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# NOTICE OF MEETING

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## CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2017 AT 2.00 PM

THE EXECUTIVE MEETING ROOM - THIRD FLOOR, THE GUILDHALL

Telephone enquiries to Lisa Gallacher 02392 834056

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If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

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## CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Councillor Ryan Brent (Conservative)

### Group Spokespersons

Councillor Rob Wood, Liberal Democrat

Labour Group Spokesperson - Vacant

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(NB This Agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting.)

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**Deputations by members of the public may be made on any item where a decision is going to be taken. The request should be made in writing to the contact officer (above) by 12 noon of the working day before the meeting, and must include the purpose of the deputation (for example, for or against the recommendations). Email requests are accepted.**

## AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Declarations of interest
- 3 **Children and Families Portfolio Budget Monitoring Report for the Second Quarter 2017-18 (Pages 3 - 8)**

### Purpose of report

To inform the Cabinet Member of the projected revenue expenditure within the portfolio cash limit and capital programme for the current financial year 2017-18. This report sets out the budget position and contributing factors to the projected year-end overspend within the portfolio as at the end of September

2017.

**RECOMMENDED: that the Cabinet Member**

- (1) Notes the Children and Families Portfolio forecast budget position, at the end of September 2017, of £2.4m in excess of current approved cash limit provision.**
- (2) Supports the ongoing process of budget review and implementation of proposals to reduce the projected overspend position and deliver a balanced budget within the area of Children's Social Care.**
- (3) Notes the capital programme spending is currently in line with the approved capital budget.**

**4 Annual Adoption Panel Activity Report November 2017 (information only) (Pages 9 - 18)**

The following report is for information only.

Purpose of report

The previous report was prepared March 2017 and presented July 2017. This report will update the Lead Member on Portsmouth Adoption Agency's quarters one and two performance for 2017 and ongoing development in accordance with the government's Adoption Reform Programme introduced in 2012.

It is required by Standard 25.6 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011 for Local Authority Adoption Services that the executive receives a six-monthly written report outlining the management and performance of the adoption agency.

The Cabinet Member is asked to note the performance of the Portsmouth Adoption Agency in terms of:

- (a) Reducing waiting times for children being placed in permanent families.
- (b) Sustained number of children adopted in contrast to the national picture.

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<b>Decision maker:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Children's and Families</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Children and Families Portfolio Budget Monitoring Report for the Second Quarter 2017/18</b>
<b>Date of decision:</b>	<b>5 December 2017</b>
<b>Report from:</b>	<b>Chris Ward, Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Bev Pennekett , Finance Manager</b>
<b>Wards affected:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Budget &amp; policy framework decision:</b>	No

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## **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To inform the Cabinet Member of the projected revenue expenditure within the portfolio cash limit and capital programme for the current financial year 2017-18. This report sets out the budget position and contributing factors to the projected year-end overspend within the portfolio as at the end of September 2017.

## **2. Summary**

- 2.1. Following overspend positions in the previous three years, an initial financial pressure of around £1.6m, and a projected overspend of £2.9m at the end of the first quarter, the portfolio revenue cash limit is currently anticipated to overspend by £2.4m in 2017-18.
- 2.2. The capital programme is currently forecasting to spend in line with the approved capital budget, although there are signs that delays may occur in some spending.

## **3 Recommendations**

### **3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member:**

- 3.1.1 **Notes the Children and Families Portfolio forecast budget position, at the end of September 2017, of £2.4m in excess of current approved cash limit provision.**

3.1.2 **Supports the ongoing process of budget review and implementation of proposals to reduce the projected overspend position and deliver a balanced budget within the area of Children's Social Care.**

3.1.3 **Notes the capital programme spending is currently in line with the approved capital budget.**

## 4 Background

4.1 Expenditure on Children's Social Care and Safeguarding was subject to much scrutiny during 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 exceeding the budget provision for each year as it did. Under the approved financial arrangements, an overspend is carried forward by the portfolio in the following financial year, as portfolios are now expected to manage their financial resources across financial years in order to encourage medium term operational and financial planning. However safeguarding overspends from prior years have been subsumed corporately to provide a clean starting point for the portfolio.

## 5 Summary Position against Cash Limited Budget at the end of September 2017

5.1 The current projected overspend for the Children and Families Portfolio is forecast at £2.4m, all attributable to the Children's Social Care and Safeguarding service as identified below.

Service Area	Current Budget	Current Forecast	Variation
	£000	£000	£000
Children Social Care & Safeguarding	23,794	26,224	2,430
Early Help and Intervention	94	31	-63
Troubled Families	0	0	0
	23,888	26,255	2,367

5.2 Troubled Families is fully grant funded, estimated at some £741,000, of which £471,000 is dependent on achieving a cumulative attachment of 1,444 families to the programme by the end of 2017/18. To date 1200 attachments have been made and the Stronger Futures Board is confident that the target is achievable. Current spending is in line with estimates.

5.3 Early Help and Prevention have a cash limit budget of £94,000, which is supplemented by a Public Health funding allocation, to provide an overall budget of £1,959,000. Due to the restructure of the service, delays in recruitment to vacant posts have resulted in a forecast underspend of £63,000 for the year.

5.4 The Children's Social Care and Safeguarding service is currently forecasting an overspend of £2.4m. Whilst this encompasses a number of variations, to differing degrees, across the service, as outlined below, the most significant area of overspend relates to the cost of Looked After Children placements. In particular external residential placements account for £2.0m of the forecast overspend as a result of 10 placements in excess of the budgeted number.

- 5.4.1 **Assessment and Intervention Service** (£352,000 under spend): Staffing levels, turnover and vacancies have led to staffing costs for the year being currently projected some £278,000 below budget. This is likely to change, as all efforts are being made to fill vacant posts as they arise.
- 5.4.2 Supervised remand provision is contributing an underspend of £56,000, following review by the Head of Service, as a result of the placement service not currently being fully utilised.
- 5.4.3 **Looked After Children (LAC)** (£2,762,000 over spend): The projected overspend on placements has increased by £952,000 since the beginning of the year, although it is some £357,000 less than projected at the end of June, and is now anticipated to be £2,523,000 as shown in the table below. Some £450,000 of placement budget has been redirected towards staff employment following proposals approved by the Cabinet in June, with a view to longer term reductions in placements costs; this has added to the immediate budget pressures in this area arising from increased placement numbers and costs.
- 5.4.4 Projections are based on current placement numbers being maintained until the year end, unless there are identified placement end dates known. These costs exclude Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

September 2017	Budget			Current Projection			
	Average	Av Unit Cost	Budget	Average Predicted No.s	Av Unit Cost	Estimated Outturn	Budget Pressure
	Nos	£	£	Nos	£	£	£
External Residential	9.02	137,151	1,237,100	19.88	163,628	3,252,917	2,015,817
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	37.86	39,379	1,491,000	28.11	49,347	1,387,136	-103,864
In-House Foster care	189.10	23,253	4,397,250	218.17	21,772	4,749,928	352,678
Adoption	41.81	8,371	350,000	64.92	7,904	513,084	163,084
Residence	37.24	4,834	180,000	18.75	4,630	86,808	-93,192
Special Guardianship	93.56	6,289	588,400	135.25	5,745	777,032	188,632
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>8,243,750</b>			<b>10,766,906</b>	<b>2,523,156</b>

*The figures in the above table are subject to rounding and may not calculate exactly*

- 5.4.5 Three secure placements to date have generated a £255,000 overspend.
- 5.4.6 A pressure of £42,000 in the operation of our own children's homes is also forecast, related to additional staffing costs, including the new unit manager post, combined with a shortfall in income recovery.
- 5.4.7 **Safeguarding & Monitoring** (£16,000 under spend): due to vacant posts within the young carers team who have transferred from public health.
- 5.4.8 **Support Activities** (£36,000 over spend): Recruitment and retention (golden hello) payments are forecast to be £40,000 above budget

## 6 Capital

- 6.1 Shown below is the current approved capital programme, and payments made to date. Funding for all schemes was approved by Council on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017.
- 6.2 Whilst there has been no spend to date shown on the software replacement significant work has been undertaken on determining the specification requirements and preparing for the competitive procurement process.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Current Approved Budget</b>	<b>Actual Spend to September 2017</b>	<b>Forecast Spend</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Adaptations to Foster Carer Properties	195,000	85,724	195,000
Children's Case Management Software Replacement	1,907,000	0	1,907,000
Tangier Road Children's Home	495,000	19,091	495,000
Beechside Children's Home	55,000	638	55,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,652,000</b>	<b>105,453</b>	<b>2,652,000</b>

## 7 Summary

- 7.1 The portfolio revenue budget is currently overspending and can broadly be attributed to placement costs as described in section 5 of this report. Other pressure areas and delayed savings delivery have been broadly offset by in year savings from staffing turnover and vacancies.
- 7.2 Significant work has already been undertaken in the past to establish whether the Looked After Children and Safeguarding services more generally are costly or not, compared to our statistical neighbours. Establishing this provides a guide to the extent to which savings / efficiencies might be achievable. The evidence gathered to date indicates that the cost of Safeguarding, compared to our statistical neighbours, is low whilst performance is also comparatively low. Scope to make significant savings therefore, although possible, would appear limited.

## 8 Equality impact assessment (EIA)

- 8.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010. There is no change to policy or service and through the budget review process equality impact assessments would be undertaken on an individual basis as required.

## 9 Legal comments

- 9.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

## **10 Director of Finance comments**

10.1 Financial comments are contained within the body of the report.

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**Chris Ward, Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer**

### **Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The information upon which this report has been based has been drawn from a variety of sources; however much of the information used is held in budget files prepared by the Children and Education Finance Team. Please contact Richard Webb, Finance Manager, if required.

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families on 5 December 2017.

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Signed by: Cabinet Member

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**Title of meeting:** Cabinet member for Children and Families Services

**Subject:** Annual Adoption Panel Activity Report November 2017

**Date of meeting:** 5 December 2017

**Report by:** Jackie Clark, Service Leader, Adoption

**Wards affected:** None

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## 1. Requested by:

- 1.1. It is required by Standard 25.6 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011 for Local Authority Adoption Services that the executive receives a six-monthly written report outlining the management and performance of the adoption agency.
- 1.2. The Lead Member is asked to note the performance of the Portsmouth Adoption Agency in terms of:
  - (a) Reducing waiting times for children being placed in permanent families.
  - (b) Sustained number of children adopted in contrast to the national picture

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. The previous report was prepared March 2017 and presented July 2017. This report will update the Lead Member on Portsmouth Adoption Agency's performance between April 1 and September 30 2017 and ongoing development in accordance with the government's Adoption Reform Programme introduced in 2012.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. Practices in adoption continue to receive government attention to promote stable, permanent care arrangements for children unable to be cared for by their birth families. In the DfE paper 'Adoption - A Vision For Change' the government outlined expectations for improved practices through regionalised agencies.
- 3.2. Government grants have been made available for local authorities to develop these agencies and Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council, Isle of Wight Council and Hampshire County Council are working with the voluntary sector to develop a regional adoption agency (RAA) - Adoption South Central. The proposed date for the RAA to go live is October 2018.

## 4. Areas that are doing well

- 4.1. The number of Looked After Children leaving care through adoption has generally continued to be in accordance with government-led timescales. Last year 35 children were adopted and between April and September this year there have been 16 children adopted. A further 12 children have been matched and placed with their prospective adoptive families and it is anticipated their applications for adoption orders will be submitted to court within the next three months.

- 4.2. Nationally there has been a reduction in the number of prospective adoptive families coming forward and Portsmouth has experienced a reduction in the number of adoptive families being recruited. The vast majority of adoptive families recruited and approved by Portsmouth live within a 50-mile radius of the city, as Portsmouth children need to be placed outside of the city in order to protect the security of the adoptive placement. Fifty percent of the children matched in the first two quarters this year have been with Portsmouth approved adoptive families and fifty percent with other agency adoptive families. This reflects Portsmouth being proactive with wide-scale family finding for children particularly with complex needs, which may take time, but has secured the most suitable families for those children. Family-finding social workers are proactive in family finding for children needing adoption. They work closely with the adopters' social workers identifying those children and adoptive families that may be the most suitable match. They also refer to the government National Adoption Register, the national family finding website Linkmaker, national adoptive family exchange events and children's adoption activity days.
- 4.3. In Portsmouth the children placed with adoptive families between April and September 2017 include four pairs of siblings and one child with significant lifelong health issues. Many children needing adoption come from families with complex backgrounds where they have experienced ongoing neglect and parents involved in domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse. Research shows the impact of those experiences can have a significant impact upon the child's development and these children need nurturing, robust and secure families able support these children through to adulthood. Prospective adopters undertake a six-month assessment to enable them to develop the knowledge and understanding related to adoption preparing them for a child/children to join their family.
- 4.4. For some very young children unable to live with their birth family it is possible for them to be placed with prospective adoptive families, rather than go into foster care whilst the courts decide the child's long-term future care. These adoptive families are approved as adoptive parents, but also temporarily as foster carers. Birth families and the courts are fully informed of these placements and can be supportive, as it means the child can stay in one placement whilst care proceedings take place - the court may decide the child returns to birth family or remains in the placement, whereby the placement becomes an adoptive placement. These placements are known as Fostering for Adoption Placements (FfA), currently there have been six children placed and/or adopted through Fostering for Adoption placements.
- 4.5. Portsmouth's timeliness for children being adopted has continued to improve. The government measurement in number of days from the date the child entered care to the date the child is placed with an adoptive family has improved from 541 days in March 2016 (average over three years) to 488 in September 2017. This compares favourably to the national England average number of days between 2013 and 2016, which is 558 days.
- 4.6. In order to support adoptive families and minimise the risk of adoption breakdown, the adoption support service has continued to develop offering therapeutic parenting strategies, support with child-on-parent violence, life-story work, as well as offering group workshops for specific issues related to adoption. The adoption support service in conjunction with special guardianship support is a relatively high-demand service for families. The service has been boosted - between April and September 2017 18 families have been able to access specialist therapeutic support through funding created by the

Government's Adoption Support Fund at a total cost of £75,279. This compares to £29,327 granted during the same period last year. The ASF has been particularly beneficial enabling external providers to support those families living outside of Portsmouth.

- 4.7. Adoptive families are supported by the adoption support service for three years after the making of the adoption order and thereafter they are entitled to support from the adoption agency local authority in which they live until the child reaches the age of 18. Therefore, Portsmouth is responsible for those children they placed with adoptive families and those placed by other adoption agencies within the city three years after the adoption order. The Adoption Support Service has continued to develop in order to provide a range of support to families. Between April and September 2017 19 Adoption Support Needs Assessments (ASNAs) have been completed. Common themes for adoptive families are children's issues with identity; managing transitions - particularly in school leading to risk of being excluded and child-on-parent violence.
- 4.8. In response to feedback from adoptive parents and their children this year the support service has provided the third adopted children's group, which focuses on supporting those children with issues related to understanding and feeling positive about their adoptive status, developing peer relationships, supporting children with transitions - particularly school. Feedback from the adoptive families includes "A group of children he interacted with without trouble, angst, anxiety... somewhere where he wasn't the 'naughty boy'...". For one child it was the first time he was able to join a group activity that was after school.
- 4.9. The Adoption Service continues to learn and improve following feedback provided by adopted adults and birth parents. For the referrals received for birth records, counselling and intermediary work there is an emerging theme of younger adults who were adopted requesting their adoption records. Younger adults adopted are more likely to have been adopted through care proceedings and it is evident that adopted adults need to understand how and why decisions were made to separate them from birth family and that they have full and accurate information recorded in their adoption files pertaining to local authority and court decisions where they are separated from their siblings. Therefore the adoption service work informs children's social work practise working closely with the Portsmouth Children and Families Academy and children's social work teams to support them in preparing children's assessments and documents that children may later access as adopted adults.
- 4.10. Adoption birth-parent counselling is an open offer to birth parents involved in care proceedings leading to their child being adopted. Many birth parents are not ready to access this service in parallel with or just after care proceedings and will access the service months, or years, later. They may also join the quarterly birth parent support group, which comprises birth parents having relinquished children many years ago and birth parents having children removed from their care to adoption.

## **5. Areas for consideration**

- 5.1. Portsmouth has approved five adoptive families between April and September 2017 and a further two families have been approved since the beginning of October this year, which in line with the national trend, is a reduction in prospective adopters going forward. This year a recruitment event held at the beginning of Adoption Week in October at Marwell Zoo, promoted via radio advertising, was attended by 18 potential adoptive families generating one immediate adopter applicant assessment. A further ten potential

adopter families are preparing to submit applications within the next six months to be assessed.

- 5.2. Nationally, the number of children needing adoption has reduced and Portsmouth did see a reduction from an average of 42 to 32 children at any one time over the course of a year. However the number of Portsmouth children with plans for adoption appears to be at an increasing rate in comparison to last year, as is the number of placement orders granted by the court. Portsmouth continues to maintain a robust permanence tracking process to ensure children becoming Looked After have a clear, timely permanence plan appropriate to their needs. This may be placement with birth parents, special guardians, with extended family, long-term fostering or adoption. Permanence tracking will continue to monitor the number of children becoming Looked After to ensure early identification of those children needing permanence outside of birth families.
- 5.3. Currently, there are nine children waiting to be matched to adoptive families. This includes a sibling group of three, two children aged seven plus and a child with special needs. The majority of Portsmouth children need to be placed outside of the city in order to maintain security of the adoptive placement. The challenge for the service is recruiting adoptive families in a competitive environment with neighbouring local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies.
- 5.4. The adoption support service is available to an average total of 104 families each year, which includes adoptive families transferring from other local authorities. The availability of the Adoption Support Fund has been invaluable in bolstering the support needs. Whilst there have been some restrictions newly implemented by the ASF criteria for applications, Portsmouth families to date have not been adversely affected by these. The challenge will be for the regional adoption agency to develop and sustain the improved adoption support services once the ASF ceases in 2020, within a static budget.

## **6. Areas of development**

- 6.1. A Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) project team has been established to drive the development of Adoption South Central, which is expected to go live in October 2018. Adoption South Central comprises Portsmouth City Council, Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council; Southampton City Council the voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs), Barnardo's, Parents and Children Together (PACT) and Adoption UK. With the contributions from the VAAs the four local authorities will come together to provide a regional agency specialising in the recruitment of adoptive families; expecting high quality family finding for the local authorities and offering comprehensive support for adoptive families.
- 6.2. The benefits of an RAA to Portsmouth will be:
  - 6.2.1. The removal of local competitive recruitment for prospective adoptive families.
  - 6.2.2. Immediate access to a wider pool of adoptive families for Portsmouth children across the region.
  - 6.2.3. Adoptive placements more localised within the local regional area, promoting efficiency in adoption support.
  - 6.2.4. Adoptive families being able to access robust comprehensive support packages to mitigate risk of disruption for children with complex needs.

6.2.5. Building on local authority good practice, skills and expertise to enable prospective adopters to be fully prepared and suitably matched and supported with those children placed - securing that child's future throughout their childhood and beyond.

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Signed by (Director)

**Appendices:**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Adoption activity 2011-18	Appendix 1
PCC Adoption Scorecard	Appendix 2

**Appendix 1**

Table 1: Adoption activity 2011 – 2018

<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Adoption orders No. of children adopted</b>	<b>No. of children's plans for adoption agreed</b>	<b>Placement Orders granted</b>	<b>No. of children linked with adoptive family for adoption</b>	<b>No. of prospective adoptive families approved</b>	<b>Placements disrupted</b>
2010	2011	14	21		15	11	0
2011	2012	16	42		13	18	0
2012	2013	13	30		26	20	0
2013	2014	27	41	30	35	37	0
2014	2015	34	29	27	31	32	2
2015	2016	25	41	41	28	22	2
2016	2017	35	21	19	31	21	0
2017	2018*	16	14	11	12	5	0

\*April 1<sup>st</sup> -Sept 30<sup>th</sup>-Qtr 1 and 2

Table 2: Placement type

From	To	PCC	OLA*	VAA*
2014	2015	14	6	11
2015	2016	22	2	4
2016	2017	19	5	6
2017	<b>2018</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>

*\*Other local authority*

*\*Voluntary Adoption Agency*

## Appendix 2 - PCC Adoption Scorecard

Portsmouth Team Report - September 2017

A1 National England average 558 days

A2 National England average 226 days

### Adoption Team Report September

**A1: Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days)**

3yr average	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17
A1	492	490	482	482	486	493	493	484	482	474	481	482	488

**A2: Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)**

3yr average	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17
A2	235	235	230	230	236	239	241	242	238	242	252	250	253

**A3: Children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (number and %)**

	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17
Number	81	80	79	77	79	78	74	73	73	68	68	71	71





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