

Report to: Leader and Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development

Date of meeting: 24 March 2020

By: Assistant Chief Executive

Title: Amendment to Scheme of Delegation in relation to Executive functions

Purpose: To consider changes to the Scheme of Delegation in light of the creation of the Regional Adoption Agency, Adoption South East.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Leader is recommended to:

- (1) agree to the proposed amendment to the Scheme of Delegations to Officers in relation to Executive functions as set out in paragraph 2.2; and
 - (2) delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive to amend the Constitution accordingly.
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1. Background

1.1. In July 2019 the Lead Member for Children and Families approved the establishment of a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) from the adoption services of Brighton & Hove City Council, Surrey and East and West Sussex County Councils to be known as Adoption South East (ASE). It was agreed that East Sussex be appointed as the lead authority. The establishment of ASE is in line with national legislation directing local authorities to form or join RAAs, reflecting the policy of central Government to rationalise the adoption sector, creating a smaller number of adoption agencies operating at regional level in place of the 180 agencies in operation in England in 2015.

1.2. ASE will bring benefits such as an increased and more diverse pool of adopters through a shared regional recruitment strategy and resource, and greater choice and more timely placements for children in need of adoption. It will also enable the sharing of good and innovative practice, offering opportunities for regional initiatives, collaborative commissioning arrangements and the development of ongoing adoption support for adopted children and their families.

1.3. ASE will come into effect from 1 April 2020, and during 2020 it will begin delivering the majority of adoption services on behalf of the four constituent authorities. This will include the Agency Decision Maker role in relation to approvals of adopters. The individual local authorities retain responsibility for adoption services but will exercise functions of an adoption agency through ASE via an Inter Authority Agreement with East Sussex as the host authority.

2. Supporting information

2.1. The Scheme of Delegations to officers in the council's Constitution (Part 3, Table 6) contains the following delegations of Executive functions to the Director of Children's Services in relation to adoption services:

29. To undertake all the powers and duties of the County Council as an adoption agency having regard to the recommendations of the Adoption Panel and to approve the charge for home-study assessments for intercountry adoptions in accordance with the policy agreed by the Cabinet.

39. To appoint the members (except for the appointment of any members who are County Councillors) of the Adoption and Permanence panels in accordance with the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2011. [Note that an amendment to this delegation is the subject of a separate report to 24 March 2020 Council with a recommendation to remove reference to the appointment of County Councillors.]

2.2. In light of the establishment of the RAA, the future exercise of the majority of these functions will be through ASE. For the avoidance of doubt, it is recommended that the Leader agrees that the Head of Service for ASE be delegated authority to exercise the functions set out above and the officer Scheme of Delegations be amended accordingly to reflect this.

3. Conclusion and reason for recommendations

3.1. For the reasons set out in the report it is recommended that the amendments to the Scheme of Delegations to officers set out above are agreed and the Constitution amended accordingly.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None