

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**ADOPTION SERVICE 6 MONTHLY BUSINESS REPORT APRIL 2013 –  
SEPTEMBER 2013**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide cabinet with a business report summarising the work of the Adoption Service between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

2.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Adoption Service operates under the regulatory framework of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, The Adoption Agency Regulations 2005, Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of the Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011, Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012, Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous) Regulations 2013 (with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013) and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013. There are also National Minimum Standards that were issued in 2011.
- 2.2 It is a requirement that a business report is presented to the Cabinet Member for information every six months. This report covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013.
- 2.3 Since the last business report the Statement of Purpose has been updated and approved by the cabinet member. The Statement of Purpose is reviewed on an annual basis.
- 2.4 Since the last adoption business report, the Government has continued with their program of reform for adoption. New Regulations and Statutory Guidance were issued, with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013, which set out a new framework for the assessment of prospective adopters. There were also new Regulations introducing Fostering for Adoption, with a new temporary approval of prospective adopters as foster carers.
- 2.5 The new framework for assessing prospective adopters is now embedded in practice.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The Adoption Panel continues to meet on a monthly basis (a regulatory requirement) to make independent recommendations on the approval of new adoptive carers, matching of children to carers and where a child has been relinquished for adoption. Where required, additional Adoption Panels are arranged in order to ensure that there is no excessive delay. Approval of plans for adoption for individual children (unless relinquished) is no longer required to be presented to the panel and is now approved by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM).
- 3.2 One of the priority areas for the Adoption Service has been to ensure that we continue to meet the thresholds set by the Adoption Scorecard. For this period we have continued to meet the thresholds set. The number of adoption orders has increased gradually and reached 14 in 2012 / 2013 with a prediction of 20 adoption orders in 2013 / 2014.
- 3.3 Another priority area has been the recruitment, assessment and approval of prospective adopters. The aim being to meet the demand for adoptive placements, both locally and nationally, for children waiting. The number of approvals of potential adopters has increased from 10 (2012/13) to 20 (from 01.04.13 – 01.01.14).
- 3.4 The business report contains more comprehensive performance information for the Adoption Service during this period.

### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Overall, the service continues to make good progress and is meeting the thresholds set by the Adoption Scorecard.
- 4.2 There has been increased activity during this period in respect to children being placed for adoption and adoption orders being made. We have had 9 children being adopted during this period compared to 6 during the period October 2012 – March 2013. We have had 15 children placed for adoption compared to 8 during the period October 2012 – March 2013. During this period, 11 children ranging from the under one year to five years of age, had a 'should be placed for adoption decision', compared to 16 in the previous 6 months.
- 4.3 There have been no children who have experienced disruptions.
- 4.4 This period also reflects the increase in the recruitment and assessment activity of the service. . We have had 17 prospective adoptive families approved within this period compared to 8 approvals for the October – March 2013 period. During this period, 38 enquiries were received compared to 23 in October – March 2013.
- 4.5 The Service has a strong performance monitoring system in place and will continue to monitor the above to ensure that the service continues to make progress.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 There are no financial implications to this report.

5.2 The adoption performance reflects the investment by the council in this priority area.

6. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

6.1 An integrated impact assessment has been completed and there are no unresolved issues.

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

7.1 The feedback received from adopters, children and young people is positive with many people commenting on how easy their adoption social worker has made the process and that they have felt confident in requesting support where required.

7.2 The business report for this period details feedback received as a result of consultation and the difference this is making.

7.3 There are no conflicts of interest declared.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That Cabinet receives the report and continues to support the work of the Adoption Service.

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Previous Business Report for the Period October 2012 – March 2013 will be available in group offices