

Scrutiny Report



Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships

Part 1

Date: 8 November 2017

Subject **Proposal to Develop Fostering Services on a Regional Basis**

Author Overview and Scrutiny Officer

The following people have been invited to attend for this item:

- Sally Jenkins - Head of Children and Young People Services

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

1 Recommendations to the Committee

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to consider the report and the proposal to explore the development of regional fostering services and determine if it wishes to make any comments.

2 Context

- 2.1 Since 2007/8 across Wales Local Authority total spending on fostering services has increased by 20.7%, much of which can be attributed to the increased use of Independent Fostering Agencies. Regionally, there has been a year on year decline in the number of foster carers approved, reducing by 29 places (5.2%). Welsh Government has recognised the challenges faced by public services fostering services by supporting the work of the National Fostering Framework. During Phase One of the work of the National Fostering Framework there was extensive consultation with fostering services, foster carers, children and young people and public sector partners. A link is provided to the Fostering Network's results of their national survey of foster carers in its report : "The State of the Nation's Foster Care 2016" in the background papers at the end of this report, as additional background information.

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

- 3.1 The Head of Children and Young People Services' report upon the proposal to develop fostering services on a regional Basis Development is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 To provide additional background context, the National Fostering Framework Phase One Report - Summary and Recommendations is attached as **Appendix 2**. (A hyperlink to the full Phase 1 report and the Phase 2 report is provided is in Section 7 Background Papers below.)

4 Suggested Areas of Focus

4.1.1 In considering the report, Members may wish to explore:

- What is the timeline for developing this proposal?
- What are the benefits of delivering fostering regionally?
- At what stage is development currently?
- How will a Project Plan to take this forward be developed?
- How does Newport's performance compare with the other prospective Partner Local Authorities?
- Is there Welsh Government funding for development costs for the proposed regional provision?
- How would proposed regional arrangements be scrutinised?
- What would the proposed governance of regional arrangements look like?
- How does the proposal fit with the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act?
- How would this proposed Partnership link with other Regional Partnerships e.g. Adoption, Adult Social Care, etc?
- Can the lessons learned from the recent development processes for similar Partnerships be utilised?

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- Improvement Plan Objectives 2016-18
- Corporate Plan 2017-22 and Wellbeing Objectives

6 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no specific cost implications associated with this report. Financial implications would be identified as part of the detailed project plan for the next stage.

7. Background Papers

7.1 The Fostering Network's [The State of the Nation's Foster Care 2016](#) report.

The National Fostering Framework reports:

[National Fostering Framework Phase One Report 2015-2016](#)

[National Fostering Framework Phase Two Report 2016-2017](#)

Report Completed: October 2017