

<b>ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Report to:</b>	Executive
<b>Date:</b>	17 March 2014
<b>Subject:</b>	North Wales Adoption Service
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	Councillor Ken Hughes
<b>Head of Service:</b>	Anwen Huws
<b>Report Author:</b> Tel: E-mail:	Anwen Huws 01248751811 <a href="mailto:AnwenMHughes@ynysmon.gov.uk">AnwenMHughes@ynysmon.gov.uk</a>
<b>Local Members:</b>	Not applicable

<b>A –Recommendation/s and reason/s</b>
<p>Pursuant to Financial Procedure rule 4.8.6.4.1 the executive is asked to approve Isle of Anglesey County Council entering into a further partnership agreement, to deliver in scope adoption services via the North Wales Adoption Service until such time as the All Wales National Adoption Service is established in April 2014.</p> <p>The benefits to the local authority will be:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Continuity in our ability to deliver an adoption service which is compliant with legislation, regulation and guidance.</li> <li>2.Allows the Local Authority and the region to aligns with the national adoption agenda and to be well placed to meet the requirements of establishing the National Adoption Service and the enactment of the provisions of the bill.</li> <li>3.Adoption is a key service responsibility for the local authority, the current arrangements provides greater placement choice for the growing number of children requiring adoption across the region.</li> </ol>

<b>B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?</b>
<p><b>Background</b> In 2010 a formal partnership in relation to the provision of a Regional Adoption</p>

Service, with Wrexham Borough Council acting as host authority on behalf of the local authorities of the Isle of Anglesey, Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy and Gwynedd was established. The North Wales Adoption Service (NWAS) became operational on the 1st April 2010. The period of Partnership agreement was April 2010 – March 2013, and was extended for a further 12 months in March 2013. Within the resources allocated, the service complies with the adoption legislation regulations, guidance and national minimum standards. In scope services are:-

- Recruitment and assessment of prospective adoptees.
- Training of prospective adopters
- Ensuring appropriate matching of the child
- Step parent adoption
- Provision of a whole range of support services including birth parent counselling, step parent adoptions, intermediary service and letter box contact.
- Ensure effective links are monitored with local authority's children social services.
- Inter-country adoption services for those adults who are seeking to adopt a child from abroad.

Over the last three years, the North Wales Adoption Service has been consolidating its position, and in May 2013 undertook a service review, led by the Institute of Public Care/Oxford Brookes University. This provided an opportunity to review existing arrangements especially in light of the publication of 'Sustainable Social Services' and the recommendations for a move to a national adoption service. The review and associated implementation plan has ensured that the North Wales Adoption Service is well placed to further develop over the next 3 to 5 years, and able to adapt to the changing national policy.

### **National Context**

The Executive in its meeting on the 9th September, and resolved to approve the plan to establish a National Adoption Service for Wales, supported by Regional Collaborative and that Wrexham Borough Council act as the lead authority for the North Wales Region. In summary, the creation of a National Adoption Service is one of the key policy strands of the Welsh Government. The developed model will see a National Adoption Service responsible for various functions, with five Regional Adoption Collaboratives delivering the functions of the National Service including:-

- Ensuring compliance with legislation, regulation and the performance management framework.
- Recruitment and assessment of prospective adoptees.
- Ensuring appropriate matching of the child.
- Provision of a whole range of support services including birth parent counselling, step parent adoptions, intermediary service and letter box contact.

- Ensure effective links are monitored with local authority's children social services.

The proposed five regional collaboratives are:

- North Wales – Wrexham, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire and Ynys Mon;
- South East Wales – Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Newport and Caerphilly;
- West & Mid Wales – Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Powys;
- Western Bay – Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea; and
- Mid & South Wales – Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda-Cynon-Taff.

**C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?**

The current Partnership Agreement comes to an end in March 2014; and there is no further provision for extension within the current Partnership Agreement. In accordance with Financial Procedure rule 4.8.6.4.1 The Executive is responsible for approving delegations, including frameworks for partnerships. Therefore approval is required from the Executive to enter in to a further partnership agreement to deliver the in scope adoption services, until such time as the National Adoption Service and the five collaborative are established

**CH – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?**

The decision required is not contrary to any policy within the remit of the full Council.

**D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?**

Yes

**DD – Who did you consult?**

**What did they say?**

1	<b>Chief Executive / Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)</b> (mandatory)	
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2	<b>Finance / Section 151</b> (mandatory)	The budget is in place for a further year and the proposals is compliant with Financial Regulations.
3	<b>Legal / Monitoring Officer</b> (mandatory)	No objections.
4	<b>Human Resources (HR)</b>	Should the Partnership be dissolved the individual officers would return to the direct management of the Local Authority, as the requirement to provide the service would remain
5	<b>Property</b>	N/A
6	<b>Information Communication Technology (ICT)</b>	N/A
7	<b>Scrutiny</b>	No
8	<b>Local Members</b>	N/A
9	<b>Any external bodies / other/s</b>	N/A

<b>E – Risks and any mitigation (if relevant)</b>		
1	<b>Economic</b>	N/A
2	<b>Anti-poverty</b>	N/A
3	<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	N/A
4	<b>Environmental</b>	N/A
5	<b>Equalities</b>	Will provide a service that is statutory compliant for some of the most vulnerable children
6	<b>Outcome Agreements</b>	N/A
7	<b>Other</b>	

<b>F - Appendices:</b>
Appendix 1 – Synopsis of Progress against the Implementation plan including details of staffing implications and funding formula

<b>FF - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):</b>
Report to Executive 9th September 2013 – Establishing a National Adoption Service

Appendix 1

Workstream 1	Achieved																																								
Agree new Vision, Aims and Objectives for the service	Yes in full																																								
Review Legal basis for agreement	In progress and will be completed by 01.04.14																																								
Statutory Director to be identified to champion the service.	Yes – Gwen Carrington, Director Community (Ynys Mon)																																								
Funding Model	<p>No changes for 2014/15 to the original formula based on percentage population. Developing the cost model for Regional Adoption Service will become one of the national working groups which will consider in detail the options and implications of funding and partnership arrangements. It would seem beneficial to participate in this work and review funding formula in line with the conclusions of this work.</p> <p><b><u>North Wales Adoption Service - Local Authority Contributions 2014-2015</u></b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>LA</th> <th>Staff Contribution</th> <th>Cash Contribution</th> <th>TOTAL</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Conwy</td> <td>£110,156.71</td> <td>£14,994.29</td> <td>£125,151.00</td> <td>16.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Denbighshire</td> <td>£75,262.00</td> <td>£30,927.00</td> <td>£106,189.00</td> <td>14.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flintshire</td> <td>£75,262.00</td> <td>£94,640.00</td> <td>£169,902.00</td> <td>22.40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gwynedd</td> <td>£86,472.50</td> <td>£47,022.50</td> <td>£133,495.00</td> <td>17.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wrexham</td> <td>£105,033.34</td> <td>£42,114.66</td> <td>£147,148.00</td> <td>19.40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ynys Mon</td> <td>£75,262.00</td> <td>£1,346.00</td> <td>£76,608.00</td> <td>10.10</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>TOTAL</b></td> <td><b>£527,448.54</b></td> <td><b>£231,044.46</b></td> <td><b>£758,493.00</b></td> <td><b>100</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	LA	Staff Contribution	Cash Contribution	TOTAL	%	Conwy	£110,156.71	£14,994.29	£125,151.00	16.50	Denbighshire	£75,262.00	£30,927.00	£106,189.00	14.00	Flintshire	£75,262.00	£94,640.00	£169,902.00	22.40	Gwynedd	£86,472.50	£47,022.50	£133,495.00	17.60	Wrexham	£105,033.34	£42,114.66	£147,148.00	19.40	Ynys Mon	£75,262.00	£1,346.00	£76,608.00	10.10	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£527,448.54</b>	<b>£231,044.46</b>	<b>£758,493.00</b>	<b>100</b>
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Review role of Operational Management Group	Will step down in 2014/15
Establish Terms of Reference for new Partnership Board accountable to the North Wales Heads of service, NWSICC and North Wales Health and Social Care Partnership Board in addition to accountability to local authority director of social services and democratic processes via partner representation on the Management Board	Yes in full
Workstream 2	
Review of Service Structure	Completed. Recommended additional Business Support capacity to support the development of service strategy, performance management and overall service management. Staff who remain in Partner employment will remain seconded to the host authority.
Review of service	Completed: Recommendations

location	<p>Retain the existing operational bases</p> <p>Modernise ways of working through maximising IT, streamlining processes and moving away from paper based systems</p> <p>Relocate to a more geographically central base the centralised functions of service management, recruitment and training</p> <p>Consider centralising to this central base administration/facilitation of panel, matching meetings and supervision</p>
Workstream 3	
To strengthen systems and practice	<p>Work is ongoing to develop systems and practice which will strengthen the service and make it 'fit for purpose' over the next 3 – 5 years. This includes considering changes in delivery of some aspects of the service e.g. step parent adoptions, after adoption support; improving performance in relation to timelessness of decisions and planning for individual children: promoting consistency in practice and quality across the region: and a strategic approach to the recruitment of prospective adopters</p> <p>.</p>