

# MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/2019 REPORT NO. 185

**MEETING TITLE AND DATE:**

CABINET – 12<sup>th</sup> March  
2019

**REPORT OF:**

Executive Director, People

Agenda – Part: 1

Item: 4

**Subject: A Regional Adoption Agency for  
North London**

**Wards: All**

**Key Decision No: 4814**

**Cabinet Member consulted: Cllr Georgiou**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The move towards the creation of Regional Adoption Agencies is led by a national agenda to better target the recruitment of prospective adopters and speed up the matching and placement of children for adoption.

All Local authorities are expected to become part of a Regional Agency by April 2020. In March 2018 the DfE introduced the legislation that allows them to direct a local authority into a RAA if there is no progress being made. DfE Grant monies have been made available to assist the project in its development phase.

In November 2016 Cabinet agreed in principle, to join a London Regional Adoption Agency, subject to detailed financial analysis and business case, delegating authority to the Cabinet Member and the Director of Children's Services to progress arrangements relating to the development and implementation of the London Regional Adoption Agency model and negotiate with other RAA's as appropriate.

The Adopt London North (ALN) Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) is created through combining the adoption services for the North London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington.

An Implementation Board for North London (with Director/Assistant Director representation from the 6 Boroughs) has met regularly to progress the project plan and develop the business case. Establishing the RAA will allow the six authorities to provide a more cohesive, efficient and effective use of resources and development of practice to the benefit of children, adopters and others who gain from adoption services. It proposes that the London Borough of Islington will host the RAA.

A decision to formally join the Adopt London North RAA is now required in order to progress the project to Go Live status. Go Live date is anticipated to be 1st July 2019.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- To approve the service and financial model for Adopt London North Regional Adoption Agency.
- To agree to join the Adopt London North Regional Adoption Agency.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This document sets out the case for creating a new Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) to be named " *Adopt London North*" through combining the adoption services for the local authority areas Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington. It describes how establishing a single agency will allow the six authorities to provide a more cohesive, efficient and effective use of resources and promote the development of practice to the benefit of children, adopters and others who gain from adoption services. It proposes that London Borough of Islington will host the new adoption agency, the cost of implementation has been funded by the Department for Education. This document also sets out how Adopt London North will work with other RAAs pan London to develop a Regional Hub for the provision of some services yet to be determined.

### **3.2 SCOPE AND VISION OF THE NEW RAA**

The proposed Regional Adoption Agency would encompass all six Local Authority areas in North London. It is estimated that approximately 60 children annually will be placed by the RAA (some in sibling groups) and 50 adopter households recruited. This is based on current activity and demand which could potentially increase over time. The RAA will operate in partnership with three other RAAs and a developing Hub in London. Additional adoption functions will be provided by the Hub as regionalisation plans develop, where they can further improve the outcomes for children and achieve better value.

The vision of the RAA is to achieve excellent outcomes for children and adults affected by adoption through:

- Working closely with the Local Authorities and partners to ensure that children's best interests are at the heart of placement decisions which will fully meet their needs;
- Targeting recruitment and establishing a wider and more diverse pool of prospective adopters;

- Embedding early permanence principles and matching so that children are placed without delay in secure, loving families;
- Providing creative and outstanding adoption support services;
- Investing in the workforce to ensure they have the right skills and capacity to deliver excellent services;
- Continually seeking to apply best practice and innovation to our ways of working;
- Actively listening to and learning from children, adults and staff to develop and improve the services provided.

### **3.3 OVERVIEW OF THE OPERATING MODEL**

From a local perspective, the six agencies have a long history of working together and North London has a clear identity. The North London Consortium has focused on developing joint services for Fostering, Adoption and Special Guardianship. Robust working relationships are already established. Adoption services have worked cooperatively in sharing practice and training opportunities. This has enabled constructive working together in developing the target operating model.

Adopt London North will therefore bring together best practice from these LAs while providing the opportunity to create clear practice improvements and enable a viable future market for recruitment. Approximately 40 LA staff, many of whom work part time, are expected to become part of the new organisation to deliver the following main services across North London:

- Recruitment and Assessment – to provide the prospective adopters;
- Permanence Planning – ensuring that children identified as requiring adoption achieve a placement;
- Matching and Placement – to match prospective adopters with children in need of adoption;
- Adoption Support – to help all affected by adoption;

More detail on the Operating Model is found in Section 4 below.

### **3.4 STRATEGIC BENEFITS**

The key aim in combining services to create a Regional Adoption Agency is to achieve better outcomes for all children and young people with adoption plans in the region. Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies will come together and combine adoption services into a new regional agency to benefit children and their adoptive families, with larger operating areas giving a wider pool of adopters and children, more effective matching and better support services.

The Government set out the challenges they are seeking to address nationally through the creation of Regional Adoption Agencies in the

paper 'Regionalising Adoption', published in June 2015. In summary, these are:

**Inefficiencies:** a highly-fragmented system with around 180 agencies recruiting and matching adopters for only 5,000 children per year (this number has subsequently decreased to 4,350 in 2017). Agencies are operating on a small scale this is not an effective and efficient and is likely to mean that costs are higher because management overheads and fixed costs are shared over a smaller base. Having a system that is fragmented in this way reduces the scope for broader, strategic planning, as well as specialisation, innovation and investment.

**Matching:** the system needs to match children with families far more quickly. Nationally, the data also shows that, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, there were 2,470 children with a placement order waiting to be matched. In North London at the end of March 2018 there were 54 children with a placement order not matched to adopters. It is vital that children are given the best and earliest possible chance of finding a family, irrespective of authority boundaries and lack of trust of other agencies' adopters. Successful matching relies on being able to access a wide range of potential adopters from the beginning and operating at a greater scale would allow social workers to do this, thus reducing delay in the system. It could also reduce the number of children who have their adoption decisions reversed. Furthermore, the opportunity for practice innovation created by moving to a new delivery model also has real potential to improve matching.

**Recruitment:** whilst there has been growth in adopter recruitment there are too few adopters willing and able to adopt 'priority' children. Recruitment from a wider geographical base as part of a regional recruitment strategy will go some way to addressing this. Recruitment from a wider geographical base than an individual local authority, that takes account of the needs of children across a number of those local authorities in a regional recruitment strategy and uses specialist techniques for recruiting adopters for hard to place children, would potentially lead to fewer children waiting.

**Adoption Support:** currently adoption support services are provided by a mix of local authority provision, the NHS and independent providers (voluntary adoption agencies, adoption support agencies and small independent providers). There is a risk that the public and independent sectors are unlikely to be able to grow sufficiently to meet increased demand for adoption support. There are regional gaps in the types of services on offer and little evidence of spare capacity. The sector is currently dominated by spot purchasing and sole providers. This is not an efficient way to deliver these services. For providers to expand and therefore operate at a more efficient scale, services need to be commissioned on bigger and longer-term contracts. RAAs should enable this to be done.

**The Local Perspective:** Children are adopted when there are no other options this is a positive permanent solution to a child's future. Since April 2018, 8 adoption orders have been granted on our Enfield children. A further 11 children are in pre-adoptive placements and of these, 8 have already had adoption order applications lodged.

There is already a great deal of joint working between the 6 adoption agencies as part of the North London Consortium to provide parts of the current service. Joining the six local authority services together within Adopt London North will enable efficiencies to be achieved and improvements to services for all those affected by adoption.

In terms of recruiting adoptive parents all the agencies are currently competing. There is a duplication of effort and associated costs with the risk that people wanting to be considered as adoptive parents are confused about where and how to proceed with their enquiry. Adopt London North will have a single point of contact for prospective adopters, reducing the current fragmentation of services. Similarly, a single point of entry to the adoption service locally will improve access to adoption support services for adoptive families, and for adopted adults and birth family members, who have a statutory entitlement to receive a service. Recruitment will be targeted for those children waiting in North London in order to ensure the service is delivering for those Boroughs contributing financially.

Combining the services should ensure that management overheads and fixed costs will be reduced over time. The new service will allow for the more efficient use of staff time, for example prospective adoptive parents are provided with training as part of the assessment process. Adopt London North will deliver training courses across the whole area resulting in less duplication and more timely access to the training courses for prospective adopters. There will also be the opportunity for trialling new approaches, including the use of experienced adoptive parents as trainers/mentors.

There are currently six Adoption Panels operating across the six Local Authorities. ALN will have one Adoption Panel which will consider applications from prospective adopters and placements of children with approved adopters. Agency Decisions in relation to prospective adopter approvals will be made by the Agency Decision Maker for the RAA. It will no longer be necessary for the six Local Authorities to retain their individual Adoption Panels, but each will continue to have a designated Agency Decision Maker for considering and agreeing the plan that a child should be placed for adoption and agreeing the match to appropriate adopters. Central list for Adoption panel will continue to encourage and retain the oversight, contributions and expertise provided by elected members across the North London region.

The new combined service provides the opportunity for the provision of a service of excellence for adoption support. This will be a multi-

disciplinary service in partnership with colleagues from health and education and providing comprehensive and high-level targeted support for adopted children, adoptive parents, adopted adults and birth family members

The RAA will bring the existing local expertise among managers and social workers together in respect of what makes a good match and will be looking at a high proportion of children being referred to the RAA prior to the point of Placement Order. Early identification of children with likely adoption plans by the Permanence Coordinators, and the plans for the RAA worker to liaise with the child's social worker during the court proceedings will enable fuller and more accurate assessments of an individual child's needs to inform matching and prepare the child. Being more strategic in terms of recruitment will also widen choice of potential adoptive families for children, which again should lead to better and more sustainable matching.

Benefits will be delivered through adopting the "best practice" from the six contributing organisations. This will be of value in delivering benefits from the areas of Early Permanence (concurrency and fostering to adopt), improved adoption support, making optimal use of colleagues in health and education as well as those in ALN registered as social workers and those without social work qualifications but with other relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

### **3.6 REALISING THE BENEFITS OF THE RAA**

The diagram in Appendix 1 shows how key elements of the planned project work and implementation combine to achieve our desired outcomes and how these align to meet central Governments objectives. Benefits expected to be realized through the project include:

- Improved timescales for adopter assessments
- Higher conversion rate from enquiry to approval of prospective adopters
- Early identification of children with potential adoption plans and more children placed on an Early Permanence (Fostering to Adopt or concurrency) basis
- Reduction in the number of children for whom the permanence plan has changed away from adoption
- Increase in the percentage of children adopted for care
- More timely matching of approved adopters
- Improved timescales for placing children with their adoptive families
- Fewer prospective adopter approvals rescinded as approved adopters are not matched with a child
- Fewer adoption placement disruptions pre and post adoption order

- Improved performance measurement and management across the service

### **3.7 STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED**

Consultation with stakeholders has been an integral part of the Regional Adoption Agency project. Task and Finish groups with practitioners across North London has served as a vehicle to acquire the views and experience of staff and the adopters they work with.

Specific Listening and Sharing events have also been instrumental in ensuring the views of staff are being sought to inform the development of the service delivery model.

Views ascertained in the Adopter Voice North London consultation report (early 2018) have been considered when developing the service specification and have informed agenda items at task and finish groups. It is also intended that Adopters will be invited to future Listening and Sharing events.

### **3.8. RAA OPERATING MODEL**

#### **PROCESS**

The target operating model for the new RAA considers its role in the delivery of the following main services across North London:

- Recruitment and Assessment – to provide the prospective adopters;
- Permanence Planning – Identifying children who need adopting;
- Matching and Placement – to match prospective adopters with children in need of adoption;
- Pre and Post Placement Support – to help all affected by adoption

The functions and roles and responsibilities of the RAA and the L.A can be found in Appendix 2.

As part of implementation project managers across London are exploring potential areas for the VAA to partner with the 4 London RAAs to support service delivery including consideration of the following areas:

- Targeted recruitment activity focusing on Early Permanence and targeted assessments for priority children
- Specialist adoption support training
- Specialist practical or therapeutic support services for children and families post placement and post order
- Adoption counselling and services to adopted adults

- Continued provision of VAA families

Practice improvements will be delivered through the implementation of new ways of working. ALNRAA will work jointly with the other RAA's and the Hub (once developed) in London to seek to explore further sources of funding to work jointly with the VAA and ASA sector, for example, in the areas of Early Permanence and adoption support to design and deliver practice improvements.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED ORGANISATION FOR THE RAA**

Approximately 40 FTE Adoption staff would become part of Adopt London North to deliver Adoption services across North London. The new roles created in the establishment of the new organisation are:

- 1 FTE Head of Service (also ADM)
- 1 FTE Service Manager

The **Head of Service** is expected to provide leadership and vision for the continuous development of the ALNRAA, leading the strategic planning, development and management of all aspects of the Agency to ensure the delivery of high quality, effective and legally compliant Adoption services. They will manage the operational relationship with Local Authorities through interaction at Senior Management level. An ability to work in a transformation role will be essential as part of this role to drive the practice improvement and cultural change required to deliver these.

The **Service Manager** will be responsible for the operational management of the social work teams and the monitoring and driving of performance. They will deputise for the Head of Service when necessary.

The **Agency Advisers** (1.5FTE) will be centrally located and will work closely with child care social workers throughout the permanence and adoption process. They will provide quality assurance and advice to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) and act as Agency Adviser to the Adoption Panel.

The **Marketing and Recruitment Officer** will play a key role in developing and delivering the Marketing and Recruitment strategy ensuring that recruitment is targeted for children who are waiting.

Other roles within the RAA related to team management, social workers, family support workers and business support staff will be included in the organisation. In designing the organisational structure, we have designed and shaped the RAA using the combined experience of managing adoption services across the local authority and voluntary sector. The operational staff numbers have been determined to meet the anticipated demands of the service and ensure

the ability to deliver and sustain practice improvement to the benefit of children, adopters and others who benefit from adoption services.

Detailed work on mapping existing staff (in scope of TUPE) to the teams in the new staffing structure will form part of the HR Work Stream.

Enfield's adoption service is currently delivered by the Adoption and Special Guardianship team with all staff members working in both areas. The team spends most of its time focussing on special guardianship work. A detailed assessment has therefore been completed identifying the proportion of time each member of the joint team spends on adoption work. This has highlighted that Enfield will transfer one FTE adoption social worker and one FTE adoption support worker to the new RAA based in Islington. A number of staff within the service have expressed an interest in transferring across. If more than two staff apply to transfer, then there will be a selection process undertaken to identify who will move. Any member of the team who is not successful in this selection process, will be able to apply independently for any role within the RAA as future vacancies arise.

One member of the Enfield business support team will move to the RAA and it is anticipated that this will be through the transfer of a vacant post. The Deputy Manager and Team Manager of the combined Adoption and Special Guardianship Team, the Service Manager for Fostering, Adoption and Special Guardianship and the Head of Services for Looked After Children, all currently spend a proportion of their time on adoption work. The costs of this time have been calculated and this funding will be moved into the RAA on the Go Live date.

#### 4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

1. **Do nothing:** this is not viable as the L.A could risk government intervention.
2. **Create a new model:** there is not the time nor the funding to progress this option.
3. **Join another RAA:** contact has been made with several other RAA's as follows:
  - South Eastern Region of England (Hertfordshire lead): this consortium arrangement is not accepting any other interested Local Authorities.
  - Coram (Harrow), this RAA has not progressed as far as the ANL and Enfield risks breaking ties with the North London consortium and loses its excellent partnership working.

- Kent RAA (Kent CC, Medway & Bexley): is considering becoming an RAA hosted by Kent CC by 2020 however they are just completing their scoping exercise.
  - Adopt South West (Devon CC lead): this went live on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018, but the geographical distance would preclude Enfield joining their Agency
4. **Creation of a new single entity:** this is time consuming and costly and not a preferred option elsewhere with RAAs already live.

## 5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The joining of a regional adoption agency is mandatory by April 2020 and if not progressed there is a risk of government intervention. There are operational benefits to Enfield staying in the consortium that outweigh any of the alternative options outlined above.

The ALNRAA will continue to be accountable to Corporate Parenting Boards and other Local Authority bodies. Joining the Adopt London North RAA will enable efficiencies to be achieved and improvements to services for all those affected by adoption by:

- joining up training
- improve recruitment opportunities and reduce competition across the 6 Boroughs
- reducing adoption panels that are currently held within each of the 6 Local Authorities
- improving outcomes by strengthening practice, bringing together the existing local expertise among managers and social workers

The delivery model for the ALNRAA addresses the DfE minimum expectations of a Regional Adoption Agency as outlined below –

- **Single line of accountability** – The new body must be able to act as a single entity on behalf of the individual authorities.
- **Core functions are transferred to the RAA** –Responsible for recruitment, matching and support.
- **Pan regional approach** – The new body should have a regional reach as far as its key functions are concerned, particularly on family finding and matching.
- **Recruitment, support and matching** – It is essential that RAAs drive forward the recruitment of new adopters utilising a wider geographical base audience to increase the scope for more matching and ultimately increasing placement opportunities. We believe this will be particularly helpful in assessing adopters for harder to place children.
- **Head of Service** – To be appointed with line management responsibility for all staff in the RAA.

- **Pooled funding** – LAs to pool their adoption funding into one RAA funding pot that is managed by the RAA.
- **Partnership with the voluntary sector** – VAAs have an important role to play in the provision of adoption services. We want RAAs to involve them in the design and implementation of RAAs and to consider their role in the delivery of services.

The ALNRAA proposes to work collaboratively with 3 other RAAs across London namely –  
 Adopt London West – host Ealing  
 Adopt London South – host Southwark  
 Adopt London East – host Havering

Enfield have invested in the ALN RAA development with the Executive Director: People, Director of Children and Family Services and Head of Service being actively involved in Boards and project steering groups over the last 2 years.

## 6. COMMENTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS

### 6.1 Financial Implications

A thorough analysis of each Boroughs expenditure on adoption services has been undertaken, with resulting challenges and peer-to-peer reviews. Total confirmed contributions from six boroughs will sufficiently fund the proposed new service, including staff and overheads attributed to the hosting of the agency. Enfield's contribution is as follows:

Ongoing Annual Contribution	260,163
2019/20 Pro-rata from go-live (9/12ths)	195,122
2019/20 One-Off Contribution	54,000

### 6.2 Legal Implications

Section 3ZA of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 came into force on 7 March 2018 and enables the Secretary of State to direct local authorities to make arrangements for any, or all, of their adoption functions to be carried out on their behalf by another local authority or another agency

The Council has the general power of competence pursuant to s.1 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals generally may do provided it is not prohibited by legislation and subject to Public Law principles. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits local authorities to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of their functions. The **proposed creation of ALN RAA** is incidental to the discharge of the Council's functions.

S. 101 (1) (b) Local Government Act 1972 and Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations SI 2012/1019 provides that a local authority may arrange for the discharge of any of their functions by another local authority.

The Council must also adhere to the Duty of Best Value in accordance with the Local Government Act 1999.

All agreements (including all associated documentation) arising as a result of the recommendations contained in this report must be in a form approved by the Director of Law and Governance

### **6.3 Property Implications**

The ANR will be hosted by the London Borough of Islington and staff will be based in Islington and be able to hot desk in Enfield at Triangle House.

## **7. KEY RISKS**

The development of a Regional Adoption Agency is a mandatory requirement there is a risk to all Local Authorities who fail to join a regional agency. This would include central government directing how its services would be delivered.

Major reorganisation of adoption services in the region may have an impact on service delivery to children and adoptive families in the short term. To mitigate these risks, performance measures aligned with the revised operating model and regular monitoring arrangements will be established between the host and non-host authorities.

Separation of functions could cause delay through ineffective communication. The service delivery model promotes co-location and local delivery in all six Local Authority areas. Effective information sharing agreements and close working relationships between children's and adoption social workers will mitigate against this risk

Any future difference in opinion across the LAs as to the role and scope of ALN and future governance arrangements could delay implementation.

The organisational staffing levels proposed in this business case have been based on actual demand experienced over the past three years, however there is a risk that suggested staffing levels might not be consistent with future demand.

There is risk, even regionally, of not being able to recruit adopters able to meet the needs of the children waiting, leading to more interagency placements and financial viability issues. More coordinated and

targeted recruitment activity is expected to address this, scope for enhanced recruitment and assessment has been built into the delivery model.

Major change will see a potentially worrying time for staff and proposed changes to ways of working could lead to a risk that ALN may find it challenging to retain its existing experienced and qualified adoption team workforce. The engagement of staff directly involved in the delivery of adoption services, and the involvement of current service users will be essential mitigation alongside keeping colleagues in partner organisations informed. The project team have been engaging with staff to ensure they are informed and enthused about the opportunities in a joint agency.

## **8. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES – CREATING A LIFETIME OF OPPORTUNITIES IN ENFIELD**

The ability to pool resource and target adopter recruitment will address the shortfall in adopter households which has been an issue across North London over the past 3 years. Targeting recruitment to meet the needs of those waiting will reduce timescales and associated costs of a child remaining in care.

Improvements in the support of adopter families and their children will reduce the risk of placement disruption and a return to the care system for some children.

Establishing a service where staff focus entirely on the specialism of adoption will improve the quality and timeliness of services on offer to those requiring them.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

This project covers all six Boroughs of North London. The intended impact of the policy and regionalisation of Adoption services in North London is to ensure timely decision making, increase in the number of adults wishing to adopt and improved services for all adopter families in the Region. The recipients of this regionalised service are some of the most vulnerable in the Boroughs. Improvements in the way adoption services are delivered will minimise disadvantage and inequality across the region and promote better understanding of support available.

Corporate advice has been sought in regard to equalities and an agreement has been reached that at this stage an equalities impact assessment is neither relevant nor proportionate for the approval of this report to seek approval to move towards a Regional Adoption Agency for North London. However, it should be noted that projects or work stream deriving from this may be subject to a separate Equalities Impact Assessment. Therefore, any project or work stream will be

assessed independently on its need to undertake an EQIA to ensure that the council meets the Public Sector duty of the Equality Act 2010.

## **10. PERFORMANCE AND DATA IMPLICATIONS**

It is anticipated that a Performance Framework already in use within live RAAs will be utilised to ensure accurate performance reporting and sufficiency predictions. A quarterly performance report will be provided to the Governance Board for ALN RAA. Performance measures aligned with the revised operating model and regular monitoring arrangements will be established between the host and non-host authorities.

## **11. HR IMPLICATIONS**

It is proposed that some staff for whom the provision of TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings- Protection of Employment) applies, will transfer to London Borough of Islington from the boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Hackney, Haringey and Enfield. Formal consultation will form part of the HR Work Stream and will commence following Cabinet approval. It is not anticipated that there will be any need for staff redundancies as a result of Regionalisation. For those staff currently working in Adoption services who fall out of scope of TUPE, there will be a preference exercise completed as phase 2 of the HR process. Consultation with Unions is being undertaken.

The project plan for implementation in order to complete the TUPE transfer will be subject to the following:

- Cabinet sign off approval March 2019
- Once cabinet approval is secured the formal consultation process with affected staff and recognised Unions will commence in March/April 2019
- Recruitment to the post of Head of Service will be finalised.
- The staffing structure for the new service will be finalised subject to consultation with affected staff and trade unions to be effective from July 2019, this will include the final Job Descriptions for the proposed posts within the RAA
- Each respective LA will conduct an exercise to identify the staff in scope and eligible for transfer in line with TUPE regs and will likely involve a further exercise to identify the individuals who will transfer in accordance with the financial contribution and associated posts ringfenced for LBE staff in the RAA.
- Eligible staff will transfer to London Borough of Islington on their existing terms and conditions, however, the option to transfer onto Islington terms and conditions will be made to staff from the point of transfer

- HR processes will be put in place to formalise the process and populate the staffing structure with information provided by the boroughs concerned through Employee Liability Information process.
- Any remaining vacant posts within the new RAA structure will be subject to recruitment and selection procedures open to all staff across the 6 North London Boroughs to apply. Any offers of employment will be on Islington terms and conditions of service.

## **12. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

Enfield Council already has good arrangements for Adoptions Services working in partnership with other Council's. The requirements set out in this report will be most beneficial to Council's who do not have such good arrangements as Enfield. However, the Government have made this approach mandatory on all Council's thus the recommendations in this report. Adoption is important to public health providing security and stability to some of our most vulnerable children and young people which will contribute to their overall health and wellbeing. Adoption enhances the chances of achieving the following public health outcomes:

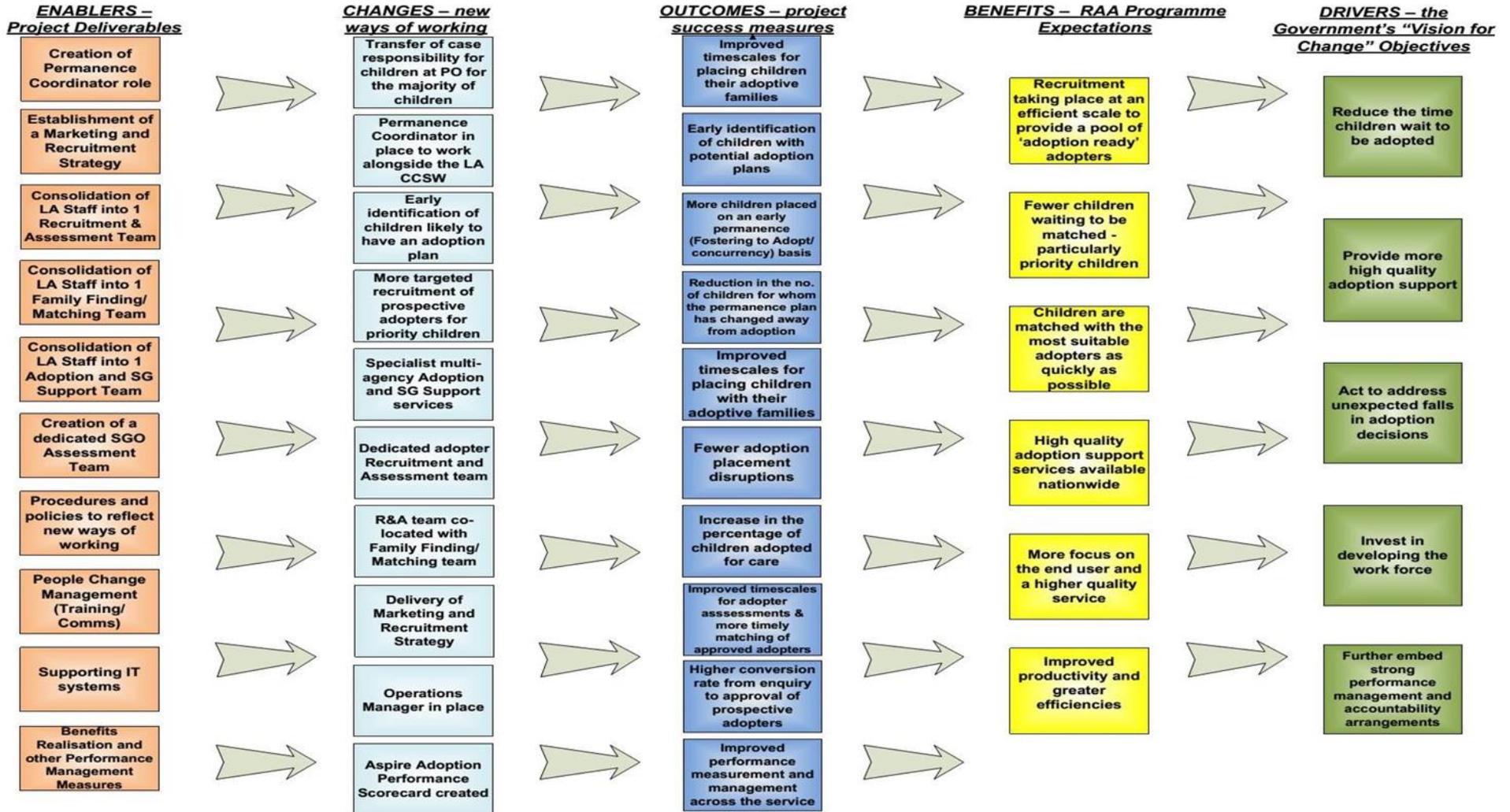
- babies, children and young people have positive attachment with their parents;
- babies, children and young people live healthy lifestyles and have a positive sense of well-being;
- babies, children and young people develop and achieve their potential;
- babies, children and young people are in the best possible health, have good nutrition and maintain a healthy weight;
- babies, children and young people are protected from ill health, injuries, and physical and mental health problems;
- children and young people are involved in decisions about their health and well-being.

### **Background Papers**

None

# BENEFITS DIAGRAM

# APPENDIX 1



SERVICE SCHEDULE

APPENDIX 2

The table below sets out the RAA and LAs will work together, summarising roles and responsibilities for each:

Function	Regional Adoption Agency	Local Authority
<b>RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT</b>		
Marketing and Recruitment Strategy	✓	
Adopter Recruitment and Enquiries	✓	
Assessment of Prospective Adopters – all Stage One and Stage Two functions	✓	
Completion of Prospective Adopter Report	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for approval of adopters	✓	
Post approval training	✓	
Matching	✓	
Post Placement training for Prospective Adopters	✓	
<b>PERMANANCE PLANNING</b>		
Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption		✓
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption	✓	✓
Support and advice to child care social worker on the adoption process	✓	✓
Sibling or other specialist assessments if commissioned by LA	✓	✓
Direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	✓
Preparation of the Child Permanence Report		✓
Agency Decision Maker for “Should be placed for Adoption” decisions		✓
Agency Decision Maker for Foster to adopt placements under reg 25A Care Planning Regulations (specific child)		✓
Case management prior to the point agreed by the LA ADM		✓
Case management from point agreed by the LA ADM		✓
<b>MATCHING AND PLACEMENT</b>		
Family finding	✓	
Looked After Child reviews	✓	✓
Shortlist and visit potential families	✓	✓
Organising child appreciation day	✓	
Ongoing direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	✓
Adoption Panel administration and management	✓	
Agency adviser role	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for Matching prospective adopters and child		✓

Function	Regional Adoption Agency	Local Authority
Placement Planning meeting administration and management of introductions	✓	
Support to family post placement and planning and delivery of adoption support	✓	
Ongoing life story work and preparation of Life story book	✓	✓
Independent Review Officer monitoring of quality of child's care and care plan		✓
Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for Adoption Order – including attending at court	✓	
Preparation of later life letter		✓
<b>ADOPTION SUPPORT</b>		
Assessment for adoption support	✓	
Developing and delivering adoption support plans	✓	✓
Agree and administer financial support to adoptive families pre and post Adoption Order		✓
Adoption support delivery including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support groups</li> <li>• Social events</li> <li>• Post adoption/special guardianship training</li> <li>• Independent Birth Relative services</li> <li>• Support with ongoing birth relative contact</li> <li>• Adoption counselling and training</li> </ul>	✓	
Financial support to adopters including adoption allowances		✓
Funding applications to the Adoption Support Fund	✓	
<b>NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS</b>		
Step parent/partner adoption assessments	✓	
Inter-country adoption assessments and post approval and post order support	✓	

