

| <b>MAYOR AND CABINET</b> |   |                              |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Report Title</b>      | Adoption Statement of Purpose   |                              |
| <b>Key Decision</b>      |   | <b>Item No.</b>              |
| <b>Ward</b>              | All.  |                              |
| <b>Contributors</b>      | Shirley Gounder, Service Manager Children Looked After, Leaving Care & Adoption |                              |
| <b>Class</b>             | <b>Part 1</b>   | <b>Date: 10 October 2018</b> |

## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report presents the Lewisham Adoption Service Statement of Purpose to the Mayor and Cabinet.

## **2 Summary**

- 2.1 It is a regulatory requirement that children, their parents, adopters, prospective adopters, staff and the leaders of responsible authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the adoption service and what services and facilities it provides. This information is all contained within the Lewisham Adoption Service Statement of Purpose which is attached at Appendix 1.

## **3 Recommendation**

- 3.1 That the Mayor and Cabinet note and approve the Adoption Statement of Purpose.

## **4 Policy Context**

- 4.1 Lewisham is a registered Adoption Agency. Adoption Agencies are subject to the Adoption Agency Regulations (AAR) 2005 and 2011 and The Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012; Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013; Children and Families Act 2014; Children and Social Work Act 2017 and are subject to the National Minimum Standards 2014 (NMS) which accompany the Regulations. Standard 25.6 of the National Minimum Standards requires the Adoption Agency to produce a six monthly report to be received by the Council Executive.
- 4.2 Standard 18.3 of the National Minimum Standards requires that the Adoption Agency approves and annually reviews the Statement of Purpose.

4.3 The Statement of Purpose contributes to five of the key priority outcomes of Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020:

- **Ambitious and achieving** – where people are inspired and supported to fulfil their potential
- **Safer** – where people feel safe and live free from crime, antisocial behaviour and abuse
- **Empowered and responsible** – where people are actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities
- **Healthy, active and enjoyable** – where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and well-being
- **Dynamic and prosperous** – where people are part of vibrant communities and town centres, well connected to London and beyond.

4.4 The Statement of Purpose also aligns with the Corporate Priority of **protection of children** – better safeguarding and joined up services for children at risk.

## 5. **Detail**

5.1 The Adoption Statement of Purpose is attached to this report as Appendix 1. There are no significant changes since last year since there have been no major legislative or policy developments, apart from regionalisation which is dealt with elsewhere on Mayor and Cabinet's agenda. Adoption continues to be a strong area of performance for Lewisham's Children's Social Care service. The service consults with adopters and is part of wider networks with the aim of improving practice. The report elsewhere on the agenda recommends joining the Regional Adoption Agency in line with government requirements. It will be necessary therefore that next year's Statement of Purpose will fully reflect the new arrangements.

## 5 **Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the agreement of the recommendations of the report.

## 6 **Legal Implications**

6.1 Section 3(1) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 places a duty on the Local Authority to establish and maintain an adoption service in its area designed to meet the needs of children who may be or who have been adopted, adults who have been adopted, their parents or guardians, including parents and former guardians, and both prospective or actual adopters.

6.2 The Local Authority is required to maintain and operate its adoption service in accordance with detailed statutory regulations, including The Adoption Agency Regulations (AAR) 2005 and 2011 and The Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012,

Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013, Adoption and Social Work Act 2017 and it is subject to National Minimum Standards which accompany the Regulations.

- 6.3 National Minimum Standards apply to how the Local Authority discharges its duties. They do not have the force of law, but are used by registration authorities when registering and inspecting adoption agencies and adoption support agencies, to determine whether the agencies meet their obligations under the mandatory regulations.

## **7 Equalities Implications**

- 7.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.2 In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 7.3 Lewisham's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme 2016-20 sets out the council's commitment to improve the life chances of residents across the borough. In the context of this report, the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme objectives that are particularly relevant are to: improve access to services, close the gap in outcomes for our citizens and increase participation and engagement.
- 7.4 The Adoption Statement of Purpose reflects the council's commitment to equalities and diversity, with a section addressing these issues explicitly.

## **8. Crime and Disorder Implications**

- 8.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **9. Environmental Implications**

- 9.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

## **10. Background documents**

- Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 and 2011

- The Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012; Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- National Minimum Standards (Adoption) 2003, 2011 and July 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

#### **Appendix 1-Adoption Service Statement of Purpose 2018-19**