Number – DL01 23/24

Decision	
1	<b>Title of decision:</b> Integration of Cornwall's adoption services into Adopt South West
2	<b>Decision maker:</b> Councillor Jemima Laing, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications
3	<b>Report author and contact details:</b> Nigel Denning , Service Director Children, Young People and Families nigel.denning@plymouth.gov.uk
4	<p><b>Decision to be taken:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To agree the proposal to integrate Cornwall into Adopt South West as a full member as outlined in the Briefing report.</li> <li>To agree the implementation of a revised funding formula that will be introduced over 2 years 2024/26</li> </ol>
5	<p><b>Reasons for decision:</b></p> <p>Cornwall joining Adopt South West will provide several key benefits to existing Local Authorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cornwall has an outstanding adoption service and expertise across children's social care, evidenced in its outstanding Ofsted inspection report outcome (2019). This would indicate that Cornwall can contribute positively to the good quality of social work practice in Adopt South West. Although Adopt South West has not yet been inspected by Ofsted a peer review by Essex County Council in 2021, identified a good quality of practice.</li> <li>Cornwall joining will offer a wider range of potential adopters for children across the Adopt South West area. A single pool of adopters would improve the capacity for a reduction in the number of 'change of plans' across the region, leading to potential for more children achieving permanence through adoption. It would improve adopter recruitment levels and all potential prospective adopters will have the same consistent preparation within the Adopt South West region.</li> <li>There is the potential for member authorities to see improved outcomes for children due to swifter matching for children within a larger pool of prospective adopters to achieve the most suitable match.</li> <li>An increase in the number of partners to share overhead costs will see each of the existing partners benefit by over £203k in the first year of their membership. All of the local authorities involved could potentially achieve better value for money when commissioning and procuring contracts for services and pooling resources.</li> </ol>

<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Alternative options considered and rejected:</b></p> <p>1. The no change option was not a viable option as the push for Cornwall to join a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) came for the Department for Education and given their location, Adopt South West was the only RAA that made logistical sense.</p> <p>2. The other proposal considered was for Cornwall’s adoption services to be integrated into Adopt South West, with the exception of the adoption support services. However, this option was not considered viable by the existing Partners as it would have meant that Partners in Adopt South West would no longer have been equal, which would have made the calculation of financial contributions and governance arrangements extremely difficult.</p>			
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Financial implications and risks:</b></p> <p>1. Work has taken place over recent months to ensure that Adopt South West will have sufficient additional budget to take on the functions for which it will now be responsible. In total additional budget of £916k will be required.</p> <p>At their meeting in August 2023 the Adopt South West Strategic Board were asked to consider a new funding formula for use for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27. This new methodology fundamentally changes the basis on which partners are recharged for the costs of Adopt South West and uses volumetric activity data to determine charges to each partner. Partners have informally indicated that they are happy with the new methodology and have recently informally agreed to implement this over a 2-year period, subject to the normal democratic decision-making processes required by each partner. Options based on implementing the formula over different timescales from one to three years were explored but consensus on the implementation over 2 years has been reached. All other options were rejected by one or more of the partners.</p> <p>Cornwall have worked closely with the Adopt South West finance team to enable their contribution levels under both the existing and proposed funding formula to be calculated by providing operational volume data and historic spend information.</p> <p>If the funding formula is fully implemented the Plymouth contribution to Adopt South West will reduce to <b>£996,107</b> in 2025/26 from <b>£1,098,126</b> in 2024/25 and <b>£1,219,614</b> in 2023/24</p> <p>The implementation of the new funding formula and its phasing are subject to the democratic decision-making processes of each partner. In the event that any partner fails to ratify this proposal then the existing funding formula would apply.</p>			
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b>          (please contact <a href="#">Democratic Support</a> for further advice)          Please type an X into the relevant boxes</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>	<p><b>Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:</b></p> <p>X in the case of <b>capital</b> projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of <b>£3million</b> in total</p> <p>X in the case of <b>revenue</b> projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of <b>£1 million</b></p> <p>X is <b>significant</b> in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising <b>two or more</b> wards in the area of the local authority.</p>
<p><b>If yes, date of publication of the notice in the <a href="#">Forward Plan of Key Decisions</a></b></p>				

<b>9</b>	<b>Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget:</b>	Keeping children safe is a key priority for the council. This proposal strengthens existing arrangements for adoption whilst spending money wisely and providing quality public services.		
<b>10</b>	<b>Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)</b>	None.		
<b>Urgent decisions</b>				
<b>11</b>	<b>Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(If yes, please contact Democratic Support ( <a href="mailto:democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk">democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk</a> ) for advice)
		<b>No</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>(If no, go to section 13a)</b>
<b>12a</b>	<b>Reason for urgency:</b>			
<b>12b</b>	<b>Scrutiny Chair Signature:</b>		<b>Date</b>	
	<b>Scrutiny Committee name:</b>			
	<b>Print Name:</b>			
<b>Consultation</b>				
<b>13a</b>	<b>Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<b>No</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>(If no go to section 14)</b>
<b>13b</b>	<b>Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?</b>			
<b>13c</b>	<b>Date Cabinet member consulted</b>			
<b>14</b>	<b>Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer
		<b>No</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>15</b>	<b>Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?</b>	<b>Name</b>	David Haley	
		<b>Job title</b>	Director of Children's Services	
		<b>Date consulted</b>	03 October 2023	

Sign-off									
16	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:		Democratic Support (mandatory)			DS62 23/24			
			Finance (mandatory)			DJN.23.24.119			
			Legal (mandatory)			LS/00001312/1/AC/18/10/23.			
			Human Resources (if applicable)						
			Corporate property (if applicable)						
			Procurement (if applicable)						
Appendices									
17	Ref.	Title of appendix							
	A	Briefing report for publication ( <i>mandatory</i> )							
	B	Equalities Impact Assessment ( <i>where required</i> )							
Confidential/exempt information									
18a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information?		Yes		If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in <b>18b</b> below.  (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain)				
			No	X					
			Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18b	Confidential/exempt briefing report title:								
Background Papers									
19	Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below.  Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.								
Title of background paper(s)			Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>Cabinet Member Signature</b>							
<b>20</b>	I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act (2010) and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached.						
<b>Signature</b>				<b>Date of decision</b>	25/10/23		
<b>Print Name</b>	Cllr Jemima Laing						