

Mr Paul Marshall

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

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Paul High

Chairman

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

14 October 2019

Dear Paul

Partnership Agreement to form a Regional Adoption Agency

I write in response to the recommendation from the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee in relation to the formation of a Regional Adoption Agency, following consideration of the proposal at the meeting on 11 September 2019. The Committee asked that, before the County Council enters into a member's agreement with Brighton and Hove City Council, East Sussex and Surrey County Councils, the Committee have sight of the partnership agreement.

As explained at the Select Committee meeting there is a government requirement for all local authorities to become part of a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) by April 2020. To comply with this requirement the County Council intend to participate in the Adoption South East RAA.

The partnership agreement that I have delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services to sign to enable the RAA to be implemented is also termed a member's agreement. This term refers to an agreement between the authorities that will be the members of the RAA - Brighton and Hove City Council, West Sussex, East Sussex and Surrey County Councils.

The agreement does not come into effect until April 2020 so is still in the process of being drafted. However, the agreement is being drawn up with the full support and advice of a range of subject matter experts including officers from the financial and legal departments of each of the four participating authorities to ensure a comprehensive and robust partnership agreement is put in place. In addition those writing the partnership agreement are obtaining guidance from the Department for Education that has developed following the experience of implementing other RAAs across the country.

In relation to the request that members of the Committee having sight of this agreement I am content for this to happen but after the four participating authorities have signed the partnership agreement and the RAA has been implemented.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Paul Marshall

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
West Sussex County Council