

**TO: EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
17 DECEMBER 2014**

**PAN BERKSHIRE ADOPTION SERVICE
(Director, Children, Young People & Learning)**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the staffing arrangements following the decision of the Executive to support the creation of a Pan Berkshire Adoption service.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Children and Families Act 2014, which came into force in March, required local authorities to implement additional requirements. This included a requirement to speed up the adoption process, reduce the number of organisations involved in adoption recruitment and encouraged local authorities to merge together to deliver improvements. These clearly presented considerable challenges for smaller Councils.
- 2.2 The Berkshire Unitaries had been discussing the opportunity for a joint adoption service for some time and four authorities involved with this new service have all received approval to proceed with the shared service arrangements with the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead hosting the service. Both Reading and Slough have declined the opportunity to be part of this joint arrangement and will continue to run adoption services in-house. A Management Board has been established by representatives from all four Unitaries which will provide direction and monitoring for the new shared service. The representative from Bracknell Forest will be the Chief Officer, Children Social Care.
- 2.3 On 22 July the Executive approved the transfer of the Council's Adoption Service into the Berkshire Shared Service with effect from 1 December.
- 2.4 Staff were TUPE transferred from the participating local authorities into the new service. The three staff subject to the transfer are all qualified social workers. The option of redeploying the staff in Bracknell Forest had been considered, particularly with the recruitment difficulties being experienced in Children's Social Care. However, given that their work activities and skills are based wholly on the work of the adoption service and the fact that the new service will need these key workers in order to be a success, this was not considered feasible. The three TUPE'd staff are a full time Assistant Team Manager and 1.8 Social Workers.
- 2.5 There has been considerable discussion with staff for some months regarding this proposal. As a result, all employment or service led questions have already been resolved and so no staffing issues have been identified.

Contact for further information

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