

**CABINET
DECISION RECORDING LOG**

DECISION DETERMINED ON: 12TH FEBRUARY 2014

DECISION WILL COME INTO EFFECT ON: 21ST FEBRUARY 2014
(Subject to "Call-in" by appropriate Select Committee)

SUBJECT: DELIVERING A REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE

DIVISION//WARD AFFECTED: ALL

PURPOSE:

1. To inform Members on the new arrangements at a national and regional level and to seek approval for the plan to establish a National Adoption Service for Wales from the 1st April 2014.
2. To seek agreement to move to a Gwent wide adoption service hosted by Blaenau Gwent.

DECISION:

1. To endorse the proposals for achieving a National Adoption Service in Wales.
2. That Blaenau Gwent will act as the lead authority for the Gwent Wide Adoption Service known as the South East Wales Adoption Service within the National Adoption Service.
3. That Monmouthshire County Council contributes funding resources as set out in the report required to deliver the South East Wales Adoption Service.

REASONS:

Whilst the key driver for the move to a national adoption service has been driven by Welsh Government the regional model proposed by ADSSC/ WLGA has been accepted and offers a robust framework for strengthening adoption across the Gwent area. The benefits of the new model are identified as:

- Timely implementation of the improvements required.
- An increase in the pace of collaboration and the capacity to build sustainable services for the future.
- A reduction in bureaucracy and a streamlining of service delivery.
- An improvement in service accessibility for all key stakeholders.
- Maintenance of the essential integrity and coherence between all elements of Adoption Services, to prevent a mismatch between the needs of children requiring adoption placements and the adopters being recruited.
- Long term and lasting improvements to address the weaknesses identified in some elements of current service provision.
- A central place for the significant contribution made by the Voluntary Sector as valued co-producers and delivery partners.
- Collective opportunities for local authorities to respond effectively to rising pressures within the care system.

The proposal will be underpinned by a National Standardised Performance Framework that will allow the National Adoption Service to identify, review and highlight key performance measures.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

As a member of the existing tripartite arrangement the move to a five authority model brings additional resilience but does not bring significant tangible benefits in the short term. Consequently Monmouthshire has negotiated firmly to agree a funding formula which offers good value for us and compares favourably with the costs of remaining in the current arrangement. Due to our increase in Looked After Children (a key component of the adoption service funding formula) we were planning for an increase in our costs and the additional cost to Monmouthshire of £18,000 constitutes a good deal for the County. This represents an unanticipated budget pressure related to the increased LAC demand and will be funded as a component of the additional pressures money for childrens services in the 2014/15 budget

CONSULTEES:

Children's Services have been consulted across Gwent, Children's DMT, Health and Education.

Proposals were discussed at Select Committee and members were fully supportive. An issue was raised regarding how the Service would be effectively scrutinised and this will be discussed at the next meeting of Scrutiny Officers in Wales and at the next Management Board meeting.

CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT:

G.C. Burrows, P.A. Fox, R.J.W. Greenland, P.A.D. Hobson, G. Howard, S.B. Jones, P. Murphy.

OTHER ELECTED MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Batrouni, D. Evans, P. Farley, R.J. Higginson, S.G.M. Howarth, M. Powell.

INTEREST DECLARED:

Nil.

AUTHOR:

Gill Cox, Service Manager, Children's Services.

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SUBJECT: SERVICE PERFORMANCE 2012/13 COMPARISON WITH OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

DIVISION//WARD AFFECTED: COUNTYWIDE

PURPOSE:

To provide some of the important points for Monmouthshire from the recently produced Welsh Government analysis of "Local Authority Service Performance 2012/13".

DECISION:

To use the information to help evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery and ensure that resources are targeted efficiently to deliver improvement.

REASONS:

To ensure that Cabinet is sufficiently informed to enable members to drive improvements in performance.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Any resource implications to improve performance will be informed as relevant through partnership plans and the council's own strategic plans such as the Single Integrated Plan 2013/17, the Improvement Plan 2013/16 and the Medium Term Financial Plan. Any further operational resource implications may be picked up within the relevant teams' service plans.

CONSULTEES:

Cabinet, SLT.

CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT:

G.C. Burrows, P.A. Fox, R.J.W. Greenland, P.A.D. Hobson, G. Howard, S.B. Jones, P. Murphy.

OTHER ELECTED MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Batrouni, D. Evans, P. Farley, R.J. Higginson, S.G.M. Howarth, M. Powell.

INTEREST DECLARED:

Nil.

AUTHOR:

Richard Jones, Teresa Norris and Matthew Gatehouse

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SUBJECT: TOP TEAM STRUCTURAL REVIEW

DIVISION//WARD AFFECTED: N/A

PURPOSE:

To set out proposals to re-shape the paid service Strategic Leadership Team and adjust portfolio responsibilities for several members of the team.

DECISION:

To agree the changes suggested and to their immediate implementation.

REASONS:

- Within this context there is no desire to directly replace two positions (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Transition) that have fallen vacant. There is a will instead to adjust portfolio responsibilities across remaining team members and extend SLT membership to recognise changes in personnel and responsibilities that have occurred over the last 3 years. SLT members are keen to continue to play their part in taking the organisation forward and are all willing to take on extended or changed portfolios in the wider interests of the Council.
- Significant time has been spent in the last couple of years on developing leadership capacity throughout the organisation. Whilst Monmouthshire County Council is becoming a smaller organisation, the calibre of employees is high. There is a pride in what is being achieved and a desire to achieve more. Members will be familiar with the organisation becoming more networked and more officers are

being given the chance to develop and lead projects and programmes. This strength in depth, which we need to continue to develop, will be vital over the next three years.

- I am satisfied that these changes will give the Council an officer leadership team capable of playing its part in taking the Council forward. Every member of the team has a combination of service responsibility and wider whole authority responsibility. The blend of knowledge, experience, energy and enthusiasm is appropriate. The sense of vocational calling and commitment to Monmouthshire is absolute.
- Given the judgements above, it is the right thing to do to test out the new model and release savings back into the organisation that can be applied to sustaining services.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- No member of the SLT will receive any salary enhancement or any type of indirect financial benefit from these proposals.
- The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Transition positions were both initial £90k+ positions. These positions can now be deleted from the establishment.
- These changes require SLT members to review management structures within their portfolios. Several of these will lead to adjustments which in most cases, will already be a feature of budget mandates that have been considered in preparing budget proposals for next year. These will be taken through the appropriate decision-making processes shortly.

CONSULTEES:

All current members of the Strategic Leadership Team.

CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT:

G.C. Burrows, P.A. Fox, R.J.W. Greenland, P.A.D. Hobson, G. Howard, S.B. Jones, P. Murphy.

OTHER ELECTED MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Batrouni, D. Evans, P. Farley, R.J. Higginson, S.G.M. Howarth, M. Powell.

INTEREST DECLARED:

Nil.

AUTHOR:

Paul Matthews, Chief Executive.

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SUBJECT: REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2014/15 – FINAL PROPOSALS

DIVISION//WARD AFFECTED: ALL

PURPOSE:

- To update Cabinet with the consultation responses to the budget proposals issued by them on the 4th December 2013 and 18th December 2013 in respect of the Capital and Revenue budgets.
- To update members with implications arising from the Final Settlement announcement of the Welsh Government.
- To make recommendations to Council on the Capital and Revenue budgets and level of Council Tax for 2014/15.
- To receive the Responsible Financial Officer's Prudential Indicator calculations for capital financing.
- To receive the statutory report of the Responsible Financial Officer on the budget process and the adequacy of reserves.

DECISION:

1. That Cabinet considers the responses to consultation and recommends to Council:
 - The 2014/15 revenue budget as attached in Appendix I to the report.
 - The 2014/15 to 2017/18 capital programme as attached in Appendix J1 to the report noting that this will require annual review.
 - 3.95% increase in the Band “D” equivalent Council Tax to apply for County purposes in 2014/15.
2. That Cabinet approves the necessary saving proposals and the release of £2.155 million from earmarked reserves and £296,000 from the general reserve to deliver the changes required and support the 2014/15 budget.
3. That Cabinet recommends Council to dispose of assets identified in the exempt background paper at best value, and to approve the associated costs of disposal.
4. That Cabinet considers the Responsible Financial Officers report on the robustness of the budget process and the adequacy of reserves issued under the provisions of the Local Government Act, 2003.
5. That Cabinet adopts the Responsible Financial Officers report on Prudential Indicators.
6. That Cabinet formally notes that Schools based expenditure is currently estimated to increase by 0.45% as calculated in accordance with the requirements of WG to ensure that, together with the Pupil Deprivation Grant funding, its target of funding schools by 0.9% or more is met.
7. That Cabinet approves the following:
 - Further work is undertaken on the schedule of savings over the 3 year period 2015/16 to 2017/18 outlined in Appendix E1 and E2 to the report.
 - Council Tax assumption of a 3.95% increase each year over 4 years
 - Regular review of the MTFP to ensure it remains up to date

REASONS:

- To make appropriate recommendations to Council on the revenue and capital budgets for 2014/15, and the resultant Council Tax recommended to be set for County purposes.
- To sustain the Capital programme and establish capital resources to support the 21st century schools programme by the sale of surplus assets.
- As required by statute, to consider the Responsible Financial Officers provisional conclusions on the robustness on the budget process and the adequacy of reserves going forward.
- To approve the Prudential Capital Indicators calculated by the Responsible Financial Officer.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

As identified within the report and appendices.

CONSULTEES:

Cabinet, Strategic Leadership Team

CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT:

G.C. Burrows, P.A. Fox, R.J.W. Greenland, E.J. Hackett Pain, P.A.D. Hobson, G. Howard, S.B. Jones, P. Murphy.

OTHER ELECTED MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Batrouni, D. Evans, P. Farley, R.J. Higginson, S.G.M. Howarth, M. Powell.

INTEREST DECLARED:

County Councillor R.J. Higginson declared a personal interest under the Members' Code of Conduct as a Member of the East Wales Valuation Tribunal that deals with Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

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