

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	21 NOVEMBER 2023
Report Title:	REPRESENTATION ON THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE FOR WALES AND FOSTER WALES
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There will be no effect on the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	To appoint and nominate an Elected Member to sit on the Joint Committee for the National Adoption Service for Wales and Foster Wales.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the appointment of an Elected Member to sit on the Joint Committee for the National Adoption Service for Wales and Foster Wales.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Authority is represented on a number of outside bodies and joint committees as reported and appointed by Cabinet on an annual basis.
- 2.2 Outside bodies are external organisations and partnerships which have requested that the Council appoint a representative to them. Outside bodies have separate governance structures to the Council and appointments to them can be an important mechanism within the County Borough for: community leadership, partnership and joint working and knowledge and information sharing. The appointment of County Borough Councillors to serve on outside bodies is intended to be a mutually beneficial act for both the Council and the bodies themselves. The implications associated with the appointments are considered to be positive.
- 2.3 With regard to making appointments, the Cabinet should first consider whether it is appropriate for an appointment to be of a specific office holder either by reference to the constitution of the outside body concerned or in the light of any other circumstances as Cabinet may determine.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 An invitation has been received for the Council to confirm its nominated Elected Member representative to join the newly established Joint Committee for the National Adoption Service for Wales and Foster Wales.
- 3.2 The Joint Committee is underpinned by a legal agreement (Joint Committee Agreement) and will be made up of Elected Members representing all 22 Welsh Local Authorities. All local authorities have now formally approved this agreement and an inaugural meeting of the Joint Committee is being planned.
- 3.3 It has been identified that the ongoing effective operation of the National Adoption Service requires formal co-operation between the 22 Welsh local authorities; the Joint Committee will facilitate this.
- 3.4 As the capacity and functions for the national co-ordination of Foster Wales also sits within a combined Central Team, the remit of the Joint Committee will also include Foster Wales. The Joint Committee will therefore provide the mechanism for all local authorities to discharge an executive and oversight role for the National Adoption Service for Wales and Foster Wales.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the Joint Committee will meet twice yearly on a virtual basis; the administration arrangements will be undertaken using the Modern.gov system. It will approve / receive:
- The Annual Reports of the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales;
 - The annual programme of work for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales;
 - The budget for the office of the Director and national work for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales; and
 - The agreement, and any changes to the agreement, for the host authority support of the office of the Director and national work for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales. The agreed host authority is Cardiff City Council.

For the National Adoption Service only, it will also oversee how councils work together to exercise their powers and comply with the National Assembly Directions.

- 3.6 It is usually proposed that Members be appointed for a term of one year except where earlier revocation of appointment is appropriate.
- 3.7 It is proposed that where Cabinet nominates on the basis of a Member's role within the Authority the appointment be attached to the role and not to the individual Member, e.g. Scrutiny Chair, Cabinet Member.
- 3.8 All appointments are made with the assumption that appointees represent Bridgend County Borough Council. Should any appointee cease to be a Bridgend County Borough Councillor, they will cease to represent this Authority and are expected to relinquish their appointments as necessary.
- 3.9 It is proposed that the Cabinet Member, Social Services and Health be nominated as the representative to sit on the Joint Committee having the relevant portfolio.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The following is a summary of the implications to show how the 5 ways of working have been used to formulate the recommendation:

- Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the long term planning of the business of the Council by the continuation of effective relationships with organisations linked to Fostering and Adoption
- Prevention - Continued and relevant representation supports the Council by enhancing its current and future relationships. Adoption and fostering services are effective in preventing breakdown of children's accommodation, care and support arrangements.
- Integration - Regional adoption collaboratives which come under the governance of the NAS include partners from health and third sector employment agencies as well as local authorities.
- Collaboration - This report supports partnership working with other local authorities and organisations at a regional and national level to deliver and improve adoption and fostering services.
- Involvement - The establishment of the Joint Committee has involved key stakeholders throughout and the Council's role on the Committee will help continue this engagement of key stakeholder groups.

5.2 The report is also linked to the following Corporate Wellbeing Objectives:

WBO 1. A County Borough here we protect our most vulnerable;

WBO 4. A County Borough where we help people meet their potential;

WBO 6. A County Borough where people feel valued heard and part of their community;

WBO 7. A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives;

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications associated with this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding implications associated with this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to appoint the Cabinet Member, Social Services and Health as the representative to sit on the Joint Committee for the National Adoption Service for Wales and Foster Wales.

Background documents

None.