

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 December 2014

ADOPTION SERVICE – DRAFT CABINET REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an opportunity to undertake the pre-decision scrutiny of the draft Cabinet report on the Regional Adoption Service due to be considered by Cabinet on 11 December 2014. (attached at **Appendix A**).

Background

2. The establishment of a National Adoption Service is a key part of the implementation of the Social Services & Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014. The model agreed by the Deputy Minister for Social Services for the delivery of the new National Adoption Service visualises a two-tier functional model.
3. Committee will be aware of the proposals for establishing the Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative which were contained in the reports to this Committee in July 2014. The recommendations of this report were subsequently resolved by the Cabinets in Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil to allow for the development of the Regional Adoption Collaborative. Whilst Cardiff's Cabinet resolved to agree to the Vale of Glamorgan Council establishing and recruiting to the Regional Adoption Manager post and secured agreement to the Vale of Glamorgan Council acting as the host authority for the Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative, the Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet did not make the recommendation in relation to the appointment of the Regional Adoption Manager and made an in principle decision to the Vale of Glamorgan acting as host local authority.

4. Since the date of the last Cabinet Report and the decision of the Executive, plans to progress the National Adoption Service on a national and regional level have continued. The structure for the National Service is attached at **Appendix 3**. As the host authority for the central elements of the National Service, Cardiff has worked with the WLGA to establish a national tier of the service with the appointment of the Director of Operations and other key personnel. The National Adoption Advisory Group has been established. The National Adoption Service was formally launched at the Senedd in Cardiff on the 5th November during National Adoption Week.

Key Issues

5. This report sets out the results of the detailed work undertaken by the Councils to date on developing proposals for the Regional Collaborative. The business case which supports the implementation of the Regional Collaborative and which contains the proposed service delivery model can be found at **Appendix 1**. The key issues are summarised in the Cabinet Report.
6. The Cabinet report also sets out the Resources implications of the Adoption Service, both Financial and Employment together with the proposed collaborative model, which includes the delegation to a Joint Committee

Scope of Scrutiny

7. The governance arrangements for the National Model are that it has a Director of Operations who will be accountable professionally to the National Adoption Advisory Group . The Director of Operations will prepare and present bi-annual information reports to the Deputy Minister for Social Services and an annual report to the National Adoption Advisory Group. The Advisory Group will support the National Adoption Governance Board

to undertake its role in providing overall strategic direction for the National Adoption Service in Wales.

8. The Committee when considering the previous report in July 2014 recommended that this Scrutiny Committee will continue to undertake its duties, in respect to Adoption, as set out in the Council's Constitution:
 - *To scrutinise, measure and actively promote improvement in the Council's performance in the provision of services and compliance with Council policies, aims and objectives in the area of children and young people, including Children's Social Services: and*
 - *To assess the impact of partnerships with and resources and services provided by external organisations including the Welsh Government, Welsh Government Sponsored Public Bodies and quasi-departmental nongovernmental bodies on the effectiveness of Council service delivery.*
9. The report, attached at **Appendix A**, states that whenever Councils consider working together, a decision will be required as to the collaboration model to be adopted. In determining the collaborative model to be used, it is important that the decision is based on a detailed analysis of the costs, benefits and other implications of adopting the model proposed and comparison with other options available in respect of delivering the services concerned. The body of the attached report and associated appendices attached set out the detail of the analysis undertaken, leading to the recommendation that a Regional Adoption Collaborative be established for the four local authorities based on the Joint Committee model.
10. The Joint Committee model provides that the Council would delegate some of its functions relating to the provision of adoption services. The Joint Committee has no separate legal identity and so cannot own

property or enter into contracts in its own right. It is proposed that one Authority, the Vale of Glamorgan Council, will act as host authority and take responsibility for employment of staff directly affected, enter any third party contracts required and provide all support services required.

11. At this meeting Members may wish to consider the proposal and to pass on any observations, comments or recommendations to Cabinet prior to their consideration of the report, particularly in respect of the Governance arrangements and scrutiny of the Regional Adoption Service.

Way Forward

12. Councillor Sue Lent (Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families and Deputy Leader) has been invited and may make a statement. Tony Young (Director of Children's Services) and Angela Bourge (OM, Strategy, Commissioning & Resources) will make a presentation and will be available to answer any questions Members may have.

13. Members may wish to comment on the draft Cabinet report attached at **Appendix A**, submit any comments or recommendations to the Cabinet Member and Director of Children's Services, and consider any issues for further investigation.

Legal Implications

14. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be

undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

15. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. These financial implications will need to be considered before any changes are implemented. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the information contained in **Appendix A**, and submit any comments or recommendations to the Cabinet Member and Director of Children's Services prior to the Cabinet's consideration of the report.

Marie Rosenthal
County Clerk and Monitoring Officer

1 December 2014

**CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL
GYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD**

CABINET MEETING: 11 December 2014

REGIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

AGENDA ITEM:

PORTFOLIO: EARLY YEARS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Reason for this Report

1. To provide an update to Cabinet on the decisions needed to establish the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative.
2. To seek approval to establish the Vale, Valleys, and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative as outlined in this report.
3. To seek authorisation to implement the business and service delivery model for the Collaborative and to undertake further consultation with the recognised trade unions and staff to implement the proposed service delivery model.
4. To seek approval to establish and recruit to the post of the Business Support Manager for the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative along with the recruitment of the Regional Adoption Manager Post. Cabinet's approval to establish and recruit to the Regional Adoption Manager post was previously secured at its July 2014 Business Meeting.

Background

5. Cabinet will be aware of the proposals for establishing the Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative which were contained in the reports to Cabinet considered at the December 2013 and July 2014 Cabinet Business Meetings. The recommendations of these reports were resolved by the Cabinets in Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil to allow for the development of the Regional Adoption Collaborative. Whilst Cardiff's Cabinet resolved to agree to the Vale of

Glamorgan Council establishing and recruiting to the Regional Adoption Manager post and secured agreement to the Vale of Glamorgan Council acting as the host authority for the Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative, the Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet did not make the recommendation in relation to the appointment of the Regional Adoption Manager and made an in principle decision to the Vale of Glamorgan acting as host local authority.

6. Since the date of the last Cabinet Report and the decision of the Executive, plans to progress the National Adoption Service on a national and regional level have continued. The structure for the National Service is attached at **Appendix 3**. As the host authority for the central elements of the National Service, Cardiff has worked with the WLGA to establish a national tier of the service with the appointment of the Director of Operations and other key personnel. The National Adoption Advisory Group has been established. The National Adoption Service was formally launched at the Senedd in Cardiff on the 5th November during National Adoption Week.

7. It is Welsh Government's expectation and a commitment by local government that all five Regional Collaboratives which will form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales are to become operational in 2014. The other four Regional Collaboratives are either operational already or will achieve this aim within the agreed timetable. In order to ensure the long term sustainability of the National Service and as part of implementing the Social Services & Well-Being Act (Wales) Act 2014, Welsh Government officers are in the process of drafting legislative powers pursuant to the Act which will require local authorities to collaborate in relation to the provision of their adoption services. These new powers will be subject of a consultation process.

8. Within this Regional Collaborative, considerable work has been undertaken to progress plans to develop the collaboration, a business case and a service delivery model. The Project Development Officer has continued to oversee the development of the implementation plan. A number of technical groups with representation from each of the four local authorities have continued to agree issues in respect of financial, human resources (HR), legal and IT and information governance matters. The technical groups have provided detailed information and advice at the request of the Steering Group in overseeing the development of the Collaborative.

9. Joint working arrangements in respect of training of prospective adopters and the sharing of assessments of prospective adopters and the resources available in respect of placements for children have been developed across the region. Plans are also in place to establish a Regional Adoption Panel which will operate from locations north and south of the regional area. Expressions of interest have been invited from members of the existing Adoption Panels to join a central list of Panel members to support the new Regional Panels.
10. Work is continuing in relation to the development of procedures and protocols with local authorities to underpin the work of the Regional Collaborative. National Performance Indicators in respect of the provision for adoption services have been published by Welsh Government and, with effect from April 2014, all Regional Collaboratives have been required to report upon their performance as measured against the National Performance Indicators. Systems have been developed at a local level to capture the data and report as required on a quarterly basis. The Vale of Glamorgan has responsibility for uploading the regional data onto the national database and the Collaborative has fully complied with the reporting requirements in a timely manner.

Issues

11. This report sets out the results of the detailed work undertaken by the Councils to date on developing proposals for the Regional Collaborative. The business case which supports the implementation of the Regional Collaborative and which contains the proposed service delivery model can be found at **Appendix 1**. The key issues are summarised below.
12. The policy and legislative background in respect of the development of the Regional Collaboratives sets a very clear agenda for change, as detailed in earlier reports considered by the Cabinet. In the business case, Welsh Government's expectations for the establishment and operation of all Regional Adoption Collaboratives in 2014 are considered in line with legislation which makes provision for joint arrangements in relation to an Authority's adoption service. Welsh Ministers currently may only direct two or more local authorities to enter into specified arrangements for the provision of their adoption but, before giving a direction under this section, they must consult the local authorities to which it is to be given.

13. The anticipated timescale has presented a challenge in terms of developing an agreed service delivery model across the four authorities which best delivers the aims of the Collaborative in delivering an integrated, comprehensive service which will promote service priorities and ensure performance measures are met. A number of proposed service delivery models were considered as set out in the business case.
14. It is proposed that the current model of delivering adoption services across the four local authority areas involved in this Regional Collaborative will change from four generic teams to services being provided by three co-located specialist teams. It is envisaged that the specialist focus will improve service delivery and outcomes, particularly in respect of the recruitment and assessment of adopters and increase placement opportunities for children requiring adoptive placements. It will also ensure that, through the creation of a specialist team specifically for adoption support services, this function will be afforded the same priority as other service areas.
15. Reorganising teams and amalgamating staff in one location may result initially in short term disruption to service delivery. However, it is intended that staff will retain their own caseload upon transfer to the host authority until the reorganisation takes place. We believe that the immediate impact upon service delivery will be outweighed by longer term benefits and efficiencies as a result of collaborative working.
16. The proposed service delivery model and staffing structure in respect of the Collaborative has formed part of the consultation process and was based upon a detailed analysis of the service needs over a period of three years and likely projected future service needs. A summary of the relevant data is contained in the business case. The Regional Collaborative will be enhanced by the creation of two new posts, the Regional Adoption Manager and Business Support Manager. The ability to recruit to these posts will be a key milestone in establishing the Collaborative and the proposed transfer of staff. This is reflected elsewhere in other Collaboratives in Wales which have already established similar regional management arrangements.
17. In deciding the number and type of posts required (both at a managerial and practitioner level), the need to streamline the number of managerial posts within the new structure was considered. It was recognised that

practitioners working in adoption generally have more experience than newly qualified practitioners and so they need less supervisory oversight. The proposed structure does not retain the Senior Practitioner posts which currently exist in two authorities; however, only two of these individuals are 'in scope' for transfer. The rationale for this is outlined in detail in the business case but is derived from a lack of uniformity in the role across the four authorities and the potential for duplication with other roles within the structure.

18. The proposed structure of the business support staff reflects the anticipated workload to be generated by the Collaborative and having regard to economies of scale resulting from co-location.

19. The financial and budgetary implications of the new service along with the proposals for premises, IT requirements and governance arrangements are set out in the business case. These requirements can be achieved within budget.

20. The key milestones to be achieved in implementing the Collaborative, including the steps which have been achieved to date, are detailed in the business case. The timescales proposed to ensure that the essential elements of the Collaborative are operational remain challenging. The commitment to ongoing consultation with staff and recognised trade unions throughout this process will mitigate against some of the risks, along with robust joint working and decision making arrangements between the partner authorities.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

21. There will be one off implementation costs to cover the procurement of new IT and communications equipment, relocation, marketing and other peripheral costs. These are projected to total £38,000. It is intended to fund these initial costs from grant monies made available by Welsh Government to implement the new legislation. These costs have been apportioned to authorities as follows:

	Cardiff (37.1%) £000	RCT (34.8%) £000	Merthyr (11.5%) £000	VOGC (16.6%) £000	TOTAL £000
One off Costs	14	13	5	6	38

22. Each local authority's existing budgets and expenditure have been reviewed and an indicative budget for the first year of operation has been established. Contributions to be made by each authority to the Collaborative have been projected. Overall, the budget has been set to provide an initial level of saving in the service of £19k. However, it is anticipated that further efficiency savings will be made once the Collaborative is operational.

23. It is considered that this collaboration can provide an improved level of service for users, will be a more efficient and resilient service, while achieving an overall level of savings and will aim to reduce the overall LAC population across the region.

24. Certain areas of expenditure will not be included in the budget to be transferred for the first year (e.g. adoption allowances, adoption support and agency fees). While these payments will be administered by the Collaborative, they will be directly recharged to the responsible authority until standardised policies for their payment are put in place and further work is undertaken on developing a formula for their recharge.

25. The initial proposed budget and contributions from authorities is as follows:

Costs	TOTAL	Cardiff		Merthyr		RCT		VOG	
	£000	%	£000	%	£000	%	£000	%	£000
Staff	1,010	37.1	375	11.5	116	34.8	351	16.6	168
Other Staff	37	37.1	14	11.5	4	34.8	13	16.6	6
Commissioning	46	37.1	17	11.5	5	34.8	16	16.6	8
Running	117	37.1	43	11.5	14	34.8	41	16.6	19
Panel	30	37.9	11	10.2	3	44.6	14	7.3	2
Hosting	30	37.1	11	11.5	4	34.8	10	16.6	5
Annual Cost	1,270		471		146		445		208
Current Budget	1,289		472		154		454		209
Over/(Under) Current Budget	(19)		(1)		(8)		(9)		(1)

26. The proposed accommodation for the Collaborative at Ty Pennant, Pontypridd has been costed and leasing arrangements will be agreed via

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the respective Estates Department of the Vale of Glamorgan and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

27. The IT requirements of the Collaborative and the provision of support to an offsite office location by the Vale of Glamorgan Council have been scoped and costed and are included in the proposed budgets previously shown.

Proposed Collaborative Model

28. Following implementation of s.170 Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which inserts a new s.3A into the Children and Adoption Act 2002, Welsh Ministers may direct two or more local authorities in Wales to enter into specified arrangements with each other in relation to the provision of specified services maintained under s.3 (1) of the Children and Adoption Act 2002. Before giving a direction under this section, the Welsh Ministers must consult the local authorities to which it is to be given. 'Specified arrangements' under s.3 (1) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 include (among other things) arrangements as set out in s.170 (3) (a)-(h) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

29. Whenever Councils consider working together, a decision will be required as to the collaboration model to be adopted. In determining the collaborative model to be used, it is important that the decision is based on a detailed analysis of the costs, benefits and other implications of adopting the model proposed and comparison with other options available in respect of delivering the services concerned. The body of the report and the appendices attached set out the detail of the analysis undertaken, leading to the recommendation that a Regional Adoption Collaborative be established for the four local authorities based on the Joint Committee model.

30. The Joint Committee model provides that the Council would delegate some of its functions relating to the provision of adoption services. The Joint Committee has no separate legal identity and so cannot own property or enter into contracts in its own right. It is proposed that one Authority, the Vale of Glamorgan Council, will act as host authority and take responsibility for employment of staff directly affected, enter any third party contracts required and provide all support services required.

31. If it is agreed to proceed with the proposal, it will be necessary for the Authorities to conclude a formal agreement, referred to as a 'Partnership Agreement'. This agreement will set out amongst other things:

- The extent of the matters to be delegated to the Joint Committee, and any delegations to officers in the shared service;
- The constitutional basis of the joint committee and its terms of reference;
- The terms of reference and membership of the Management and Executive Boards;
- The termination and exit provisions;
- The structure of the Regional Collaborative, staffing proposals and pensions;
- As to the apportionment of costs, and what indemnities the Host Authority would seek from the other authorities in respect of carrying out its role;
- The financial management arrangements;
- Contain provision to address matters such as disputes, variations, data protection and freedom of information.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

32. In considering this matter the decision maker must have regard to the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010. Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must, in making decisions, have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity and; foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.

33. The equalities implications are set out in the Equality Impact Assessment appended to the report (**Appendix 2**). It is envisaged that the Collaborative will promote equal opportunity for prospective adopters and those requiring support service by ensuring consistency of response and approach. The Collaborative will also increase placement opportunity and choice for children requiring adoptive placements.

34. The purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment is to ensure that the Council has understood the potential impacts of the proposal in terms of equality so that it can ensure that it is making proportionate and rational

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decisions having due regard to its public sector equality duty. The decision maker must have due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment in making its decision on the options to be submitted for consultation

Consultation

Consultation with Adoption Managers and staff

35. There has also been staff consultation and engagement as detailed above and this is also expected to continue throughout the project. Please also see paragraph 30 for further details.

(Feedback from December 3 staff consultation to follow)

Consultation with Trade Unions

36. This report has been subject to consultation with recognised trade unions. In accordance with each respective local authority's collective agreements, consultation with their respective trade unions has started and is expected to continue throughout the project.

(Feedback from December 3 staff / TU consultation to follow)

Feedback from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee

37. The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee considered the implications of the Regional Collaborative at its meeting held on 9 December 2014.

(Feedback to be inserted following Committee on 9 December 2014)

Comments on consultation feedback required also

Reasons for Recommendations

38. To enable the Regional Collaborative to be established on an agreed basis in terms of cost, funding, income, savings, service level, structure and timing of implementation of the Regional Collaborative to enable the creation of the shared service with appropriate governance mechanisms.

39. To enable the efficient and effective administration of the service in line with the Joint Committee governance model.

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40. To enable the Regional Collaborative to be established in line with the timescales set out in this report and associated appendices and for the appointment of the Regional Adoption Manager and Business Support Manager to be undertaken.
41. To ensure that Cabinet continues to exercise effective oversight of this key function.
42. To consider the views of the Scrutiny Committees and recognised trade unions.
43. To enable completion of the final version of the Partnership Agreement.

Legal Implications

Legal Powers

44. There are a number of legal powers available to the Councils to facilitate the proposed collaborative and creation of the Joint Committee. These powers include Sections 101, 111 and s.113 of the Local Government Act 1972; s.2 and s.19 of the Local Government Act 2000; s.9 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and s.1 of the Local Authority (Goods and Services) Act 1970. These powers include the ability to delegate functions, the ability for two or more authorities to discharge any of their functions jointly, and where this occurs, to do so via a Joint Committee, and/or by their ability to supply administrative professional and technical services.
45. Section 12 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires local authorities when considering their duty of continuous improvement to consider whether it would that would be facilitated through exercise of the powers of collaboration under section 9 (which include the delegation powers under section 101 LGA 1972 and section 19 LGA 2000)
46. Under section.170 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which inserts a new s.3A into the Children and Adoption Act 2002, Welsh Ministers may direct two or more local authorities in Wales to enter into specified arrangements with each other in relation to the provision of specified services maintained under s.3 (1) of the Children and Adoption Act 2002. This provision came into force on 1 November 2014
47. Whilst no direction has been given under that section the arrangements being proposed have been progressed in accordance with the

expectations of Welsh Government. If the arrangements are put into place it is envisaged that there would be no requirement for Welsh Government to issue a direction.

48. The proposals raise sensitive employment implications for staff (including staff who support the services concerned) and the employment law implications are set out in this report in the combined HR and legal advice section. .

Financial Implications

49. The report sets out the resource implications for the new Regional Adoption Service and identifies a required annual funding contribution of £471,000 per annum for Cardiff. This can be funded from the existing Adoption budgets in Children's Services.
50. The report also identifies one-off implementation costs of £38,000 of which Cardiff will fund £14,000. These initial costs will be funded from grant monies made available by Welsh Government to implement the new legislation.
51. The Human Resources implications confirm that the principles of TUPE apply and that existing staff will transfer to the new Regional Collaborative. No voluntary severance costs are anticipated.

Human Resource Implications

52. The Human Resources (HR) and Employment Law Technical Group has considered all staff transfer options and it is agreed that the principles of TUPE apply. Staff and recognised trade unions have been advised of this as part of the consultation process.
53. Work has been undertaken to determine contractual terms and conditions and differences which may apply. HR representatives have also identified those staff in scope for transfer. It is acknowledged that there will be a change of staff location for some. Terms and conditions will be maintained on the whole. Some staff may see some changes to existing work arrangements due to operational or organisational issues. For example, some payroll dates may change. Such matters will be considered as part of the ongoing consultation with staff.
54. The staff consultation process began on 20 August 2014 following discussions with the recognised trade unions. All affected staff have received written correspondence informing them of the process.

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Consultation meetings for all staff in scope for transfer to the Collaborative were held during the week commencing 13 October 2014 in each of the authorities and are planned again for the first week in December 2014. Trade union representatives have been involved in these meetings.

55. The new posts of Regional Adoption Manager and Business Support Manager are key to the establishment of the Collaborative and it is envisaged that these posts will be recruited to via a competitive process ring-fenced initially to the four local authority areas. Other management posts will be appointed via a matching process.
56. The transfer date for staff will take effect after the appointment of the Regional Adoption Manager, enabling the Collaborative to become fully operational. As part of the consultation process, staff have been asked to indicate a preference for a particular specialist team and these will be considered as part of the selection process for the teams. It is anticipated that there will be no surplus staff in the restructure and that recruitment of new staff will be required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

57. Cabinet is recommended to:

- a. note the contents of this report
- b. approve the business case, service delivery model and implementation plan, subject to further consultation with the trade unions and staff, for establishing the Vale, Valleys, and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative based on the model set out and described in **Appendix 1**, with governance arrangements based on a Joint Committee model.
- c. agree that the post of the Business Support Manager be established and advertised by the Vale of Glamorgan Council along with the regional Adoption Manager post.
- d. agree that a further update report be brought to Cabinet following conclusion of the consultation with affected staff and trade unions detailing any substantial changes to the resource, employment, and legal implications set out in this report.
- e. provide delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Member and other senior officers as appropriate to agree and finalise a Partnership Agreement covering the matters set out in the body of this report, and to

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authorise signature of the Partnership Agreement by the Head of Legal Services.

58. In considering this matter, Cabinet is also asked to take into account the views of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee and recognised trade unions and the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equalities Impact Assessment attached as **Appendix 2**.

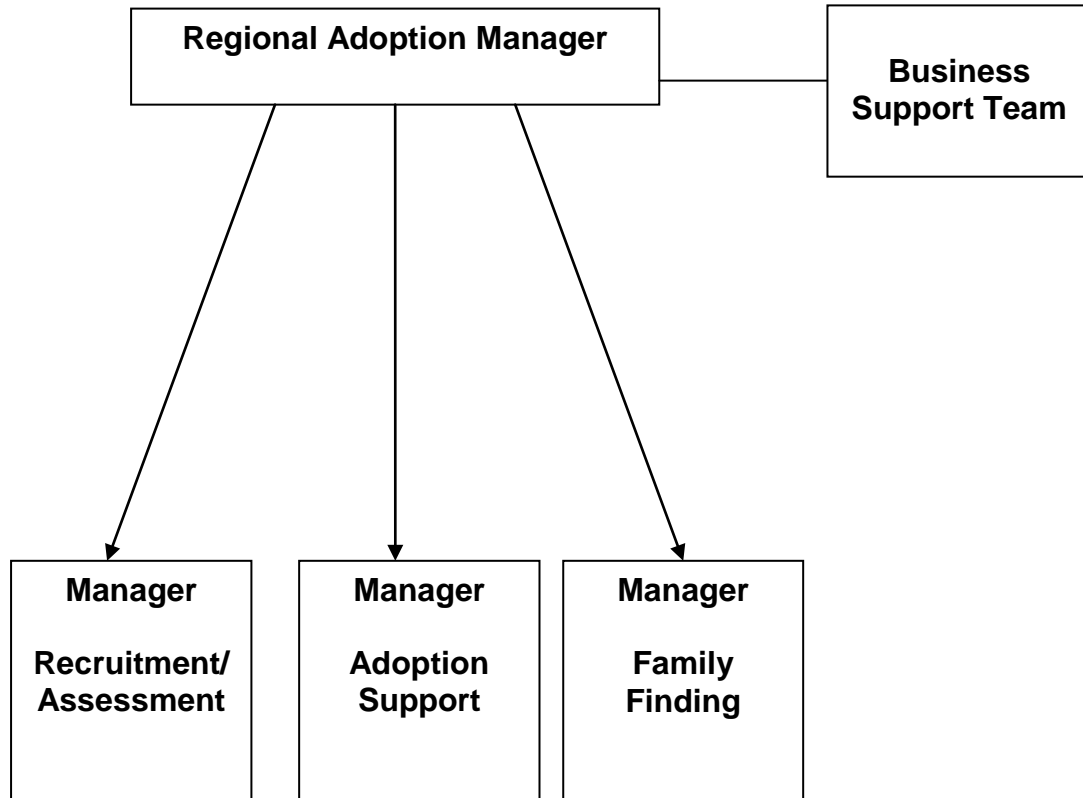
TONY YOUNG
Director of Children's Services
December 2014

The following appendices are attached:-

Appendix 1 - Service Delivery Model
Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 3 - Structure of the National Adoption Service
Appendix 4 - Business Case October 2014

**APPENDIX 1
(of Business Case)**

PROPOSED SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) – Part 1

V0.6 October 2014

Policy title and purpose (brief outline):	Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative
Report prepared by:	Rachel Evans – Lead Head of Service
Status:	The EIA is an evolving document which will be reviewed as the establishment of the Collaborative progresses.
Date:	October 2014

1. Please provide a brief description of the policy/decision

The vision is to create a fully integrated Regional Adoption Collaborative comprised of Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC's adoption service operating within one management structure in accordance with statutory requirements.

Establishing a National Adoption Service is a key component of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014. The Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative is one of five regional collaboratives which will form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales.

In October and November 2013, a common report was taken to the respective authorities' Cabinets outlining proposals to work in partnership with the four Councils and to agree in principle the Vale of Glamorgan Council as the host authority for the Collaborative. A further report was presented to the four Cabinets in July 2014 and a further more detailed report will be presented in December 2014.

The proposals provide a pathway for creating an effective and responsive National Adoption Service. This will help to more effectively recruit and support adoptive placements and reduce delays for children waiting for placements.

Work has been undertaken to develop the service specification including the areas of service for which the Collaborative will be responsible. It has therefore been identified that the responsibilities of the Regional Collaborative will centre around three main functions:

- All functions associated with the recruitment, training, assessment and support of prospective adopters. This includes inter-country adopters, step-parent & relative adopters.
- The provision of a family finding, linking and matching service for all children requiring adoptive placements.
- The provision of a range of adoption support services for children, birth parents and adoptive families pre and post adoption. This function also includes the provision of counselling for adopted persons seeking access to their birth records and the provision of an intermediary service for persons seeking to trace adopted persons.

Each local authority within the Regional Collaborative will retain responsibility for:

- The assessment, care planning and review of children referred and placed for adoption.
- Maintaining the functions of the Agency Decision Maker in respect of children requiring an 'ought to be placed' decision.
- Assessing the support needs of children requiring adoption.
- The choice of adoptive placement and working with the family finder in matching the child with prospective adopters.

Against this background, a number of models of service delivery were developed and discussed at workshops with managers and staff. The preferred model of delivery supports the restructuring of the Adoption Collaborative into functional teams which has been based upon an analysis of service need within the region.

The analysis has identified a number of areas where improvements in the service provided to children, prospective and approved adopters and birth parents are required. It highlighted the large number of children in the region requiring adoptive placements but also the potential to increase the number of adopters being recruited.

During the engagement process staff have acknowledged the need to improve practice in certain areas and that by restructuring the way adoption services are delivered and pooling resources, opportunities for new ways of working and creative practice in all key areas will be developed. Within the region there are examples of development in collaborative practice already having a positive benefit on the service, including joint training of adopters and sharing adoptive placements. In terms of resources, it is expected that working collaboratively with regional partners the pool of potential in-house adoptive placements will increase and opportunities to use resources more effectively will be provided.

Failing to take a collaborative approach carries considerable risk for the continued individual provision of these statutory services. Welsh Government via powers bestowed in the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 will be enabled to direct those authorities which do not collaborate.

2. We have a legal duty to engage with people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (please refer to Annex A of the EIA guidance) identified as being relevant to the policy. What steps have you taken to engage with stakeholders, both internally and externally?

Internal:

A written briefing was sent to all staff in the region in October 2013 regarding the Regional Collaborative.

Workshops were held with managers in November 2013 and February 2014, and with staff and managers in December 2013 to design the service model. These ideas and discussions helped influence the structure of the model which has been subsequently agreed by the Steering Group, Directors and Cabinet.

The total number of staff that attended the workshops from each Council is shown below:

Vale of Glamorgan	-10
RCT	- 6
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	- 5
Cardiff	- 9



A further written briefing was sent to all staff in the region by the Steering Group during the week of 24 June 2014 and individual authority meetings were held with staff during that week to discuss the common report being presented to Cabinet.

Each of the authorities has consulted with trade unions on a local basis and a full pre-scrutiny process took place prior to the reports being taken to Cabinet.

Technical groups comprising lead HR, Legal, Finance, and ICT colleagues across all authorities have been established and have a work plan which they are progressing.

Further meaningful consultation has taken place with staff and trade unions as part of the formal consultation process during week commencing 13th October 2014 and a further session is scheduled for the first week of December.

A Steering Group comprised of Heads of Service from the four authorities has been established and meets bi-monthly. Each Head of Service reports upon progress to their respective Directors and a joint meeting was held in May 2014 with all the Directors to agree the service delivery model.

Individual meetings were held with lead Cabinet members and Directors for each of the authorities in June 2014 to discuss plans for the regional service and prior to the report being presented to Cabinet.

A report outlining the proposals was taken to Cabinet in each local authority in October/November 2013 and a further update report in July 2014. A further more detailed report will be presented in December 2014.

External:

As part of the process for establishing the National Adoption Service in accordance with the functional model developed by the ADSS and endorsed by the Deputy Minister for Social Services, a National Task and Finish Group has been established to oversee the implementation of the Service. It comprises senior officers from the lead authorities from each regional collaborative, representatives from Welsh Government, ADSS Cymru, CSSIW, BAAF, and voluntary sector providers.

Regional reports on progress are presented to the Task and Finish Group on a monthly basis.

Four national workshops have been held to consider a range of topics: the role of the medical adviser, voluntary sector, developing legal agreements and adoption support. These have been attended by medical advisers, voluntary sector providers and representatives from all of the regions.

Within the region, a communication strategy for briefing users and stakeholders is being developed.

A meeting is being arranged with Medical Advisers to progress plans for joint regional working.

No engagement has taken place with service users on the basis that there is no discernable difference in how individuals will access or receive the service. The Collaborative will retain its statutory responsibilities for the delivery of adoption services as detailed on page 2.

3. Your decisions must be based on robust evidence. What evidence base have you used? Please list the source of this evidence e.g. National Survey for Wales. Do you consider the evidence to be strong, satisfactory or weak and are there any gaps in evidence?

The evidence base for the Regional Collaborative stems from a number of Government initiatives which have highlighted the merits of authorities collaborating to provide services. In 2011 Welsh Government published 'Sustainable Social Services - A Framework for Action' which highlighted the need to develop a National Adoption Service in Wales as a key policy initiative. This was embodied in the new legislation governing Social Services.

Other important sources of evidence are the National Assembly's Inquiry into Adoption 2012 which highlighted the gaps in adoption provision and practice, the Department of Education's research into marketing of adopters highlighting the need for timeliness of response published in June 2014, and Cardiff University's research into adoption support published in July 2014 which has provided a clear picture of adoption support and the variance of provision.

Additionally, the regional data analysis over the past three years has provided evidence of service gaps and practice which needs to be improved, particularly in terms of converting enquiries from prospective adopters into applicants and the length of time children await placement.

We consider that this is a robust set of evidence which lends support to the argument that current services need to change to be able to deliver more efficient and timely services. The current economic and budgetary position also supports the need to pool resources and work collaboratively.

Welsh Government has produced a set of national performance indicators which measure key activities for the service. Regions are required to report against these indicators on a quarterly basis which will ensure that the evidence base for the service is kept under review and performance is challenged.

It is important to note any opportunities you have identified that could advance or promote equality.

Impact

Please complete the next section to show how this policy / decision / practice could have an impact (positive or negative) on the protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 (refer to the EIA guidance document for more information).

Lack of evidence is not a reason for *not* progressing to carrying out an EIA. Please highlight any gaps in evidence that you have identified and explain how/if you intend to fill these gaps.



4.1 Do you think this policy / decision / practice will have a positive or negative impact on people because of their age?

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff based on age. Statistics regarding the age range of existing adoption staff in the four authorities indicate a range between 20-29 and 60+. The majority of staff are aged 30-49.

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on wider stakeholders based on age. It is anticipated delivery of adoption services to adopters and adoptive children will improve. This improvement relates principally to an expectation that the number and range of adoptive placements will increase and children will be matched more quickly.

4.2 Because they are disabled?

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff based on disability. Staff have an opportunity to provide details of any disability but are not required to. There is no information to suggest any of the existing adoption staff have a disability. Each case would be looked at individually should it arise.

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on wider stakeholders based on disability. It is anticipated delivery of adoption services to adopters and adoptive children will improve. This improvement relates principally to an expectation that the number and range of adoptive placements will increase and children will be matched more quickly.

4.3 Because of their gender (man or woman)?

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff based on gender. Statistics regarding the gender of existing adoption staff in the four authorities indicate the majority of staff are female.

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on wider stakeholders based on gender. It is anticipated delivery of adoption services to adopters and adoptive children will improve. This improvement relates principally to an expectation that the number and range of adoptive placements will increase and children will be matched more quickly.

4.4 Because they are transgender?

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff based on transgender.

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on wider stakeholders based on transgender. It is anticipated delivery of adoption services to adopters and adoptive children will improve. This improvement relates principally to an expectation that the number and range of adoptive placements will increase and children will be matched more quickly.



4.5 Because of their marriage or civil partnership?

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff based on marriage or civil partnership.

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff based on marriage or civil partnership. It is anticipated delivery of adoption services to adopters and adoptive children will improve. This improvement relates principally to an expectation that the number and range of adoptive placements will increase and children will be matched more quickly.

4.6 Because of their pregnancy or maternity?

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff based on pregnancy or maternity.

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on wider stakeholders based on pregnancy or maternity. It is anticipated delivery of adoption services to adopters and adoptive children will improve. This improvement relates principally to an expectation that the number and range of adoptive placements will increase and children will be matched more quickly

4.7 Because of their race?

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff based on race. Statistics regarding the race of existing adoption staff in the four authorities indicate the majority are White. Some staff chose not to disclose this information.

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on wider stakeholders based on race. It is anticipated delivery of adoption services to adopters and adoptive children will improve. This improvement relates principally to an expectation that the number and range of adoptive placements will increase and children will be matched more quickly.

4.8 Because of their religion and belief or non-belief?

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff based on religion and belief or non-belief. The majority of existing adoption staff chose not to disclose this information.

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on wider stakeholders based on religion and belief or non-belief. It is anticipated delivery of adoption services to adopters and adoptive children will improve. This improvement relates principally to an expectation that the number and range of adoptive placements will increase and children will be matched more quickly.

4.9 Because of their sexual orientation?

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff based on sexual orientation.

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff based on sexual orientation. It is anticipated delivery of adoption services to adopters and adoptive children will improve. This improvement relates principally to an expectation that



the number and range of adoptive placements will increase and children will be matched more quickly.

4.10 Do you think that this policy will have a positive or negative impact on people's human rights? Please refer to point 1.4 of the EIA Annex A - Guidance for further information about Human Rights.

We have no evidence to suggest there will be an impact on staff or wider stakeholders based on human rights.

If you have identified any impacts (other than negligible ones), positive or negative, on any group with protected characteristics, please complete Part 2.

Only if there are no or negligible positive or negative impacts should you go straight to part 2 and sign off the EIA.



Equality Impact Assessment – Part 2

1. Building on the evidence you gathered and considered in Part 1, please consider the following:

1.1 How could, or does, the policy help advance / promote equality of opportunity?

For example, positive measures designed to address disadvantage and reach different communities or protected groups?

An improvement in service accessibility for all key stakeholders.

There is considerable evidence regarding the difficulties experienced in finding adoptive families for children who need them and the new service is intended to tackle these obstacles.

1.2 How could / does the policy / decision help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation?

The service delivery will be maintained at a similar or improved level. Policies of the host employer will be adhered to. A commitment to ensure the recruitment process is fair and clarity of process has been made.

1.3 How could/does the policy impact on advancing / promoting good relations and wider community cohesion?

Collaborative working between the four authorities will enhance the quality of service provision. Persons seeking approval as adoptive parents and individuals requiring access to their birth records and the support of an intermediary service will be afforded a single point of contact. This should provide a more timely, equitable response and remove some of the existing barriers to service. The Regional Collaborative will provide a more timely and equitable response for children requiring adoptive placements by increasing the choice of local placements. Protocols will be developed with local authorities and key stakeholders to ensure positive joint working.

2. Strengthening the policy

2.1 If the policy is likely to have a negative effect ('adverse impact') on any of the protected groups or good relations, what are the reasons for this?

What practical changes/actions could help reduce or remove any negative impacts identified in Part 1?

There are no negative impacts identified.



2.2 If no action is to be taken to remove or mitigate negative / adverse impact, please justify why.

(Please remember that if you have identified unlawful discrimination (immediate or potential) as a result of the policy, the policy must be changed or revised.)

N/A

3. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing

How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy?

List details of any follow-up work that will be undertaken in relation to the policy (e.g. consultations, specific monitoring etc.).

This will be built into our implementation plan for the change process and be monitored as part of the governance mechanisms which will include a committee of elected members.

There is a commitment to introduce robust monitoring of service uptake by relevant protected characteristics that are highlighted in the engagement process. For example, focus groups, feedback forms and one-to-one sessions for staff. This information will be available for inclusion in each local authorities' annual equality report.

The results of all impact assessments where the impact is significant will be published on the Welsh Government's website.

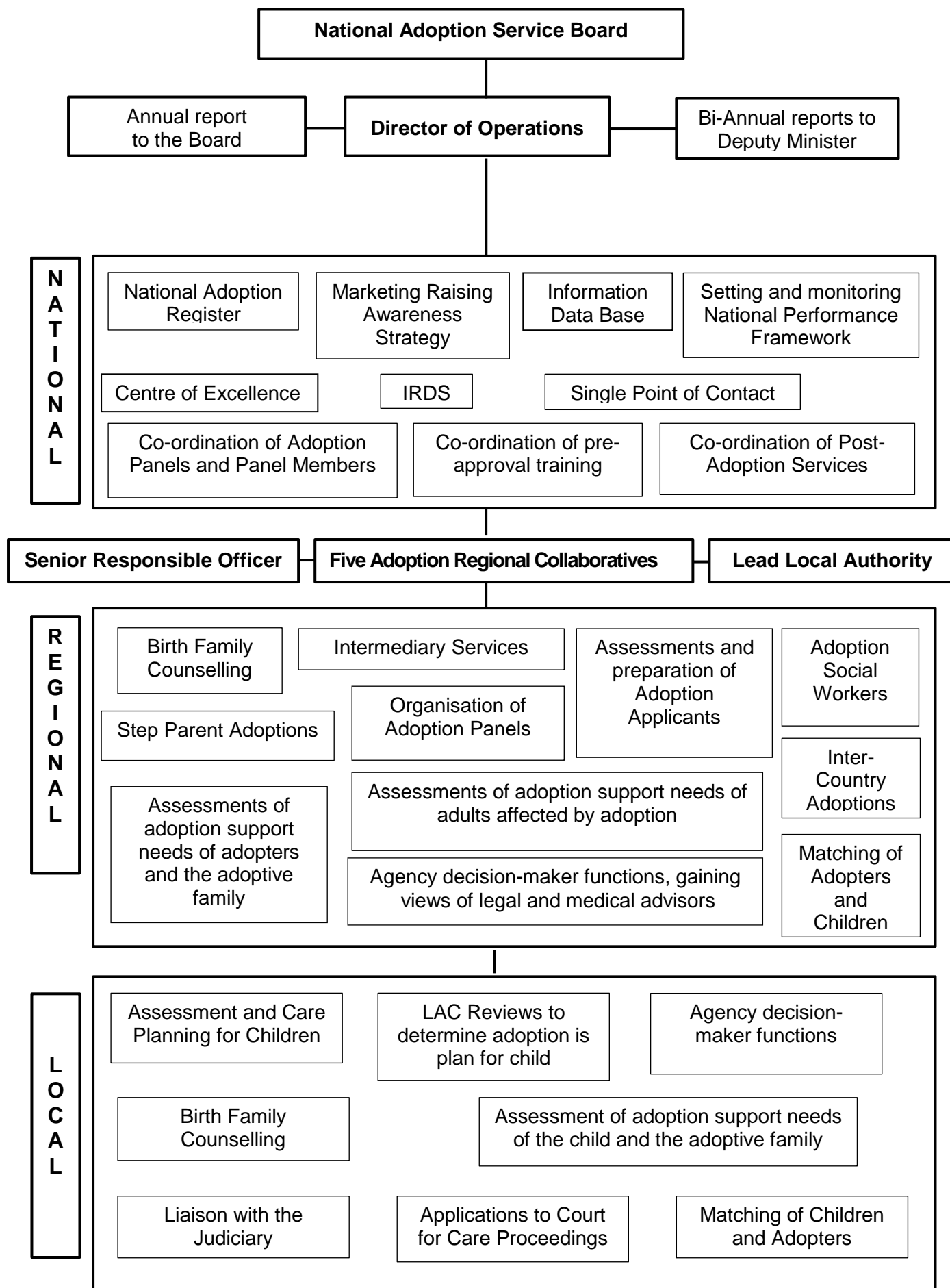
4. Declaration

The policy does not have a significant impact upon equality issues

Official completing the EIA
Name: Rachel Evans, Lead Head of Service
VVC Regional Adoption Collaborative
Date: October 2014



National Adoption Service – Functional Model



APPENDIX 4



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaboration

Business Case

October 2014

Executive Summary

This business case outlines the reasons for change and the way in which it is proposed to change the structure and processes of the Adoption service as required by Welsh Government. Due to the statutory requirement to collaborate, this business case does not seek to establish the case for collaboration, but rather sets out how the councils intend to work together to achieve the aim and objectives of this component of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014.

The aim of the Collaborative is to create a fully integrated Regional Adoption Collaborative comprised of Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC's adoption service operating within one management structure and in accordance with statutory requirements.

The Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative is one of the five collaboratives which are expected to form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales. The requirement to collaborate is expected to provide a pathway for creating an effective and responsive National Adoption Service. It is anticipated that this will ensure more effective recruitment and support for adoptive placements and reduce delays for children waiting for adoptive placements.

Considerable work has been undertaken to date to progress the Collaborative and details of this work are contained within this Business Case. This has included involvement of the trade unions, staff, technical input from officers with the relevant expertise, review by senior officers and referral to the Executive within each respective authority. The Collaborative's development has been approved by each authority's Executive, both in 2013 and 2014.

It is considered that this collaboration can provide an improved level of service for users, will be a more efficient and resilient service, while achieving an overall level of savings and will aim to reduce the overall LAC population across the region.

1. Background

In December 2012, the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services proposed a National Adoption Service be developed in Wales and this Collaborative emanates from those proposals and the subsequent legislative powers made to facilitate it.

It came against the backdrop of change being considered across social services generally. In February 2011 “Sustainable Social Services - A Framework for Action” was published by Welsh Government. This had involved a review of current social service functions across Wales and consideration of how it would cope with future demands placed upon it in order to ensure that social services were sustainable for the future. It recognised that services needed to be re-shaped and that some services might be better provided more collectively as opposed to on an authority by authority basis. It indicated at that juncture that adoption services might be better provided nationally. In addition to this there has also been the Family Justice Review across England and Wales in November 2011 which looked across the Court system concerning Family matters. This included public law matters such as care proceedings and there has also been an in-depth inquiry from the Children and Young People Committee of the National Assembly in Wales, the findings of which emanated from a detailed consultation into the position concerning adoption in Wales.

As set out in the Executive Summary, establishing a National Adoption Service is a key component of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014. This Act provides the legislative basis for the Service and amends existing primary legislation concerning the provision of local authority adoption services enabling local authorities to enter into “specified arrangements” with other authorities for the provision of adoption services. This also provides Welsh Government with the power to direct local authorities to collaborate where this is not happening.

ADSS Cymru, working closely with the WLGA, developed a functional model for the delivery of a National Adoption Service via five regional collaboratives. This was endorsed in principle by Leaders at the WLGA, Welsh Government’s Expert Advisory Group on Adoption and the Deputy Minister during 2013. On the basis of this model the National Adoption Service is being developed across Wales. Accordingly it is proposed that the Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative is one of the five collaboratives which will form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales. This Collaborative includes the Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) councils.

The other four collaboratives in Wales are North Wales (comprising Wrexham, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire and Ynys Mon), South East Wales (comprising Blaenau Gwent, Monmouth, Torfaen, Newport and Caerphilly), West and Mid Wales (comprising Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Powys) and Western Bay (comprising of Neath, Port Talbot, Swansea and Bridgend).

2. Project Aim, Objectives & Scope

Aim:

The aim is that the four local authorities will establish and deliver a unified, Regional Adoption Collaborative on behalf of the National Adoption Service.

Objectives:

- To carry out the functions of the National Service and deliver a comprehensive adoption Collaborative on a regional level.
- To ensure compliance with legislation, regulations, minimum standards, local procedures and the performance management framework set by the National Board.
- To ensure that services are carried out in a timely and efficient way and based upon the assessed needs of those persons requiring a service.
- To ensure that those persons seeking approval as adoptive parents are welcomed without prejudice and delay and that their applications are considered on their individual merit.
- To develop a recruitment strategy which ensures a range of adoptive placements are available regionally or through external agencies to ensure timely placements for all children where the placement plan is adoption.
- To provide a child focussed placement service to ensure that children are appropriately matched with adopters who can meet their needs throughout their childhood.
- To provide a counselling service for birth parents and families affected by adoption.
- To provide a range of pre and post adoption support and intermediary services in conjunction with statutory and voluntary sector providers.
- To establish effective working links with key stakeholders and other collaboratives.
- To maintain effective working links with local authority Children's Services Departments to ensure that agency functions in relation to children requiring adoptive placements are maintained.
- To utilise and build upon examples of good practice within the region and promote consistency, excellence and continuous improvement.
- To comply with the requirements of external audit and inspection.
- To ensure that customer feedback and the views of services users are obtained and considered in the development of the Collaborative.

Scope:

The Regional Collaborative will be responsible for:

- All functions associated with the recruitment, training, assessment and support of prospective adopters. This includes inter-country adopters, step-parent and relative adopters.
- The provision of a family finding, linking and matching service for all children requiring adoptive placements.
- The provision of a range of adoption support services for children, birth parents and adoptive families pre and post adoption. This function also includes the provision of counselling for adopted persons seeking access to their birth records and the provision of an intermediary service for persons seeking to trace adopted persons.

The Regional Collaborative will not be responsible for the following functions as these will be retained by each individual local authority:

- The assessment, care planning and review of children in need and referred and placed for adoption.
- Maintaining the functions of the Agency Decision Maker in respect of children requiring a should be adopted decision.
- Assessing the support needs of children requiring adoption.
- Responsibility for the choice of adoptive placement and working with the family finder in matching the child with the prospective adopters.

3. Current Service Profile

This section of the business case sets out the current position of each council – highlighting the staffing, service delivery, budgets, ICT and premises information. This baseline is important to establish in order to know from where the collaborative originates and to be able to plan accordingly.

3.1 Current Organisational Structure

Across the four authorities, the following staffing arrangements are in place.

Job Title	Cardiff FTE	RCT FTE	Merthyr FTE	VOGC FTE	Total FTE
Service Manager	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3	1.2
Team Manager	1.5	1.0	0.5	0.3	3.3
Practitioner Manager	0	0	0	1.0	1.0
Senior Practitioner	0	1.95	0.5	0	2.45
Social Worker	6.3	5.0	0.75	2.0	14.05
Support Worker	0	0	0.75	0	0.75
Business Support	3.0	1.57	0.33	0.75	5.65
Total	11.10	9.92	3.03	4.35	28.4

The functions of these posts are described as follows:

Role	Description
Service Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide overall strategic and managerial responsibility for the service alongside other service areas.
Team Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide day to day management of the team and service and supervision of staff. There are currently 2.5 FTEs with specific responsibility for adoption and 2 posts with responsibility for adoption and other service areas, equating to 0.8 adoption FTEs.
Practitioner Manager/Senior Practitioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is 1 FTE Practitioner Manager who supervises staff and takes delegated responsibility for the management of the team alongside carrying a caseload. There are 2.45 FTE Senior Practitioners who manage specific aspects of the team's work/ chair meetings etc. and carry a caseload.
Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 14.05 FTE Social Workers who are all qualified and have at least three years post qualifying experience which is required for adoption. They all have generic caseloads and perform all functions of the adoption service.
Support Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is 1.00 FTE unqualified post which supports the Fostering and Adoption team undertaking practical duties, managing the letterbox scheme. 0.75 FTE of this post is deployed in adoption.
Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 5.65 FTE Business Support staff that perform a range of administrative duties to support the work of the teams, including the

administration of four Adoption Panels on a monthly basis.

3.2 Current Service Users

Service delivery information has been collated between 01/04/2010 to 31/03/2013 for each respective authority and has been categorised as follows:

- Referrals of children requiring adoptive placements and their progression to a placement order and subsequent placement.
- Recruitment/Assessment of potential adopters from enquiry to approval.
- Consideration of adoption support referrals

The following tables provide a summary of the key data outlined above:

Children on referral for Adoption

Local Authority	Year	Number of children referred to service for Adoption during year	Number of Placement Orders granted during year	Number of children placed for adoption during year	No. of Adoption Orders granted during year	Av. length of time from Placement Order to child being placed for adoption
Cardiff	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	83	52	17	15	7.5 months
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	75	24	20	22	7.5 months
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	45	25	16	20	8 months
Merthyr	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	22	17	6	16	6.57 months
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	16	15	16	3	6.06 months
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	26	9	6	13	5.4 months
RCT	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	94	53	39	47	8 Months
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	55	59	42	33	7 Months
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	109	43	31	28	7 Months
V of G	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	10	15	10	5	8.4 months
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	16	9	5	6	8 months
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	11	4	5	9	9.5 months

Recruitment / Assessment of Adopters

Local Authority	Year	Number of initial enquiries received	Number of applications received	Av. timescales for completion of assessments (PAR) & approval at panel	Number of adopters approved
Cardiff	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	55	25	10 months	9
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	57	17	16 months	5
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	45	8	16 months	12
Merthyr	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	6	5	7 months	2
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	10	10	7 months	8
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	7 months	Data not available
RCT	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	33	22	5 months	22
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	32	18	5 months	18

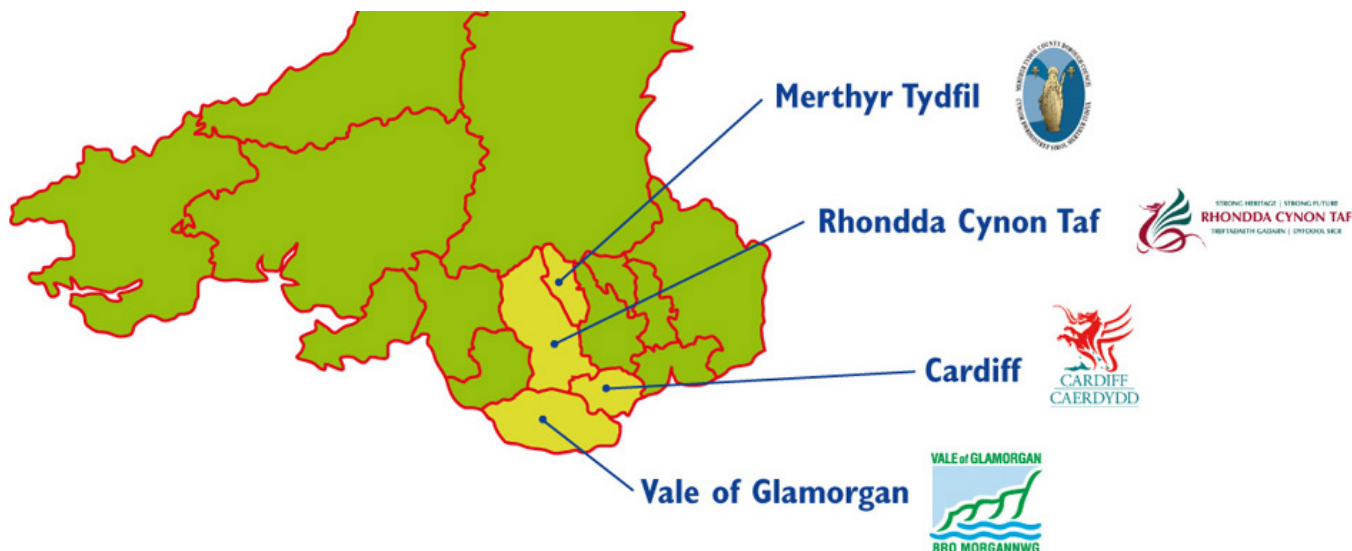
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	33	14	6 months	14
V of G	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	26	11	5-6 months	7
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	20	12	6-8 months	8
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	50	6	8-10 months	7

Adoption Support / Post Adoption Support Services

Local Authority	Year	No. requests / referrals received for birth parent / family counselling	No. requests / referrals received for intermediary services	Number of referrals for adoption support received requesting both financial & practical support
Cardiff	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	83	23	106
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	75	35	110
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	45	14	59
Merthyr	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	9	2	11
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	Data not available	Data not Available	Data not available
RCT	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	13	16	29
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	18	18	36
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	20	9	29
V of G	01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	10	4	14
	01.04.2011 - 31.03.2012	10	5	15
	01.04.2010 - 31.03.2011	9	4	13

3.3 Current Geographic areas

The service is currently delivered across the four regional areas.



The following provides an indication of the total size of each area, in absolute population terms and also in terms of each authority's LAC population.

Demographic make up	Cardiff	RCT	Merthyr	VOGC
Average overall population between 31/03/2011 to 31/03/2013	348,548	235,362	58,923	126,890
Average overall LAC population between 31/03/2011 to 31/03/2013	549	589	180	200
LAC as % of Overall Population	0.16%	0.25%	0.31%	0.16%

It can be seen that there is a higher % of LAC population in RCT and Merthyr and therefore a higher demand for the service.

3.4 Current Budget

The combined 2014/15 net budgets for the adoption service of the four councils equates to £2.4 million. This is broken down over the authorities as follows:

Budget for the Year 2014/15	Cardiff £000	RCT £000	Merthyr £000	VOGC £000	TOTAL £000
Staff Costs	416	391	130	192	1,129
Other Staff Costs	9	8	5	6	28
Running Costs	29	42	9	5	85
Panel Costs	18	13	10	6	47
Adoption Support	37	24	13	20	94
Adoption Allowances	179	116	74	110	479
Agency Fees (Net)	207	132	129	102	570
TOTAL	895	726	370	441	2,432

3.5 Current ICT

ICT arrangements vary across the region as follows:

IT Infrastructure	Cardiff	RCT	Merthyr	VOGC	Comments
Software	Care First (OLM) Spreadsheets	Swift (Northgate) Spreadsheets	Swift (Northgate) Spreadsheets	Swift (Northgate) Spreadsheets	Supplementary information on adopters recorded on spreadsheets
Hardware	Fat and thin client (terminal server) Laptops, PCs and terminals	Fat and thin client (Citrix) Laptops and PCs	Fat client Laptops and PCs	Fat client Laptops and PCs	
Hosting arrangements	Locally hosted network infrastructure	Locally hosted network infrastructure	Locally hosted network infrastructure	Locally hosted network infrastructure	

3.6 Current Information Governance

All participating authorities are subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act and have their own local policies in relation to Information Governance. Each respective authority is signed up to WASPI (Wales Accord for the Sharing of Personal Information).

3.7 Current Buildings

Each authority has a dedicated team which operates from premises within their respective geographic boundaries as follows:

Details of current premises	Address Details	Whole or part of building (W or P)	Lease or owned (L or O)
Cardiff	Operates from 1 site St Mellons Family Centre, Heol Maes Eirwg, St Mellons, Cardiff	Px1	Ox1
RCT	Operates from 1 site: Ty Pennant, Catherine Street, Pontypridd	Px1	L
Merthyr	Operates from 1 site: Triangle Business Park Pentrebach, Merthyr Tydfil	Px1	Ox1
VOGC	Operates from 1 site: Dock Offices, Barry	Px1	Ox1

4. Progress to date

Good progress has been made to date in establishing the Regional Collaborative.

For example, a number of technical groups have been established to look at key areas which the Collaborative will need to address in order to proceed. These are Finance, Human Resources, Legal, ICT and Information Governance and comprise specialist officers from each respective authority.

As the Collaborative progresses information is fed back to the Steering Group which consists of Heads of Service from each respective authority. Thereafter, as the Collaborative has developed and reached milestones, each local authority's Senior Management structure and Executive has been updated via formal reports.

In addition to these activities, staff engagement via union consultation, workshops and presentations has been undertaken and will continue.

5. Service Delivery Models – Options Appraisal

During 2013 an analysis of service need was carried out in order to identify the most appropriate operating model for the new service.

Analysis of arrangements in each respective authority was undertaken which included looking at the structure of each service from a staffing and service user perspective. Some of the data used to inform this work is set out in the sections above.

In order to find a service delivery model which would meet the objectives of the National Adoption Service, the following principles were used to identify a range of possible models:

- The needs of service users are met and the best outcomes achieved within the resources available;
- Resources are focused upon specific areas of service delivery where necessary;
- A unified service is provided across the Collaborative which is not fragmented and complements the National Adoption Service;
- Effective links are maintained with local teams;
- Staff are engaged and utilised to their full potential, making the most of their knowledge and skills base.

In meeting these principles, the project would provide:

- improved service delivery, efficiency and outcomes;
- a service designed to meet the needs of its users;
- a more accessible, responsive service which reduces delay.

As a result of this analysis, a range of potential models of service delivery were identified. These options were presented to the Heads of Service and at workshops with managers and staff in the respective authorities during November and December 2013. The models were discussed and identified through their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis).

	Option Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
0	Do Nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little disruption to service and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would not be congruent with the requirements of a collaborative and the model developed by ADSS for the National Adoption Service. • Current service deficits would be maintained. • Current service demands would not be met in a timely way. • The status quo would be maintained and this has already been determined as unsatisfactory.
1	Restructure service into	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes regional identity and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By specialist teams there is a

	<p>a co-located functional service model of 3 teams; Recruitment & Assessment, Family Finding , Adoption Support</p>	<p>concept of one service which is in line with the National Adoption Service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an equitable, focussed service to improve customer outcomes. • Streamline service delivery making it easier to measure performance. • Offers opportunities for innovative ways of working. • Provides an opportunity for knowledge sharing. • Promotes greater flexibility within the service and across the teams. • Pooling of resources provides longer term financial and service delivery benefits. • Provides one central management point. • Provides greater opportunities for service users to obtain desired outcomes. • Ensures that service users will be provided with a dedicated service that will be more efficient in terms of expertise and reaching objectives. 	<p>risk of de-skilling staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local links may be lost.
2	<p>Restructure service into two generic geographical north and south teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largely maintains status quo. • Provides least disruption and may be easier to implement. • Would mirror LHB footprint. • Allows more flexible use of resources if workload fluctuates. • Retains links between functions and local teams. • Provides equitable workload between 2 teams. • Provides overall management point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would lack regional identity, cohesion and focus and would not fit well with the National Adoption Service. • Performance outcomes would be difficult to measure. • More difficult to standardise practice. • Current deficits would be maintained and adoption support would not be prioritised. • The identity of the Regional Collaborative might be difficult to maintain collectively due to the North /South divide.
3	<p>Restructure service into geographical/functional teams and separate adoption support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates the positives of the other models. • Provides opportunities for close working with local team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks cohesion and more difficult to promote collaboration across the region.

	<p>function.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens collaborative working between family finding and recruitment. • Allows for different service options in relation to adoption support. • Provides overall management point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of regional identity. • Consistency of practice may be more difficult to attain given number of teams and different management points. • Collation of data for performance may be more difficult to attain. • Concerns not meeting objectives of National Adoption Service due to the issues in relation to cohesion and identity outlined above. • Concerns that providing data for performance may be more difficult from a unified perspective to achieve. • Difficult to sustain number of management points for staff numbers.
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There was considerable discussion in relation to which option would be best placed to meet the requirements of the Collaborative. **Option 1** was judged by all to be the most suitable and would best meet the needs and outcomes desired for the Collaborative from the resources available.

It was considered that Option 1 would be best disposed to develop a regional identity in line with the National Adoption Service objectives. The delivery to service users from dedicated functional specialist teams would provide a co-ordinated, integrated response. Functional specialist teams were generally recognised as potentially offering the most efficient service to its users. Therefore, it is anticipated that this option would best address the current service deficits by improving timescales for recruiting adopters and placing children; this being the ultimate objective of the National Adoption Service within the resources available.

In terms of the potential issues with Option 1, it was felt these could be mitigated with effective management and clear and defined communication channels to ensure effective links with local teams. There is a risk of de-skilling staff, which it is considered can be overcome and taken into account when drafting the job descriptions and by considering how the service will function operationally. It is acknowledged that there will need to be flexibility within the service to mitigate the risk of de-skilling and to respond to fluctuations in service demands.

In adopting Option 1, a series of changes and associated benefits will be realised as summarised in the following:

Change	Benefit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All assessments of prospective adopters will be undertaken by the Collaborative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single point of contact with more timely response and standardised practice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Collaborative will receive all requests for adoption placements and undertake to find an appropriate match. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater placement choice and more timely response reducing delay.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Panel functions will be co-ordinated from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing more flexibility and reducing Panel

the Collaborative.	waiting time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All requests for birth parent counselling to be provided by the Collaborative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a service independent of the case manager in line with requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments of adoption support needs to be undertaken by the Collaborative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardising practice and outcomes for children.

Option 1 was presented to Directors in May 2014, and included as the service structure presented to each respective authority's Cabinet in July 2014.

The business case has been prepared on the basis of implementing this option.

6. Implementation

Implementing the Regional Collaborative will involve the coordination of a number of activities and has implications for each partner organisation.

The following sets out the proposed implementation approach and the implications associated with the project for each authority and the Collaborative as a whole, including:

- Staffing Implications & Service Delivery Model
- Financial Implications
- Legal Implications – Governance
- Property Implications
- ICT Implications
- Project Resources & Governance

6.1 Staffing Implications & Service Delivery Model

Transfer of Undertaking Regulations (TUPE)

In order to deliver the collaborative arrangements it is proposed that all staff within scope of the project would transfer to the host (employing) authority and as such this authority (along with operational aspects of the Collaboration) would be responsible for the management of staff. Staff would therefore be transferred to the host's employment under the Transfer of Undertaking Regulations and/or the Public Sector Codes of Practice governing services changes within the public sector.

It is the intention that staff would transfer to the host's employment at the same time as transferring to a new work location and it is anticipated that the target implementation date is 1st March 2015. Wherever possible, the terms and conditions of staff will be maintained. Upon transfer the only changes for staff will be the change of workplace and the change in employer. It should be noted there may be other changes that are necessary for a variety of reasons. For example, payroll dates/periods may change. In regards to any such changes these issues will be considered in consultation with the unions and staff in advance of the transfer.

At the date of transfer staff will be working under their current job titles and roles however it is anticipated that the geographic boundaries for their service users will have changed. It is proposed that there will be a "bedding in" period where information can be shared between staff and relationships can be developed within the workforce. During this period staff and the recognised trade unions will also be formally consulted specifically in relation to the proposed re-organisation which is anticipated to support the Collaborative in order to meet the objectives of the National Adoption Service.

Reorganisation

In order to deliver the most efficient and effective collaborative service, a reorganisation of staff is proposed to implement three teams specialising in the designated functional areas. The merger of the functions from the respective authorities indicates from analysis undertaken to date that there is some work which is currently duplicated in each authority. Whilst there will be an increase in the aggregate number of service users, the reduction in relation to the aspects of duplication is

considered to be necessary together with the changing of how the service is carried out operationally. On the basis of current staffing levels within each respective authority, it is deemed unlikely that there will be staff displacement and it is expected there should be sufficient roles for all currently employed staff that are in scope for the transfer. The changes relate to operational and organisational issues designed to ensure an efficient and appropriately dedicated service within the respective areas of expertise.

Whilst formal consultation on the reorganisation will commence following the transfer of staff to assist the transition, explanatory discussions with staff and the unions have taken place and will continue to do so.

The proposed service delivery model is shown in Appendix 1. The table below lists the proposed job titles, together with a brief explanation of what the roles will entail and how many FTEs will be available. Job descriptions are being drafted and finalised in order to meet the requirements of the Collaborative in accordance with Option 1.

Post	Description of post and changes	No of FTEs
Regional Adoption Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a new post which provides overall operational and strategic leadership and management of the regional collaborative. 	1.0
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To manage the specific functional teams and supervise the Social Work staff. 	2.5
Social Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for carrying out all the functions of the adoption collaborative, roles being defined and formed to accommodate the specific functional teams set out in Option 1. 	16.0
Business Support Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a new post responsible for managing the business support functions of the new service, line managing the business support staff and managing the performance management reporting system. 	1.0
Business Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the business functions of the service. 	4.0
TOTAL		24.5

Further detail in relation to reorganisation and the job descriptions are currently being finalised and will be an on-going part of consultation processes throughout the development and early stages of implementation of the project.

The following describes the rationale for and provides further detail of the roles within the proposed structure.

- Regional Adoption Manager

Given the nature of the Collaborative and its accountability to each respective authority and the National Adoption Service, it is considered necessary for a new management post which will be responsible for the Collaborative to be developed. This proposed post (known as the Regional Adoption Manager (RAM)) is a new post and distinct from existing posts within the respective local authorities. It will be dedicated to ensuring overall that the Collaborative meets its aims and objectives as driven by the National Adoption Service.

- Managers

Senior management roles from the current structures in each respective local authority are not considered relevant to the proposals as those service managers predominantly carry out functions which will remain in situ and are not adoption related. With the exception of the RAM post and the Business Support Manager post (BSM), the management posts within the new structure bear some similarities to the existing posts within each respective local authority referred to as Team Manager posts and also the Practitioner Manager/Senior Practitioner posts. Whilst there is some similarity there will be significant changes as it is expected that in the new structure the managers will be more specialised and focus primarily upon one area of service delivery.

- Social Workers

Within the new structure Social Workers will specialise in different aspects dependent upon which team they are working within. Unions and staff have been made aware of this and an invitation for staff to indicate areas of preference has already been extended in order to assist with the integration. Staff engagement will continue throughout the processes.

From analysis undertaken, the roles of Practitioner Manager/Senior Practitioner vary within each authority and indeed not all of the authorities hold such roles. Initial analysis suggests that these roles may not be appropriate under Option 1 and it is considered necessary to re-designate these posts to reflect the proposed structure. It is considered that many of the duties in these may be replicated within functions of Social Workers and Team Managers. Work is still being undertaken in relation to these aspects.

- Business Support Manager & Business Support Staff

With regards the business support functions, and as with other functions, there has been identification of overlaps of work between the current roles in the respective local authorities. Within the new service there would be a duplication of duties which in this particular area of function is considered most likely and can lead to a reduction in FTEs. Furthermore the increase in performance monitoring and analysis of work output that will be necessary in order to accommodate the Collaboration means that the nature of this work will, in part, need to change in emphasis. Whilst it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in business support FTEs, the proposed structure highlights the need for two new roles, one of which will be a BSM, who will be responsible for overall management of the business support function. It should be noted that this function will be increasing in importance given the number of reporting mechanisms which will be necessary.

Appointments Process

Both the BSM and RAM posts require appointment prior to the Collaborative becoming fully operational. Therefore the date of transfer is determinable on the basis of the appointment to these two posts. The RAM post is a new position and will be ultimately responsible for the Regional Collaborative and will be reporting to the Joint Committee, Steering Group, respective authorities and the National Adoption Service. The role will be strategic and its primary objective will be to ensure the Collaborative maintains the requirements of the National Adoption Service. As part of consultation processes information in relation to this role is being shared with staff within the

respective adoption services of each local authority. A similar approach will be adopted for the appointment to the BSM post.

Pensions

Following transfer the Pension Fund Administrator may need to change for some staff but they will remain members of the Local Government Pension Scheme and their service will be continuous. Work is on-going in relation to this and will be covered as part of the legal agreement.

Performance Management

Not only does the National Adoption Service entail changes in working in order to meet aims and objectives, there are also new statutory requirements in relation to reporting on performance. In addition it is anticipated that each respective authority will require performance information to be reported back to their own organisations to meet their own performance monitoring requirements. As such there is anticipated to be a greater emphasis on this within the Collaborative and this has been taken into account within the proposed reorganisation.

Working Arrangements and Location

In order to facilitate a Regional Collaborative in accordance with Option 1, it is considered necessary for all staff to be based at one central location in order to assist in facilitating the regional identity and concept of one service. Currently staff are based in their respective authority's buildings within the geographic boundaries.

At present, Ty Pennant within Rhondda Cynon Taff has been proposed as the site to locate the Collaborative. This site would mean drawing from resources already available as this is currently utilised by Rhondda Cynon Taff. In addition, the site is being considered for a variety of reasons however most relevant from a staffing perspective is that the location is seen to be the most equitable in terms of the geographic footprint of the Collaborative. This can be seen from the Current Geographic areas outlined above. This will mean that some staff will need to change their place of work and for some it may mean additional travelling. However, it is anticipated that as part of the working arrangements within Option 1 there will be a greater emphasis on agile working which may assist in minimising additional travel. Consultation with the Trade Unions and staff in regards to this change has already commenced.

6.2 Financial Implications

Each authority has provided details of their current budget for adoption services. This information has been used to determine possible levels of budgets going forward, to act as a basis for apportionment of budgets between authorities and to discuss the approach to be taken for the varying types of expenditure incurred by the service.

Implementation Costs

There will be implementation costs for the Collaborative of around £38,000 which will cover expenditure on IT, relocation, marketing and other peripheral costs. There will be the requirement to purchase new laptops, a new server and communication equipment. The project has been able to attract grant funding and therefore it is planned that these start-up costs will be met from this funding, however, expenditure will need to be incurred prior to 31st March 2015.

These costs have been allocated to each authority on the basis of the % of existing staff budgets.

	Cardiff (37.1%) £000	RCT (34.8%) £000	Merthyr (11.5%) £000	VOGC (16.6%) £000	TOTAL £000
One off Costs	14	13	5	6	38

An assessment of the potential voluntary severance cost has been carried out and as previously outlined, it is unlikely that such costs will materialise.

Continuing Authority Costs

It has been agreed that during the initial operation of the Collaborative, certain areas of expenditure, while administered through the Collaborative, will be recharged directly to the originating authority. These areas are the most volatile and are where policies across authorities differ and where available budgets do not accurately reflect actual expenditure. These cover the following areas of expenditure:

- Adoption Allowances

Each authority has its own policy for the payment of allowances. It is the intention to develop one policy for the Collaborative, however, initially each authority will be charged for the actual allowances paid for its own children.

- Adoption Support

Currently, each authority assesses the support required on a case by case basis. A uniform policy will be developed for new children assessed by the Collaborative, however, initially each authority will be charged for the actual support paid for its own children.

- Agency Fees

These fees cover expenditure incurred i.e. when the new Regional Collaborative places one of its children with another provider outside the region and income is received when an authority outside the region places a child with an authority within the new region. Placements made within the new Collaborative will not be charged for. This is a very volatile area and is difficult to predict. With the introduction of the new regional structure across Wales and changes in the proposed inter authority charges, initially each authority will be liable for any cost to be paid or will receive income from agency fees for its own children/adopters.

Further discussion regarding the development of a formula for these areas of expenditure will be assessed once the Collaborative is up and running.

Contributions to Operating Costs

Indicative financial contributions towards the first year's operational costs of the Collaborative have been predicted and apportioned to each authority. Options for the method of apportionment were assessed and it was considered that for the majority of costs, the best way to reflect the available resource to be input was to use the % of existing staff budgets held by each authority as the basis for apportionment. The exception to this is Panel costs, which will be apportioned on the basis of the historic number of referrals to the adoption service in each authority.

A detailed breakdown of the proposed budget and the allocation of contributions from authorities is shown in Appendix 2. The following table provides a summary and compares the potential contribution by each authority to their currently available budget. It shows that cost could be around £19k less than existing budgets held by authorities.

Costs	TOTAL	Cardiff		Merthyr		RCT		VOG	
	£000	%	£000	%	£000	%	£000	%	£000
Staff	1,010	37.1	375	11.5	116	34.8	351	16.6	168
Other Staff	37	37.1	14	11.5	4	34.8	13	16.6	6
Commissioning	46	37.1	17	11.5	5	34.8	16	16.6	8
Running	117	37.1	43	11.5	14	34.8	41	16.6	19
Panel	30	37.9	11	10.2	3	44.6	14	7.3	2
Hosting	30	37.1	11	11.5	4	34.8	10	16.6	5
Annual Cost	1,270		471		146		445		208
Current Budget	1,289		472		154		454		209
Over/(Under) Current Budget	(19)		(1)		(8)		(9)		(1)

The projections currently show an overall saving, however, there will be an ongoing review once the service is operational, with an expectation of driving down costs further.

The following should be noted in relation to the projected costs:

- Staffing Costs

In costing the new staff structure, the top of scale of the Vale of Glamorgan pay rates for 2014/15 has been used plus an assumed 1% pay award. Staff will transfer across on their existing pay rates which may be lower than the Vale's rate so costs may be less than shown. 3 out of the 4 authorities currently include a vacancy factor of around 4% in their budgets. It is considered appropriate to continue this practice, however, an initial factor of 3% has been included in the budget, which could be reviewed and potentially increased once the Collaborative is operational.

- Other Staff Costs

Travel expenses have been calculated at current cost plus a 25% increase due to the need to relocate staff but this could reduce in the future.

- Commissioning Costs

It has been agreed to hold this budget for potentially commissioning services externally, instead of recruiting another member of staff. This option may change in the future once the service is operational and requirements can be fully assessed.

- Running Costs

This includes the rental cost for the new location in Rhondda Cynon Taff. There will be no on-going IT system costs as there is no increase above the current charge paid by the Vale of Glamorgan. It is

assumed that British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) membership will continue to be paid by each individual authority.

- Panel Costs

These are based on the new proposed rates for the region and the running of 30 panels per year across the region.

- Hosting Costs

As the host (employing) authority, the Vale of Glamorgan will be responsible for payment of all staff and non-staffing expenses and collection of income. The Collaborative will have its own Business Support staff that will be responsible for its own administration. Legal costs have been included to support panels but this support could be rotated to each authority. A small management fee has been included, which is in line with other collaboratives across Wales. There is also a small fee included for support services, e.g. IT, HR and Finance.

Potential Additional Costs

The above reflects an authority's financial position through a comparison of the proposed contribution to the new Collaborative against existing departmental budgets. There are however further potential costs which will need to be assessed by each individual authority as a result of the transfer of the budget for part posts into the Collaborative, which will not materialise as a direct saving if that actual post is not within scope for the transfer. Part of these costs can be covered by the potential for underspends on the staff budget as detailed above.

6.3 Legal Implications

Governance

In considering how best to facilitate this Collaboration, consideration has been given to the various options available in terms of governance. These have included consideration of informal, secondment, contractual, delegation to another authority, corporate, and delegation to a joint Committee models.

Based on the previous experience of the councils working collaboratively it is proposed that this collaboration should operate on the basis of a joint committee. This was determined to be the most appropriate arrangement for a variety of reasons, but in particular taking account of the number of authorities and statutory functions involved it was considered to offer the most appropriate system for ensuring the Collaborative operates appropriately and within its remit

The Joint Committee model provides that the Council would delegate its functions relating to those adoption services in scope of this project to the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee has no separate legal identity and so cannot own property or enter into contracts in its own right. It is proposed that one authority (namely the Vale of Glamorgan Council) will act as the Host Authority and take responsibility for employment of the staff directly affected, enter any third party contracts required and provide all support services required.

If the Councils decide to proceed with the proposal it will be necessary for the Councils to conclude a formal agreement, sometimes referred to as a joint working agreement. This agreement will set out, amongst other things:

- the extent of the matters to be delegated to the Joint Committee, and any delegations to officers in the shared service;
- the constitutional set up of the Joint Committee and its terms of reference;
- It is proposed that each Authority would appoint two elected members to the Joint Committee. Decisions would be taken by vote and each authority would have one vote exercisable by their appointed elected members. The Chairperson would have a casting vote. The Chairperson would be one of the elected member representatives, appointed for 12 months, with the position of Chairperson allocated in turn to each authority in alphabetical order;
- the terms of reference and membership of the Officer Management Board;
- It is proposed that there would be an Officer Management Board that would support the Joint Committee and this would comprise one senior officer from each authority with responsibility for adoption services and the chief officer of the shared service;
- the termination and exit provisions;
- It is proposed that a party could withdraw from the arrangement on giving one year's notice expiring on the 31st March in any year. It should be noted that the intent is that no party would seek to withdraw within the first three years;
- the structure of the shared service, staffing proposals and pensions;
- which Council is to be the Host Authority, detail the services to be provided by the Host Authority, how related costs would be apportioned, and what indemnities the Host would seek from the other authorities in respect of carrying out its role;
- the financial management arrangements;
- the agreement would set out how costs are to be shared amongst the authorities, which is proposed as being based on the percentage of existing staff budgets held by each authority. The exception to this is Panel costs, which will be apportioned on the basis of the historic number of referrals to the adoption service in each authority;
- the Joint Committee's financial affairs would be "hosted" by the Host Authority, with that authority's chief finance officer taking responsibility for making payments, bookkeeping and so on. The Joint Committee would propose a budget for approval by the authorities and the report sets out the initial indicative financial commitment sought. The legal agreement will include the procedures to be followed for the apportionment of any over/underspend by the Collaborative and the implications for the individual authorities;
- contain provision to address matters such as disputes, variations, data protection and freedom of information.

General legal implications

Given the scope of the Collaborative there are a number of legal implications involved in addition to the governance arrangements such as employment law, to property law, Data Protection, advice in relation to these different aspects is being provided as appropriate within the development stages of the Collaborative.

Information Governance

Strategic provision for Information Governance including data protection/freedom of information and records management will be taken account of in the agreement between the respective authorities. A joint authority working group has been established to consider the practical

implementation of these issues. A privacy impact assessment is being developed. An Information Sharing Protocol for the Collaborative may be required depending on work flows. Consideration is currently being given to the host's policies on data protection. Information Governance training will be required for staff within the Collaborative.

6.4 Property Implications

Ideally, the Collaborative would wish to occupy accommodation on flexible terms to allow the new service to review their accommodation requirements as the service develops. Therefore it is felt in addition to locating a site which is considered well positioned between the geographical footprint of the respective authorities; flexibility in terms of the lease/licence arrangement is desirable.

The Collaborative has considered various options for accommodating the service. Various locations have been considered such as County Hall, Cardiff and Ty Pennant, Pontypridd (RCT lease office accommodation). Inspections and consideration of terms and conditions has also been undertaken. Currently it is anticipated that the accommodation at Pontypridd, on balance, may be the most favourable option in terms of location and service delivery. The Terms and Conditions for occupying the office accommodation have not yet been finalised and are subject to ongoing discussions and negotiation between Estates /Legal Officers of the respective Authorities.

6.5 ICT Implications

Following an appraisal of a range of options including the Swift system (used by three of the authorities), Care First (used by the fourth council) and a commercial system, it has been concluded that the development of the Swift system for the adoption process was the most viable and cost effective solution.

Representatives from each of the four authorities will be involved in the ICT development process. The Vale of Glamorgan is to host the system within their current infrastructure. Staff within the Collaborative who do not currently have access to the Vale's network will be set up with Vale network access, which will include an e-mail account and access to the Swift adoption system. Members of the service, without existing Vale equipment, will be issued with laptops or PCs, depending on their role. Vale of Glamorgan ICT will arrange the installation of a Vale "hub" at the site in RCT, to access Vale network systems.

Arrangements will need to be put in place for staff to gain access to systems in their originating authority.

6.6 Project Resources and Governance

In order to deliver the project access to and commitment from corporate resources colleagues from a number of departments including HR, ICT, Information Governance, Legal and Finance will be required.

The project manager is currently seconded until end November 2014 and this arrangement will require review by the Steering Group. The project governance arrangements made up of the Steering Group reporting to each authority will also continue for the duration of the project.

7.

8. **Achievability – Project Plan**

In line with statutory requirements for the Collaborative to be operational as soon as possible, in consultation with the Steering Group and with reference to each respective authority's Executive, the implementation timetable is described in the following plan:

Date	Milestone	Outcome
Sept 2013	Project Manager appointed	To successfully establish the Regional Collaborative
Sept/Dec 2013	Analysis and further collection of data in relation to the proposals in order to progress the proposed Collaborative	Completed
Oct/Nov 2013	Drafting and circulation of reports for executive consideration (Cabinet etc.) in accordance with each respective authority's internal accounting mechanisms	Completed
Nov/Dec 2013	Presentations /workshops engaging staff in process to ascertain further information and exchange views, ideas and concepts	Completed
Jan 2014/ March 2014	Development of service specification for Collaborative	Completed
Feb 2014	Establishment of specialist technical groups comprising of officers from each respective authority	Completed
April 2014	Finalise consideration of service delivery model and governance arrangements	Completed
May 2014	Accumulation of HR data	On-going
May 2014	Further development of service delivery model and governance arrangements	On-going
June 2014	Commencement of drafting agreement underpinning arrangement between respective authorities, drafting Cabinet Report for utilisation within respective authorities	On-going
July 2014	Obtain each respective authority's executive approval to proceed with Collaborative in principle	Completed
July 2014	Accommodation options to be explored	On-going
August 2014	Commence more formal consultation with unions and staff	On-going
August 2014	Develop EIA	On-going
August 2014	Determination of in-scope staff	Completed
Sept 2014	Prepare financial data re costings etc.	On-going
Sept 2014	Compilation of Job Descriptions etc.	On-going
Sept 2014	Determine ICT arrangements for Collaborative	Completed
October 2014	Consideration of records management and archiving arrangements	On-going
October 2014	Preparation of further Cabinet Report	On-going

From Nov 2014 to transfer date	Staff data finalised, measures letters sent, lease for premises secured, ICT support finalised, Legal Agreement in place, Information Governance systems in place, all systems in place for commencement of Collaboration, advert and recruitment to RAM and BSM	On-going
01/02/15 estimate	Commencement of Collaboration	
Feb 2015	Bedding in period and consultation re organisation for staff	
March 2015	Reorganisation Implementation	

9. Risks and Issues Log

As with all projects of this nature, regular monitoring of risks and issues will be vital in ensuring a smooth transition to a service that meets the objectives set out in this business case on time and on budget.

The following project level risks and issues have been identified and actions are being taken:

Ref	Description	Impact	Probability	Action Being Taken
R1	The timescale set by Welsh Government for the collaborative to be operational is challenging and due to the number of tasks required it may mean that there service will not be delivered on time.	High	High	Project plan to be kept under review and timescales adjusted if required.
R 2	The need to maintain service delivery and minimise disruption for service users.	High	Medium	Services to be continued until new structure in place, develop collaborative practice incrementally.
R3	Securing an appropriate and cost effective base for the Collaborative may be difficult.	High	Medium	Ascertain what suitable accommodation may be available within the four authorities.
R4	The staff consultation and HR process may highlight issues which may delay restructure.	High	Medium	Effective consultation to take place enabling staff to make informed choices.
R5	Some financial constraints may be highlighted by servicing the Collaborative.	High	Medium	Service to be fully costed and budget kept under review.
R6	Information Governance	High	Medium	Appropriate technical and organisational security measures must be put in place.
R7	Accommodation not being available on acceptable terms and conditions to house the new service	High	Low/ Medium	Negotiations to continue to ensure acceptable agreement reached.
R8	Currently further information awaited regarding financial aspects of staff changing pension fund	High	Low/ Medium	As this is an inter authority collaboration and two of the authorities are already in the same funds the risk is currently believed to be small but further information is awaited in this regard.
R9	Ability to appoint to RAM and BSM	High	High	Approval from the

	posts may delay the transfer date		/Medium	respective authority Executives to proceed with the appointment to these roles.
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FIRST YEAR INDICATIVE BUDGET (of Business Case))

	TOTAL	Cardiff		Merthyr Tydfil		Rhondda Cynon Taf		Vale of Glamorgan	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%	£
Staff									
Based on % of Existing Staff Budgets	1,040,640	37.1%	386,077	11.5%	119,674	34.8%	362,143	16.6%	172,746
Vacancy Factor @ 3%	-31,219		-11,582		-3,590		-10,864		-5,182
Total Staff Costs	1,009,421		374,495		116,083		351,278		167,564
Other Staff Costs									
Based on % of Existing Staff Budgets									
Travel Expenses/Hire of Vehicles	36,089	37.1%	13,389	11.5%	4,150	34.8%	12,559	16.6%	5,991
Training	4,000	37.1%	1,484	11.5%	460	34.8%	1,392	16.6%	664
Training - SCDWP Grant	-4,000	37.1%	-1,484	11.5%	-460	34.8%	-1,392	16.6%	-664
Mobiles/Phones	968	37.1%	359	11.5%	111	34.8%	337	16.6%	161
Total Other Staff Costs	37,057		13,748		4,262		12,896		6,151
Commissioning Budget	46,108	37.1%	17,106	11.5%	5,302	34.8%	16,046	16.6%	7,654
Based on % of Existing Staff Budgets									
Running Costs									
Based on % of Existing Staff Budgets									
Premises Rental	34,000	37.1%	12,614	11.5%	3,910	34.8%	11,832	16.6%	5,644
Training (Adopters)	18,000	37.1%	6,678	11.5%	2,070	34.8%	6,264	16.6%	2,988
Advertising/Marketing	52,300	37.1%	19,403	11.5%	6,015	34.8%	18,200	16.6%	8,682
Intermediary	1,000	37.1%	371	11.5%	115	34.8%	348	16.6%	166
Adoption UK	2,500	37.1%	928	11.5%	288	34.8%	870	16.6%	415
Tracemart License	379	37.1%	141	11.5%	44	34.8%	132	16.6%	63
Printing & Stationery/Postage	9,000	37.1%	3,339	11.5%	1,035	34.8%	3,132	16.6%	1,494
Total Running Costs	117,179		43,473		13,476		40,778		19,452
Panel Costs									
Based on % of Referrals									
Panel Fees & Expenses	27,000	37.9%	10,233	10.2%	2,754	44.6%	12,042	7.3%	1,971
Training (Panel Members)	3,000	37.9%	1,137	10.2%	306	44.6%	1,338	7.3%	219
Total Panel Costs	30,000		11,370		3,060		13,380		2,190
Hosting Costs									
Based on % of Existing Staff Budgets									
Legal	20,000	37.1%	7,420	11.5%	2,300	34.8%	6,960	16.6%	3,320
IT, HR and Finance	5,000	37.1%	1,855	11.5%	575	34.8%	1,740	16.6%	830
Management	5,000	37.1%	1,855	11.5%	575	34.8%	1,740	16.6%	830
Total Hosting Costs	30,000		11,130		3,450		10,440		4,980
ANNUAL COSTS	1,269,765		471,323		145,633		444,818		207,991
CURRENT BUDGETS	1,289,418		472,787		153,760		454,162		208,709
INCREASE/(DECREASE) TO CURRENT BUDGET	-19,653		-1,464		-8,127		-9,344		-718