

Title of Report:	Annual Report of the West Berkshire Adoption Service and West Berkshire Adoption Service Statement of Purpose
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	21 July 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2311

Purpose of Report: To enable Members to approve the operation of the Adoption Service.

Recommended Action: To agree the Statement of Purpose and annual report.

Reason for decision to be taken: To comply with the Care Standards Act 2000 and the National Minimum Standards for Local Authority Adoption Services 2003.
The department has a statutory responsibility to report on the work of the adoption service to Elected members on a six monthly basis and also to agree a Statement of Purpose for the service.

Other options considered:

Key background documentation: None

<p>The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CPP2 – Raise levels of educational achievement – improving school performance levels</p> <p>The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CPT8 - A Healthier Life <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CPT10 - Promoting Independence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CPT12 - Including Everyone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CPT14 - Effective People</p> <p>The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by: Enabling children and young people, who were previously in care, to be adopted into families where all their needs will be met during childhood, adolescence and beyond, resulting in positive outcomes for the children and young people.</p>

Portfolio Member Details	
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Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	7 July 2011

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Implications

Policy:	The report is in line with the Council's policies regarding looked after children.
Financial:	None arising from the report.
Personnel:	N/A
Legal/Procurement:	The report complies with the legal requirements of the Care Standards Act.
Property:	N/A
Risk Management:	Ensuring that the Council has access to a high quality service is essential to meet the need, of very vulnerable children locally; without this, placement costs would rise significantly.
Equalities Impact Assessment:	The Adoption Service strives to ensure that the very varied needs of looked after children are appropriately met.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary and Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 West Berkshire Council provides a comprehensive adoption service, operating within the requirements of the relevant legislation and regulations. This paper introduces this annual report which is attached as an Appendix A
- 1.2 In addition, there is a statutory responsibility to update a Statement of Purpose annually and this is attached as Appendix B

2. The Adoption Service

- 2.1 The Adoption Service is provided by the Family Placement Team. The Service was inspected by Ofsted in February 2011 and was rated as outstanding, one of only 7 Local Authority's nationally to receive this high rating and the only one in the SE region.
- 2.2 The Service aims to ensure that all children in West Berkshire, who require permanency through adoption, are provided with an adoptive family who can meet their identified needs within a loving, stable and secure environment. It also ensures that there are sufficient approved adoptive families available to meet the needs of the children requiring adoption. It offers a range of support services to adoptive families, and children placed with adopters who live in West Berkshire, to ensure the maximum success of the placements. There are currently 111 adoptive families on our database; over 75 receive regular information and attend events. Approximately 6-10 families receive a higher level of support at any one time.
- 2.3 West Berkshire has had a busy year in terms of placing children for adoption and in supporting approved adopters who have children placed with them from other areas. The service works towards ensuring that children are placed for adoption within 12 months of best interest decision. Where this does not occur, this has been due to the specific needs of the child or court complications.
- 2.4 The Adoption Service is staffed by appropriately trained and experienced social workers and managers, a recruitment officer and support workers who work together to recruit, assess, train and support the adopters in their task.
- 2.5 In order to facilitate the operation of the Adoption Service within a small geographical area, the West Berkshire Adoption Service functions as part of the Berkshire Local Authority Adoption Agencies Consortium, alongside the other five unitary authorities in Berkshire. The consortium members jointly fund the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service, which was set up to provide a range of resources relating to adoption for the individual unitary authorities.

3. Conclusion

The West Berkshire Adoption Service is committed to providing a high quality service for children requiring adoption, valuing diversity, promoting equality of opportunity and working to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and adoptive families. It is a credit to the team and their hard work that they received the highest possible outcome from Ofsted in their recent inspection.

Appendices

Appendix A - Adoption Service Annual Report
Appendix B - Adoption Service Statement of Purpose
Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: West Berkshire Adopters

Officers Consulted: Children's Services Management Team

Margaret Goldie, Corporate Director, Children and Young People

Trade Union: