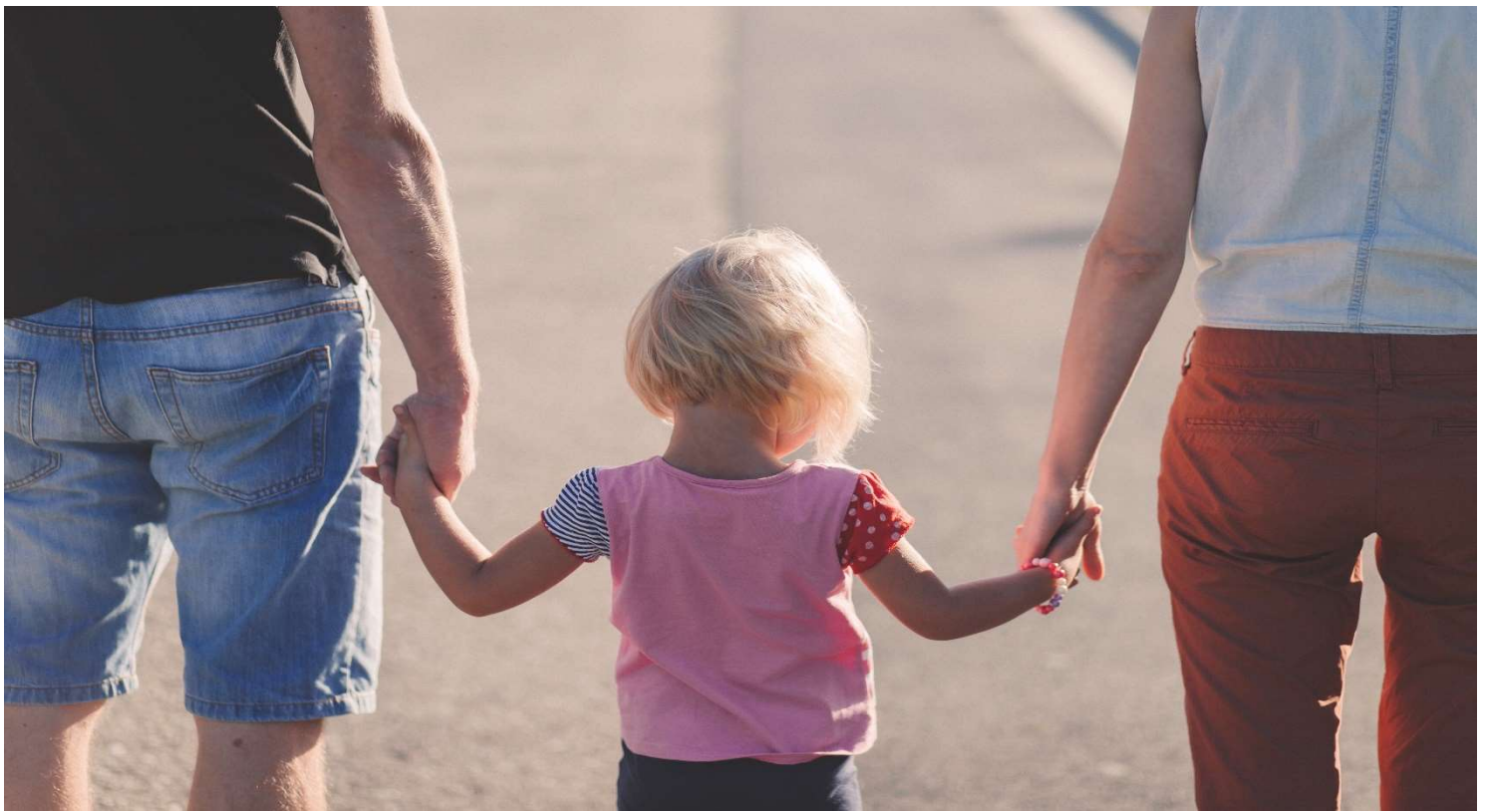# iMPOWER

Tees Valley Regional Adoption Agency: Outline Business Case

Supporting Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies in Tees Valley with the development of a Regional Adoption Agency

30 September 2016

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Version V1.0	26.09.16	iMPOWER Consulting	First full draft for discussion with Sponsor	Sally Robinson	26.09.16	
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REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

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1. ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document is an outline business case ('OBC') for the development and implementation of a Tees Valley Regional Adoption Agency (RAA).

Its purpose is to enable the five participating local authorities to consider and agree the direction of and next steps for the RAA.

It does so by setting out the design work completed with stakeholders to date, the vision that has emerged, the associated design principles and the key processes, roles and functions to deliver the new model of practice.

The document then considers, in the context of this vision, the opportunities for and risks of the new agency by illustrating a range of performance and financial scenarios.

Having supported the five local authorities in the first stage of the Regional Adoption Agency work, iMPOWER Consulting Limited ('iMPOWER') were asked by Hartlepool Borough Council (as the lead local authority) to support the development of this OBC.

In response iMPOWER proposed the following scope of support:

1. Facilitation of a series of 'design workshops' with a mixture of local authority and VAA staff to consider the potential shape and make up of a future RAA, including high-level mapping of pathways;

2. Facilitation of a series of workshops to identify and develop a number of options for the delivery of post adoption support, building on the requirements specified by adopters in the recent adopter engagement sessions, and

3. The collation of a more detailed outline business case detailing the potential model for the RAA, key principles, processes, roles, functions, indicative costs and benefits, and next steps.

This document incorporates the outputs from this support.

Overall the development of this business case for a Tees Valley Regional Adoption Agency is an iterative process. During the detailed design phase this document will be developed into a detailed full Business Case, as set out in the implementation plan.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

This Outline Business Case ('OBC') sets out the potential benefits and risks of establishing and delivering a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), an overarching vision and associated operating principles, and the processes, roles and functions that are required to deliver it.

Through modelling around performance and demand, key performance indicators have been identified, as well as the level of ambition and the financial opportunity of realising the improvements targeted. This includes becoming a net contributor of adopters and helping to meet the need from outside the Tees Valley boundaries.

Development of Outline Business Case

The process of developing this OBC has been used as an opportunity to build consensus on an optimum model for the delivery of region-wide adoption services through:

- Identification of best practice across Tees Valley, based on quantitative performance analysis and qualitative practice workshops, and the consolidation of this to ensure the RAA is greater than the sum of its parts;

- A co-productive design process, in which the ideas and ambition has come from the people who deliver adoption and children's services in Tees Valley, and

- Anchoring the service design in the needs of those who experience adoption: children, adopters and birth parents.

This approach has enabled the stakeholders across the RAA to agree a best practice model and aim for an improvement in overall performance.

Context

Through its national programme the Department of Education (DfE) is encouraging and supporting local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies to combine and to establish Regional Adoption Agencies. From February - September 2016 local authorities (LAs) and voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) in the Tees Valley have collaborated to develop outline proposals and plans for a Tees Valley Regional Adoption Agency.

Introduction and Approach

Over August and September 2016 seven workshops were held with a cross section of professionals and staff to further develop the RAA and produce this Outline Business Case. Performance and cost / benefit analyses were also produced to assess and quantify the potential benefits and risks of establishing a Tees Valley RAA.

RAA Vision, Strategic Objectives and Scope

LAs and VAAs in the Tees Valley have developed a draft vision and set of strategic objectives for the RAA. These are child and adopter centred and have underpinned the scoping and development of processes, roles and functions set out in this document.

Ideal experience from a child, adopter and birth parent perspective

Workshops with LA and VAA representatives held in August and September were used to identify the best possible experience and ideal 'customer journey' for children, adopters and birth parents.

First person narratives were produced and agreed at the workshops and used to develop guiding principles for the RAA design. These have in turn driven and informed the development of processes, roles and functions included in this document.

This exercise has facilitated the development of cross-agency consensus on what the RAA should do, how it should do it, and the potential benefits.

Core components to deliver vision

Using the vision, ideal customer experience and guiding principles, LA, VAA and adopter representatives attending the workshops mapped out the detailed activities, processes and pathways that the RAA will implement to deliver these.

This includes a proposed new approach to post-adoption support. Workshops with practitioners identified an appetite for significant innovation in moving toward a more consistent and preventative model of practice.

In so doing, it was identified that further and focussed work is required to confirm the reasons and basis for the provision of post -adoption support, what is currently provided and how, and the outcomes achieved - in order to agree the future model.

Other key considerations for the next phase of detailed design and implementation have been identified and are set out in this section.

Cost / benefit scenarios

The cost / benefit analysis included in this Outline Business Case has highlighted the significant potential benefit of establishing a Tees Valley Regional Adoption Agency in terms of outcomes for children and medium to long term cost savings for the local authorities.

This has modelled the potential sufficiency and financial opportunity if performance can be improved and / or demand increased as a result of consistently applying the best practice and innovations identified. This also highlights the risks if performance or demand were to deteriorate.

The difference between the high and low performance and demand scenarios is considerable. Indicatively, it could mean the difference between over 400 children finding adoptive homes over a five-year period, and LAs achieving annual savings of £3.5m, and only 150 children finding homes and the TV LAs seeing a total extra cost of almost £6m per annum.

Implementation plan

An implementation plan has been produced setting out the activity required to design and implement the Tees Valley RAA, including the practical aspects outlined in 'Other

Considerations', such as the formation of and transition to the new agency and back office arrangements.

The cost / benefit analysis highlights the importance of a well-organised and sequenced design and transition, an approach to which is recommended in this OBC, as well as the risks.

In order to realise the benefits and manage the risks and potential costs, a three stage plan is recommended in which:

- Detailed design work is completed and the transition planned, culminating in a Full Business Case which allows a final go/no-go decision

- The transition is effected over a period of six months, and

- A six-month post implementation period is planned following go-live to ensure that the new RAA can quickly resolve any operational issues and optimise its performance.

Recommendations

This OBC makes the following recommendations to the Tees Valley Regional Adoption Agency Project Board:

- Agree the proposed vision, principles, and outline processes, functions and roles described in this OBC;

- Agree in principle to develop a Tees Valley Regional Adoption Agency with an ambition to realise the potential benefits highlighted in this Outline Business Case;

- Proceed to Detailed Design phase in October 2016, as defined in the implementation plan, with a view to moving to a Transition phase in May 2017, and achieving go-live in the Autumn of 2017;

- Set up a further decision gateway within one month of mobilisation of the Detailed Design phase. Specifically, after detailed Workstream planning, revisit the estimated cost of change and determine whether the plan be amended in light of confirmed DfE funding levels;

- As an output of the Detailed Design work (April 2017), develop a Full Business Case setting out the proposed model, costs, benefits and risks, to enable appropriate local approvals;

- As a priority, establish a baseline for Post Adoption Support to enable further design and development of a Regional Post Adoption Support service and / or offer, and

- As a priority, further clarify and formalise the role of the five participating Voluntary Adoption Agencies in the control and governance and delivery of the Regional Adoption Agency.

Key risks and issues for RAA Project Board consideration

There are a number of design and implementation risks, issues and priorities requiring the early consideration of the RAA Project Board including:

- **Risk and gain share** - Local authorities / Voluntary Adoption Agencies will need to agree a 'deal' on what resources they put into the Tees Valley RAA, what financial / non-financial return they can expect to receive in turn (e.g. the number children placed with each year). There are a range of options on how risks and gains can be shared across each party and it will be important to start this conversation early as there are other design decisions which have dependencies on or may inform the outcome, such as how the RAA governance is set up.

- **Demand for adoption** – demand for adoption - the number of placement orders – has been falling since 2013/14 and continues to fall, locally, regionally and nationally. The question of how to gear operations up or down accordingly is one facing all adoption agencies, whether in RAA form or not. However it will be additionally important for the Board to form an expectation around demand in the short to medium term because contribution or transfer of resource from LAs / VAAs to the Tees Valley RAA may risk 'locking in' this cost more firmly, if the RAA has less flexibility to downscale adoption services than LAs / VAAs.

- **Diversity of provision** - there is the possibility that a RAA which is more successful in recruiting, matching and placing adopters (indeed this is the ambition) may address more of the demand in Tees Valley and beyond, restricting opportunities for the VAA market and reducing competition overall. This requires consideration with VAAs and the scenario modelling is intended to aid this discussion.

- **The costs of change** – further assurance is required as to a) DfE funding and b) the cost of delivering the proposed change. It is expected that confirmation from DfE will be forthcoming over the coming month and proposed that the detailed planning required be completed on a similar timescale so that a decision can be made on the model and approach to transition. The plan therefore provides for an interim 'decision gateway' when this information is available. Subject to this, the Board may wish to review the legal form the RAA takes, if it is considered that the vision and benefits targeted can be achieved through a less complex and costly service sharing arrangement, for example through contract.

3. CONTEXT

3.1 National context

Regionalising Adoption

The Department of Education (DfE) launched the 'Regional Adoption Agency' programme in 2014 with the aim of enabling the adoption of more children more quickly, through greater collaboration. The DfE believes regional adoption services will help:

- Speed up matching and markedly improve the life chances of neglected and damaged children;
- Improve adopter recruitment and adoption support; and
- Reduce costs.

Since the launch of this programme each participating region in England has received a level of financial support to develop proposals for RAAs and move to implementation. In April 2016 each formative RAA submitted a 'Transition Plan' setting out plans for the design and implementation of RAA proposals.

Children's and Social Work Bill

The Children's and Social Work Bill includes a number of measures which are relevant to the establishment of Regional Adoption Services. Section 15 of the Bill gives the Secretary of State additional powers to exempt local authorities from requirements under social care legislation. The bill will allow Government to free local authorities from regulations where Government have made an intervention.

On adoption, the Children's and Social Work Bill includes measures aiming to maximise opportunities for adoption over short-term foster care placements, where possible and appropriate, by expanding the factors courts must consider when deciding whether to make a care order.

Under this Act, when courts are considering whether to make a care order they must consider the 'permanence provisions' of the care plan prepared by a local authority including: additional information about the impact of any harm a child has suffered; their current and future needs (including any needs arising from exposure to that harm); and the way in which the proposed permanence plan for the child will meet those needs.

National reduction in number of placement orders, 2014 - 2016

The Regionalising Adoption Programme, Children's and Social Care Bill and policy emphasis on maximising the number of children who can be adopted comes is against a backdrop of a national (and regional) fall in the number of placement orders granted by judges. This was halved between March and November 2014 (ALB, November 2014),

and placement orders had fallen a further 24% in the year in the year up to March 2015 in England (DfE Children Looked After in England, March 2015).

It has been suggested by a range of agencies across the sector that this is a response to precedents established through case law and subsequent application by the judiciary nationally.

The success of the Tees Valley RAA depends not just on the rate at which it can recruit or locate appropriate adopters but on the level of demand for those placements. This trend and the risk of a further reduction in children who are able to be adopted is a key risk for the consideration of the Tees Valley RAA Project Board.

3.2 Local context

Summary

The Tees Valley has a strong adoption service, with all five local authorities in the area (Redcar and Cleveland Council, Middlesbrough Council, Darlington Council, Stockton Council and Hartlepool Council) being rated 'Good' in their latest Ofsted inspection.

As part of the national programme these five local authorities and five voluntary adoption agencies (After Adoption, PAC-UK, Barnardo's, DfW and ARC Adoption) commenced the development of a Tees Valley Regional Adoption Service in February 2016.

Since then work has been completed across a number of areas to develop a proposal and plans for a Tees Valley RAA. This OBC consolidates the analysis and proposals which have emerged to date, to provide a decision gateway for the participating authorities, on the design proposals so far and next steps.

Work to date on the development of the Tees Valley RAA

In March 2016 a Transition Plan was submitted to DfE providing outline proposals, work completed to date and a high level implementation plan for April 2016 – April 2017. This was a requirement for accessing DfE grant funding to support the development and implementation of Regional RAAs nationally.

Included in this Transition Plan were a draft vision and set of objectives developed by LAs and VAAs based on engagement with adopters and staff. At this stage initial options for the RAA delivery vehicle (legal form) were considered and evaluated against the identified strategic objectives. Subject to further design work, and any change to the business requirements which may emerge, the RAA Project Board agreed in-principle that the RAA should be constituted as a separate legal entity, controlled and 'owned' by the participating LAs and VAAs.

In April and May 2016 further work was then completed with support from iMPOWER to:

- Develop the financial and staffing baseline for the RAA;
- Further explore and define the potential role of the VAAs;
- Hold two focus groups to capture adopter views and experiences, and

- Establish a project infrastructure for the development and implementation of the RAA.

DfE funding allocation in July 2016

Further decisions on funding were made by DfE in July 2016 and the Tees Valley RAA Transition Plan was not identified as a demonstrator site. As a consequence, the Tees Valley RAA was allocated less funding than requested over a shorter time period and the plan and timescales for development and implementation were revised accordingly.

The decision was taken to continue to develop the design of the RAA model by working to agree the ideal child / adopter journey, processes and pathways, roles / functions and to start the design of the regional Post Adoption Offer. This work was completed during August and September 2016.

As detailed in the implementation plan the next phase proposes the detailed design of the RAA (including governance, VAA role, procurement, finance, HR, ICT and facilities) from Autumn 2016 to Autumn 2017.

4.   INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

4.1 Overview

In August and September 2016 further work was completed with a cross section of LA and VAA staff to develop an OBC for a Regional Adoption Agency, to enable a decision on the next phase of work; detailed design and implementation.

During this period work has also been undertaken to better understand and quantify the potential costs and benefits accompanying the establishment of a Regional Adoption Agency.

4.2 Workshops delivered in August and September 2016

Over August and September 2016 seven workshops were held to support the development of the Regional Adoption Agency and post adoption support offer. The focus and content of these workshops is set out in the tables below.

RAA Service Design

Four workshops were focused on establishing the ideal child and adopter experience, RAA pathways and processes and RAA functions and roles

Table 4.2.1

Workshop	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3	Workshop 4
Title	Developing our ideal adopter journey	Developing our ideal child's journey	Developing RAA/ council pathways and processes	Developing functions and roles
Purpose	To develop our ideal adopter (and birth parent) journey and identify what this 'looks and feels' like at each stage – to provide a set of principles to guide the design of service.	To develop our ideal child journey and identify what this 'looks and feels' like at each stage – to provide a set of principles to guide the design of the service.	To establish ideal pathways and processes in and out of RAA, and between councils and VAAs across the adoption process.	To develop a proposal for organising functions and roles in the new service into an overall model and structure.

Workshop	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3	Workshop 4
Outputs	Agreed 'Ideal' adopter experience – as first person 'pen picture', and accompanying set of principles; Activities, events, timescales and roles required to deliver our ideal experience (as a process map)	Agreed 'Ideal' child experience – as first person 'pen picture', and accompanying set of principles; Activities, events, timescales and roles required to deliver our ideal experience (as a process map)	Proposed approach to managing links and dependencies across child and adopter journeys and between RAA and LAs/ VAAs	Agreed RAA roles and functions; Identified priority risks and issues in relation to implementation.
Attendance	15* * Based on attendance sheet	21	17	15

A further workshop has recently been undertaken focussed on the experience of the birth parent. This aimed to identify how their experiences intersect with and influence the adopter and child journey, and consider the needs of birth parents in the delivery of an adoption agency and how services should be shaped accordingly.

Post Adoption Support offer

Three workshops were focused on establishing a baseline for post adoption support and ideas / options for how this could look in the future:

Table 4.2.2

Workshop	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3
Title	Understanding existing post adoption support	Developing ideas and options for delivering differently	Developing an outline for a new approach to delivery

Workshop	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3
Purpose	To identify what is currently delivered locally (and key differences between LAs / VAAs) to establish a baseline for change.	To develop a set of principles, processes and policies to support future delivery of post adoption support.	To identify common presenting / underlying needs and a consensus on how post adoption support can improve.
Outputs	Understanding of existing delivered and commissioned activity.	Set of design principles for delivery of post adoption support; Identified activities, timescales and policies required to deliver design principles from referral to monitoring and evaluation.	Review of PAS needs vs PAS services, to shape future provision; Ideas and innovation for future provision.
Attendance	16	20	18

Workshop attendance

In total 61 individuals including representatives from the five participating LAs and five participating VAAs attended at least one workshop. Total combined workshop attendance across the seven sessions was 122.

Details of workshop attendees is included in **Appendix C.**

4.3 Cost benefit scenarios and analysis

To support the establishment and delivery of a Regional Adoption Agency, work has been completed to model the potential costs / benefits. The model works through nine possible scenarios and gives an indication of the range of potential benefits and costs which may follow from different levels of demand and service performance.

The scenarios are based on individual performance data for each of the Tees Valley local authorities which has been gathered from a combination of:

- 2015/16 ALB returns;
- Ofsted reports; and

- Data provided by the local authorities.

5. RAA VISION, STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

5.1 Vision

A draft vision for a Tees Valley RAA was developed in March 2016 based on engagement with adopters, staff and VAAs:

'To achieve the best possible adoption outcomes for children and adopters, through the provision of high quality and timely services delivered by an effective and financially sustainable organisation.'

5.2 Strategic objectives

LAs and VAAs also agreed the following strategic objectives for the RAA. These were used to carry out an initial appraisal of potential delivery options (legal form of the RAA). Along with the vision these strategic objectives have underpinned the development, implementation and delivery of the RAA to date.

Figure 5.2.1

Delivers better outcomes for children
Improve timeliness of adoption
Ensure a broader range of children can be adopted (including older children and those with more complex needs)
Expand size of pool of adopters, and range of families who are able to adopt

Ease of implementation
Cost of implementation
Timescales for implementation
Legal and procurement implications

Tees Valley RAA

Delivers improved value for money
Achieve financial robustness and sustainability
Realise medium to long term potential for cost savings

Establish a strong sustainable service
Meets strategic priorities
Effective governance, accountability and control
Attract and retain the best staff
Opportunities for innovative practice and skill development

5.3 Scope of RAA

Through conversations with LAs and VAAs in February and March 2016 in principle agreement was reached on what could be within and outside of scope of RAA. This is set out in high level terms in the table below:

Table 5.3.1

What is in scope	What is not in scope
Adopter marketing and recruitment	Fostering (not at this stage)
Adopter assessment and training	Special Guardianship Order function (not at this stage)
Adopter and child matching	Connected persons (not at this stage).
Family finding	
Post adoption support	

5.4 Delivery options for RAA

In February and March 2016 an initial exercise was carried out to review the suitability of different delivery mechanisms. Potential delivery options were scored against the agreed strategic criteria. The delivery options within the red dotted line below were the highest scoring options.

Delivery options

Figure 5.4.1

In-house		New entity established				Commission
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In-house delivery through a single LA	Shared service across LAs/ VAAs	Joint venture between LAs/ VAAs	Subsidiary owned by LAs/ VAAs	New entity owned by LAs/ VAAs	New entity owned by staff	Outsourced delivery to a VAA

The three options highlighted scored highest against the strategic objectives developed in the initial exercise completed in March 2016. This will need to be revisited in the development of a Full Business Case in response to the design requirements, costs, benefits, risks and opportunities set out in this Outline Business Case.

6. IDEAL EXPERIENCE FROM CHILD, ADOPTER AND BIRTH PARENT PERSPECTIVE

6.1 Introduction

As the starting point for developing an RAA model able to deliver the agreed vision and strategic objectives, a range of LA / VAA staff were engaged through workshops in August and September 2016 to identify the ideal experience and journey through the service from the perspective of children and adopters.

This aimed to ensure that the principles and practice underpinning the RAA are based on collaboration between professionals, and harness the collective knowledge and expertise of those delivering adoption services and other, inter-dependent services for children and families.

At the service design workshops a range of professionals (including VAAs, adoption service and children's social worker representatives) developed the ideal experience for each key stage of the journey to adoption, from the perspective of children and adopters. To do this the group drew on findings from the adopter survey completed in March 2016 and the adopter focus groups completed in May 2016.

This has provided the basis for the design of RAA processes, pathways, roles and functions set out in this document and appendices.

To capture and communicate the ideal experience 'pen pictures' were developed for children and adopters. These are set out in Appendix A. In the sections below the ideal experience of each stage in the journey for children and adopters is distilled into a number of key principles which have guided and informed the development of processes, roles and functions.

6.2 Ideal child experience and key principles

Table 6.2.1

Stage	Key principle
1. Child becomes known to social care	- Talk to and listen to me about what I want/ don't want - Check back what you have written about me with me - Do all possible to make me feel supported and safe - Give me the right information about how you are helping them and what this might mean in the future
2. Pre-care proceedings and	- Make sure I have a say in my future - Keep explaining to me what is going on with me and my family and what my options are - Make me feel safe and reassured - Keep me with my sibling

Stage	Key principle
planning initiated	
3. Care proceedings and planning	• Make sure my foster parents can support me and listen to me • Let me know what is happening to my family/ parents • Reassure me that what is happening to me is not my fault • If I'm confused, angry or frustrated understand why and help me to deal with this
4. Family finding	• Try to find me a forever home where this is possible and appropriate • Keep me together with my brother or sister if this is what I want • Help me to carry on writing my life story • Support me to keep in touch with my foster carers if this is important to me • Explain what adoption is and what it could mean for me and manage my expectations.
5. Matching	• Make sure I'm well prepared for events and activities where I could meet a forever family
6. Placement and post adoption support	• Give me the chance to meet and get to know my adoptive family before I move in • Ask me whether I'm happy with my new adoptive family • Be there for me to talk to if I have any worries or concerns or want to talk to someone outside of my family • Let me know how my birth parents and foster parents will be told about how I'm doing • Let me speak to the worker who took me through the process when I want to and don't forget about me • Help me to deal with my feelings, issues and emotions now and in the future.

6.3 Ideal adopter experience and key principles

Table 6.3.1

Stage	Key principle
1. Pre enquiry	• Provide information on adoption in different ways and through different media

Stage	Key principle
	• Make sure information available online directly addresses my concerns and queries
2. Enquiry	• Make RAA website and webpages easy to find and navigate • Make sure information about next steps and contact details is clear • When I call through make sure I don't have to wait for long and that my call isn't passed around • Be friendly and warm when you take my call • Have answers ready for the sort of questions I'm likely to ask • Reassure me if I have any concerns.
3. Preparation for training and assessment (Stage 1)	• Give me and my family a clear overview of timescales, processes etc from the outset • Help me to prepare for adoption process e.g. with reading • Be sensitive, honest, open and transparent about the process with me • Challenge my assumptions and preconceptions about the sort of child/ children I'm looking for.
4. Training and assessment (Stage 2)	• Make me involved and part of the process throughout and update me regularly • Make sure training is useful and relevant, involves adopters and is delivered by experienced, insightful trainers • Help me to challenge my assumptions (or thinking?) about adoption and consider all of the options open to me • Ensure assessment is managed sensitively and that my worker can support me through it • Make me fully aware of the type of questions I'll be asked at panel • Make me feel comfortable and welcome at panel meeting. • Fully prepare me for being an adopter
5. Matching	• Give me clear and detailed information about the matching process and what I can expect • Give me the opportunity to speak to people who have been through a similar experience • Give me the opportunity to meet with potential matches face to face where possible/ appropriate

Stage	Key principle
	• Give me further opportunities to get to know prospective matches, find out about them and their story and meet their foster carers and social workers.
6. **Placement and post adoption support**	• Be clear and upfront with me about the sort of challenges I could face now and in the future and how to pre-empt these • Give me support and advice on what the needs of my child may be and how to meet these particularly in relation to attachment and emotional health • Give me a support package which is tailored to the needs of me and my family • Be there to support me if I have problems or concerns in the future • Give me the chance to access support and advice from other adopters who have been through similar experiences.

6.4 Birth parent experience and key principles

The LAs and VAAs involved agreed that the model developed must respond to the needs and concerns of birth parents, alongside those of children and adopters.

A workshop was held on Thursday 29th September with staff to establish the best way of managing and responding to birth parents needs and concerns across the adoption journey.

The outputs from this workshop will be used to further develop the principles behind the RAA and the delivery model proposed.

7. CORE COMPONENTS TO DELIVER VISION

7.1 RAA processes and pathways

Overview

In the service design workshops in August and September 2016 attendees used the agreed 'ideal' child and adopter experience to map the activities, processes, pathways and processes which the RAA required to deliver this.

This involved practitioners working through the 'pen picture' for each stage and identifying the ideal pathway and best practice needed to deliver that pathway across the child, adult and birth parent journey.

Again this aimed to ensure that the RAA model is developed through collaboration between professionals and based on the collective knowledge and expertise of those delivering adoption services and children's services.

The map in Appendix B sets out the detail activities and processes proposed to support the child and adopter journey and the links/ dependencies across both. The figure below is intended to show what this looks like.

Figure 7.1.1: RAA process map included in Appendix A

Tees Valley Regional Adoption Agency, Revised 'ideal' child and adopter journeys and mapped dependencies
September 2016
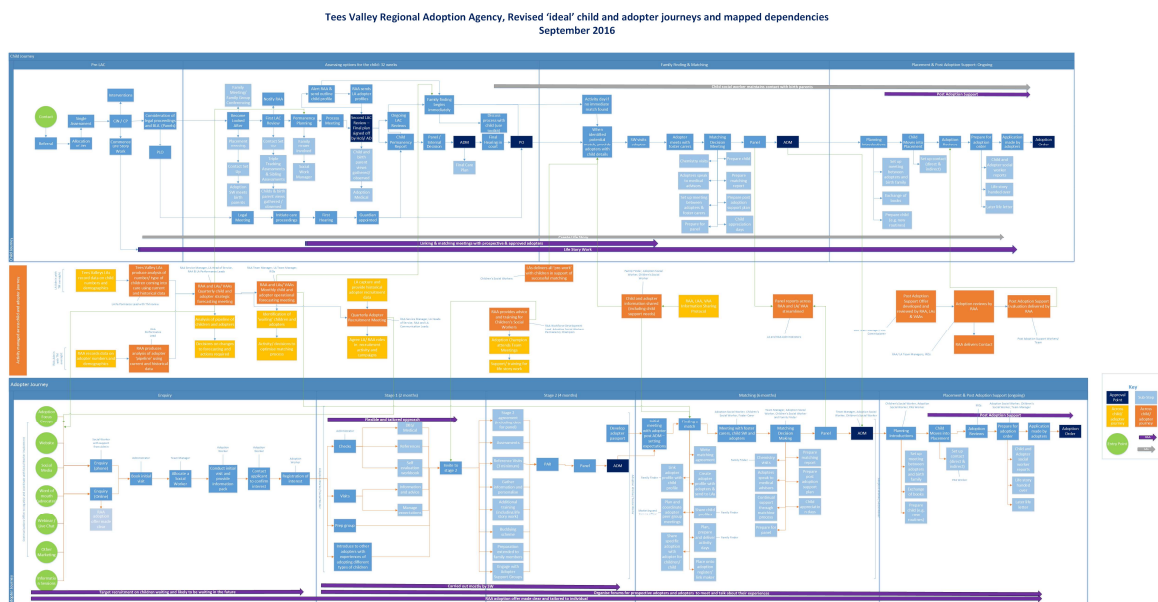
Development of ideal child and adopter journey

The development of this map required LA representatives from children's social work and adoption teams, and representatives from VAAs to establish a common process for supporting children and adopters through adoption to deliver the identified optimum experience.

The map in the top half of Appendix B provides a detailed 'blueprint' for key activities and processes needed to deliver the ideal journey to adoption from the perspective of a child, from pre-care proceedings to placement and post adoption support.

The map in the bottom half of Appendix B provides a detailed 'blueprint' for key activities and processes needed to deliver the ideal journey to adoption, from the perspective of an adopter, from pre-enquiry through to post adoption support.

The area in the middle of Appendix B provides proposed pathways, processes and activities to manage the links and dependencies between the child journey and adoption journey, and between the RAA and LAs / VAAs.

Application of ideal child and adopter journey mapping

The map in Appendix B provides a procedural 'blueprint' for the RAA and a basis for the development of the detailed RAA model (from process / policy documents to ICT requirements) which is directly informed by and built around the needs of children and adopters.

7.2   RAA Roles and functions

Overview

Based on the agreed activities, processes and pathways, attendees of the service design workshops identified key roles and functions required. This is set out in the section below and annotated on the adopter journey detailed in Appendix B.

RAA functions

In these workshops practitioners also identified the following overarching and high level set of functions for the RAA. These are set out in the table below:

Table 7.2.1

Proposed RAA functions	
1. Advertising and marketing to generate adopter enquiries	12. Monitoring Post Adoption Support
2. Managing initial enquiries and contact	13. Collaborating with LAs / VAAs on forecasting, matching and panel process
3. Assessment and training of adopters	14. Administering and coordinating Panel meetings
4. Collaborating with LAs / VAAs on adopter recruitment	15. Collaborating with LAs / VAAs on Post Adoption Support

Proposed RAA functions	
5. Supporting adopters through the assessment process (including assessment)	16. Providing training and support to LAs / VAAs
6. Coordinating adopter peer support	17. Managing and supervising RAA teams and individuals
7. Finding and matching families and children	18. Managing performance of teams and service
8. Managing matching, panel and placement process	19. Managing, supporting and coordinating RAA Board
9. Managing approval process	20. Managing case recording systems, appointments and administration
10. Assessing needs for Post Adoption Support (including financial allowances)	21. Managing staff recruitment, retention and workforce development
11. Delivering / commissioning / brokering post adoption support	22. Managing RAA financials.

RAA roles

In the service design workshops attendees identified the potential roles required to deliver the activities and functions specified in the ideal adopter and child journey maps. These potential RAA roles are also set out in the table below:

Table 7.2.2

Potential RAA roles	
1. Adoption Social Worker	11. RAA CEO
2. Adoption Worker	12. Service Manager
3. Family Finder	13. Team Manager
4. ADM	14. Business Manager
5. Permanence Champion	15. Policy and workforce development lead
6. HR Officer	16. Finance Officer
7. Peer Adopter Mentor	17. ICT Officer
8. PAS Worker	18. Performance / Data Officer
9. PAS Therapist	19. Administrator
10. PAS Commissioner	20. Marketing Officer

Organisational structure

Directly transferring adoption resources from the five authorities would provide a total resourcing of 31.3 FTE across social work, Business Support and other Support roles. This is based on assumptions provided by Adoption Service Managers in May 2016.

The chart below gives an example of how the combined FTE resource of authorities would look if this was extracted from each authority and transferred, as-is, to the RAA (based on existing roles).

Figure 7.2.3
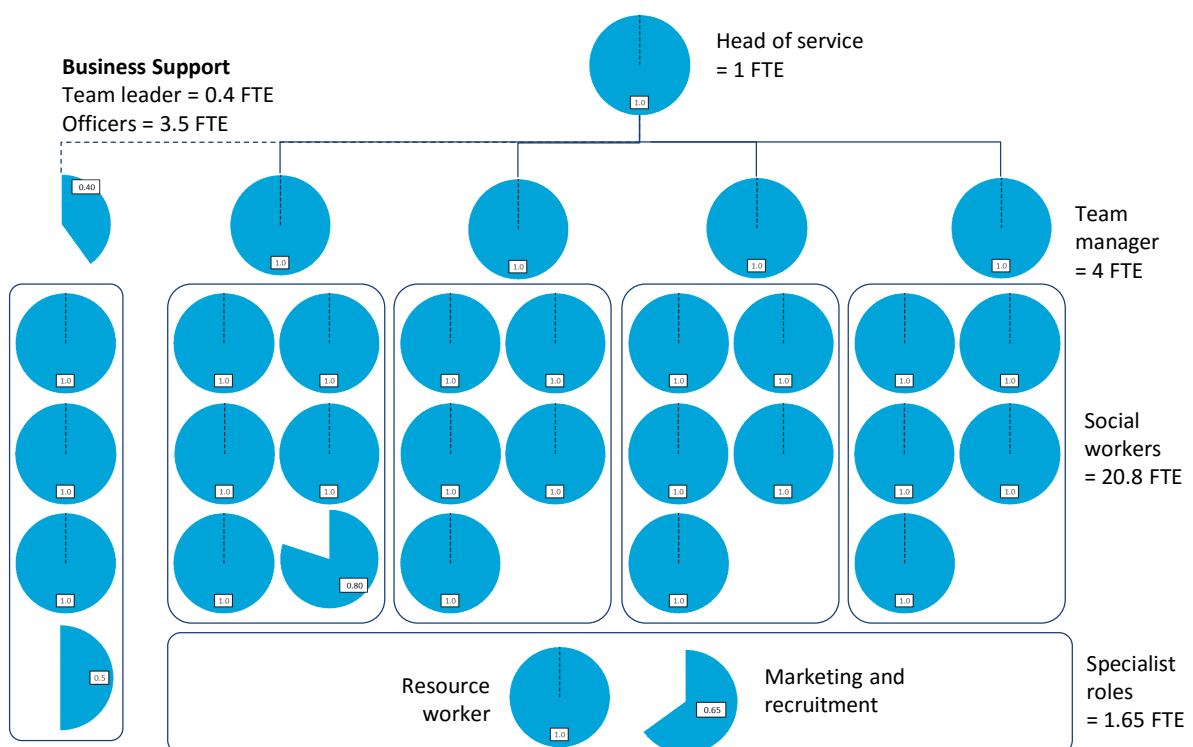
Note: As many adoption roles within local authorities are split between a number of services / functions straightforward extraction / transfer of resources will not be possible. This is a key challenge and risk as highlighted in Section 11.

Further work is planned in the Detailed Design stage to develop an organisational structure and agree an approach to managing the process for and impact of the transfer of resource from local authorities to the RAA.

7.3 Post Adoption Support Offer

Overview

As part of the development of this Outline Business Case three workshops were held aiming to establish a baseline for Post Adoption Support in the region and develop options for an optimum future model for PAS.

The workshops were structured to answer a number of key questions. Table 7.3.1 below sets out these questions out alongside emerging answers based on outputs from the workshop and a number of key next steps.

Further work is needed across the participating local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies to fully answer these questions and to design the future business case for and approach to provision of PAS, as detailed below.

However, through the workshop stakeholders agreed on a fundamentally different approach to post-adoption support that:

- Involves tailored, psychologically-informed assessment of need, planning and delivery of services;

- Includes a greater and supported role for adopters in providing peer advice, support and mentoring to other adopters, and

- Can evaluate its success against agreed criteria and measures.

Table 7.3.1

Key question	Emerging answer from workshops	Next steps
Why provide PAS? What are our goals for PAS?	To prevent family breakdown, improve outcomes for families and meet statutory requirements	In order to consistently, effectively and efficiently allocate collective resources within the RAA, further direction will be sought from the Board and Stakeholders on strategic objectives and policies (the explicit goals of PAS and therefore why and when it will be provided).
What PAS are we currently providing?	A range of commissioned and in-house services including therapeutic and social work interventions	LAs need to provide additional detail to allow this baseline to be completed.

Are PAS services achieving our goals?	Unknown – limited evidence as yet to demonstrate	To determine effectiveness of current provision, further information is also required to demonstrate the impact of existing PAS services, in the context of the above goals.
		There is an open question (for the Board) as to whether and how the impact of PAS will be monitored under future arrangements, again in the context of service goals.
What could we do differently?	There is agreement on what PAS could look like in the future, but as yet no evidence base to support this	As above. Also gather any national evidence demonstrating impact of post adoption support.

Post Adoption Support needs

In the post adoption support workshops in August and September 2016 attendees identified trends across local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies in terms the most common 'presenting need' identified at the point of accessing Post Adoption Support services. These were identified as the following:

- Emotional and behavioural issues
- Breakdown of family relationships
- Attachment issues
- Lack of understanding as to why adopted
- Confusion, or issues around, identity.

The following factors were identified as common underlying issues or root causes identified through the assessment process:

- Previous trauma and experiences (including undiagnosed)
- Psychological impact of changing home environment and family
- Children not getting right amount or type of information about themselves and their life story
- Children's lack of understanding of their own history

- Adopters not given right skills to respond to issues as these arise

- Combination of emotional needs and anxiety of adopters together with emotional/ behavioural/ attachment related issues of children

- Failure to come to terms with not being biological parent – long term impact (adopters)

- Poor support networks for families.

Workshop attendees also identified opportunities for improvement in that existing approaches to assessing and understanding need can be insufficient or lack the right focus:

- Not currently a psychologically/ therapeutically informed assessment of need

- Not sufficiently focused on identifying and responding to previous trauma

- There is a limited range of agencies involved at assessment stage

- Can be focused on individuals rather than the needs of the whole family (including wider family e.g. grandparents)

- Doesn't sufficiently distinguish between short and longer term needs

- Doesn't involve involvement or clinical supervision from psychology/ mental health professionals.

Post Adoption Support Offer

At the post adoption support workshops it was proposed that a post adoption support offer is needed that evolves in response to need throughout the adoption journey, including the following possible elements:

- Tailored assessment at point of match (as opposed to a formulaic plan devised later)

- Development of a 'predictive' lifelong support plan, planning likely support required setting clear expectations about future contact

- Clinical supervision at the point of match to work through what their early life experiences may look like at different stages of the child's development

- Peer involvement in and/ or delivery of: initial visits, assessment; support planning; networking; mentoring

- Psychologist providing surgery and clinical supervision to a) adopters and b) PAS workforce

- Use of personal budgets as a means of purchasing support services needed

- Specialist training for adopters – with phasing to reflect different development stages.

Post Adoption Support Measures of Success

At the post adoption support workshops it was proposed that the following measures are best placed to support robust evaluation of the impact and success of Post Adoption Services:

- Number of adoption breakdowns and young people re-entering care system / breakdowns

- Adopter and child led qualitative measurement of distance travelled (e.g. Outcomes Star)

- Adopter and child led case reviews

- Number of contacts with RAA / referrals – post box

- Child outcomes included educational attainment, attendance, offending, health

- Feedback / communication between RAA and LAs.

Post Adoption Support Design Principles

At the post adoption support workshops a range of design principles were identified to provide the foundation for future development and delivery of post adoption support. These are set out in the table below:

Table 7.3.2

Referral	Assessment & planning	Approval	Deliver/ commission	Monitor & evaluate
Response to self-feral, professional referral will be timely	RAA will listen hear and act non-judgementally whatever the problem	Resources will be targeted at those with a greater identified risk of breakdown	Services provided will respond to analysis of need for PAS (e.g. attachment issues. Emotional and behavioural disorders)	We will know what services are/ are not working – this will inform what we deliver and how we deliver it

Referral	Assessment & planning	Approval	Deliver/ commission	Monitor & evaluate
Ongoing relationship and monitoring will minimise need for 'cold' referrals	Will be tailored and consider whole family and surrounding environment	Panel of professionals and adopters will determine how resources are allocated	Services will be determined by evidence of what works/ doesn't work in terms of preventing breakdown	Evaluation will a) happen, b) be effective and c) be followed through
Initial contact will be supportive and managed by the right individual	Will be led by adopters and children and start at stage 1/ 2 of adoption	Timeframes for review and approval will be timely and clear	Services will be led by children and adopters, and focus on needs of both	Evaluation will focus on impact on prevention of family breakdown (& other goals)
Access for support will have a variety of entry points e.g. activity days	Roles and responsibilities of all professionals will be clearly defined	Assessments, plans and decision making will be quality assured independently	Delivery of services will be individualised but draw on a menu of services	Service will include scheduled check in visits for children and adopters
Asking for support will not feel like an admission of failure or stigmatising	Will consider longer term needs and risks (including educational)		Services will include the right blend of generalist, specialist and peer support	
Support available for all family members	Whole workforce will have an understanding of the needs of adoptive families and pathways for support		Support from adopters who have been through a similar experience	

7.4   Other considerations

The work referenced in this OBC has moved the Tees Valley RAA agenda forward by developing consensus across stakeholders, through the seven workshops and other meetings, on:

- The principles that are most important in designing what the new RAA does

- How children and adopters will positively report on their adoption experience following implementation of the RAA

- How the RAA will deliver that experience - the detailed practice processes and pathways

- Who will do what in the RAA – the functions and roles required to deliver that experience, and

- A new philosophy on and approach to post-adoption support, which takes a consistently preventative approach to identifying and anticipating needs and provides bespoke support as those needs evolve.

As part of this OBC, work has also been completed to explore the range of opportunity which would follow from a successful implementation and subsequent performance improvement (see Section 8).

This OBC also considers the potential downside, if the risks set out in Section 10 are not managed, the implementation fails to establish the RAA on a positive footing, or performance deteriorates for other reasons.

Finally, this OBC sets out what should happen next and before and after go-live to fully design, prepare and implement the RAA and ensure it can deliver the performance improvement that is targeted through the new practice proposed by stakeholders.

This further design work will need to incorporate a number of key elements which were out of scope of this OBC, or require further attention. These are set out in the implementation plan and, for clarity, are also underlined here given their importance and urgency.

Further key considerations to be resolved through the next stage of work

What funding is available from the DfE in relation to the RAA?

At the time of writing some expectations have been set by DfE but this remains to be confirmed. When the level and timing of funding is clarified, it will be necessary to revisit the plan for the next stages of work, and the level of proposed resource.

What legal form will the new RAA take?

Options evaluation work has so far settled on a separate legal entity, jointly owned and controlled by the five LAs and any participating VAAs. This needs to be revisited based on the costs, benefits, risks and opportunities identified in this OBC. The exact form and substance of this needs to be confirmed during the detailed design phase to enable a timely set up, and to allow other technical design work.

What will each participating authority 'put in', and what will each 'get out'?

The investment, risk and gain share arrangements have yet to be clarified. It is expected that this conversation will be stimulated and informed by the cost / benefit scenarios in this OBC, and the underlying data. The controlling parties must agree the funding mechanisms and / or price points. For example, what if all of the placements made by the RAA in one year are to one LA? This may precipitate a level of formal due diligence or assurance around the baseline picture.

What governance protocols will be in place, to ensure accountability of the RAA to the controlling partners?

This must also be determined in the detailed design work, with the form of the agreement depending on the legal form of the entity and how it is constituted. Subject to this, the requirements for effective 'client-side' (LA) governance will be designed.

What role will VAAs play in the new RAA?

While VAAs have contributed to the RAA design work completed so far, discussions remain underway as to any stake or investment one or more VAAs may seek or make. The proposed inputs into the RAA and return sought by the VAAs and their role in delivery remains an unresolved question at this time, and requires resolution during the detailed design phase.

Will the new RAA entity be affected by taxation and will it add cost?

It is recommended that external advice be sought quickly through the proposed Finance design Workstream, in connection with all taxation matters and, as a priority, VAT, corporation tax, and transfer pricing. Again this will depend on how the RAA entity is constituted.

How will post-adoption support work in the RAA?

Further work is required on the post-adoption support baseline including financial allowance commitments (or other ongoing financial liabilities) and the basis on which support is currently provided, and the outcomes of and business case for post-adoption

support before a new policy can be designed and put into contract through a service agreement. This must also determine where decisions to provide support will rest i.e. RAA or LA.

What workforce will the RAA require and how does compare to current staffing?

The new functions and roles required in the RAA have been defined through this OBC. An analysis of current staffing across the LAs has also been completed. This indicates that some rationalisation and re-organisation will be required. The numbers of FTE required, job descriptions, working locations role and the transition process will be agreed through the detailed design.

The above list is not exhaustive and other considerations are referenced throughout this document. However, it was considered important and helpful to flag some of the immediate priorities for the next stage of work given that the focused scope of this OBC.

8. COST BENEFIT SCENARIOS

The purpose of this section is to illustrate the potential range of performance and financial outcomes from combining adoption services under the RAA; to provide guidance on the associated opportunities and risks and to inform the decision on and approach to further design and transition work.

Approach

To calculate and illustrate the impact of potential performance and demand scenarios, a bespoke model was developed for the Tees Valley RAA.

This model aims to simulate the current adoption system across Tees Valley, in terms of both:

1. Demand - the flow of children awaiting placement (number of placement orders), and

2. Performance - the rate at which LAs can recruit or locate adoptive families and match and place them with children waiting.

The illustrative scenarios

The scenario modelling highlights the significant range of risk and reward following from a decrease or increase in performance and / or demand.

It allows nine different future scenarios to be explored, based on combinations of three performance and three demand scenarios.

The modelling calculates a number of flows, such as the number of children waiting, the number of children placed in and out of area, adopter enquiries, approvals and matches, and the number waiting.

For simplicity, these scenarios have been expressed in two single important numbers in this section:

1. The number of children placed annually, and

2. The difference in cost to the Tees Valley LAs, compared to 2015/16. In turn this is shown as a) adoption service costs or savings within the RAA and b) looked after children placement costs or savings to LAs, as a result of more or less children being adopted.

These numbers change over time so a 'steady state' picture has been shown, as an illustration of the typical difference that will be seen in the medium term for each scenario, relative to the current picture.

Further detail, including the basis, data, calculations, other scenario outcomes, assumptions and methodology behind this modelling can be found at Appendix E and within the model itself (a separate MS Excel file).

The table below summarises the outcomes of the modelling. It shows the number of children who would be placed for adoption annually, and the total saving or extra cost to the Tees Valley LAs.

Table 8.1.1: summary of placement numbers and total costs (£ in brackets) or savings

Scenarios	A - High demand	B- Medium demand	C – Low demand
1 - High Performance	Scenario:1A Children placed p/a: **84** Total saving pa: **3,478,000**	Scenario:1B Children placed p/a: **56** Total cost pa: **(775,000)**	Scenario:1C Children placed p/a: **28** Total cost pa: **(4,950,000)**
2 - Medium Performance	Scenario: 2A Children placed p/a: 73 Total saving pa: **840,000**	Scenario: 2B Children placed p/a: 58 Total cost pa: **(1,230,000)**	Scenario: 2C Children placed p/a: 28 Total cost pa: **(5,670,000)**
3 - Low Performance	Scenario: 3A Children placed p/a: 40 Total cost pa: **(4,400,000)**	Scenario: 3B Children placed p/a: 40 Total cost pa: **(4,400,000)**	Scenario: 3C Children placed p/a: 32 Total saving: **(5,480,000)**

Baseline 'do nothing' scenario

Placement orders

The scenarios illustrate a 'steady state' scenario after a number of years of operating and take into account placements into and out of the area.

The differences in possible outcomes are clearly significant, ranging from a run rate of 28 placements p.a. to 84 p.a. This compares to a current (2015/16) baseline of 68 p.a..

The Medium Demand / Medium Performance scenario is lower than the current baseline because the supply and matching of placements is currently outstripping the demand. Over time and with other things equal, Tees Valley LAs can therefore expect to achieve fewer placements each year, than are seen now.

Figure 8.1.2: the annual number of children placed in each scenario

Number of children placed under each scenario
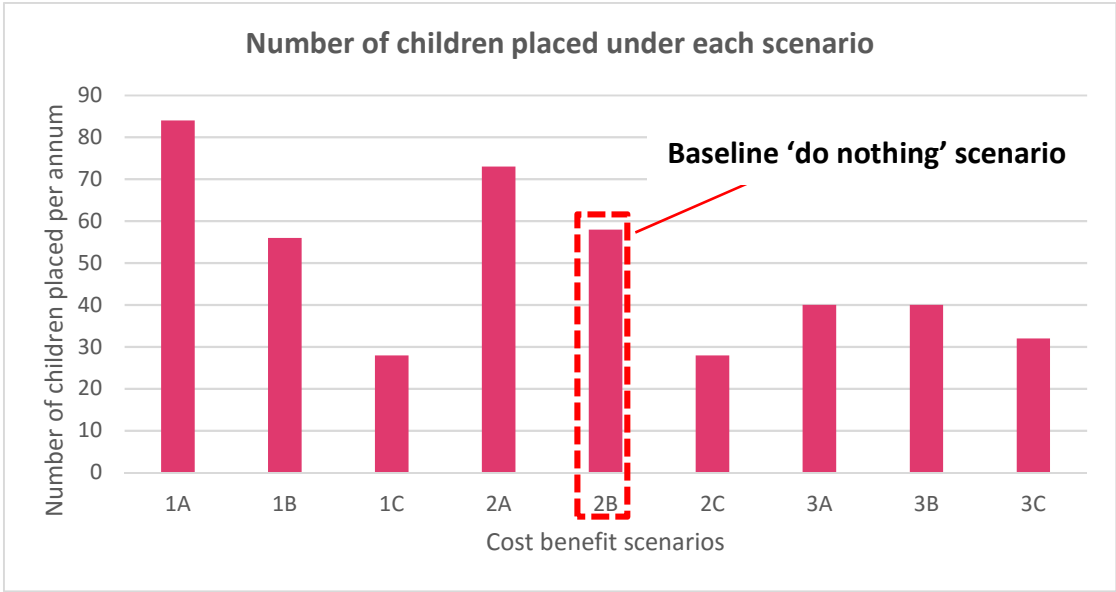
Cost / benefit

The scenarios translate into total additional costs and savings for the Tees Valley LAs as set out in the graph at Figure 8.1.3 below.

Again, the difference is stark, with the Tees Valley LAs carrying as much as £9m p.a. less cost in the best scenario than the worst.

Figure 8.1.3: Total saving or extra cost (negative) to the Tees Valley LAs
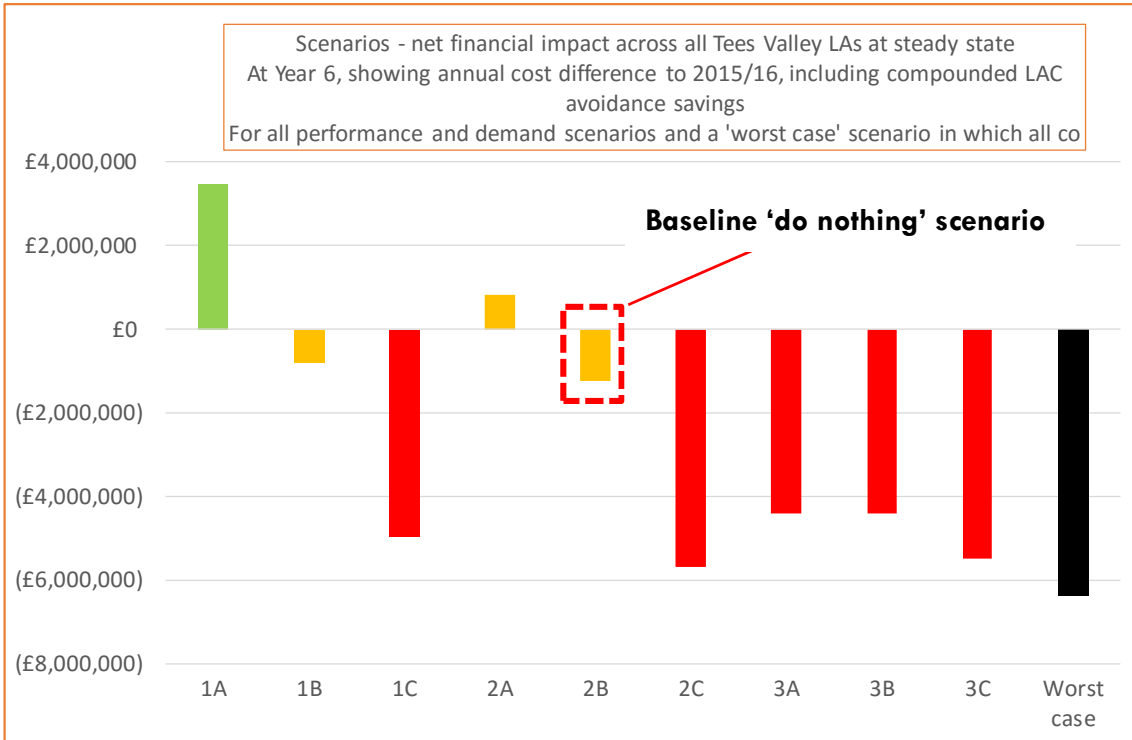
To confirm, this means that, across the five Tees Valley LAs, after five years of consistent adoption performance and demand at the levels modelled, expenditure on adoption and looked after children (combined) could be up to £5.7m higher or £3.5m lower, than in 2015/16.

Breakdown of RAA vs LA costs and benefits

The graph below shows how the cost or savings break down across LA budgets (dark blue) and the RAA budget (pale blue).

Within this it is assumed that:

- All adoption functions (and cash flows) are within the RAA. This includes recruitment, family finding and support (including financial allowances);

- The staffing costs within above are above can be varied i.e. if there is more <u>or</u> less activity, the staffing base and costs can be flexed accordingly (except in the Worst case scenario, where staffing costs are fixed);

- The costs of, and income from, out of area placements are within the RAA, and

- Where more children are placed than currently, a saving accrues to the LAs, as a result of reduced pressures on looked after children placement spend, and vice versa.

The detailed methodology and assumptions are set out in Appendix E and in the related working paper.

What this shows is that the costs within the RAA generally decrease – there is a saving. In different scenarios, this is for different reasons. For example, where there is high performance but low regional demand, RAA income from the 'sale' of RAA adopters works to reduce overall net costs (especially relevant in scenario 1C and 2C). Or, where RAA performance and demand are lower, and there is less business activity as a result, costs fall as it is assumed that the staffing cost reduces. Because this is a risk, a worst case scenario was added to show the effect if staff costs could not be decreased when business activity reduced. In this scenario, the RAA budget increases marginally.

The most significant factor in the overall cost / benefit equation, however, is the impact on looked after children placement budgets. The modelling shows that, if current trends continue (see Scenario 2B), over time fewer children will be placed than are currently, and looked after children placements spend will increase.

This underlines the importance, in both human and financial terms, of ensuring that this work seeks to positively influence performance and demand.

Figure 8.1.4: Cost (negative) or savings across LA budgets (dark blue) and the RAA budget (pale blue). The white bar shows the total financial effect.

Scenarios - difference in cost (steady state), illustrating:
1. Potential RAA cost base p.a. (including allowances, and placement income / costs)
2. LAC saving / (cost) p.a. to Tees Valley LAs, at Year 6
Both expressed as difference to 2015/16. Positive sign

- RAA saving p.a. (extra cost = negative)
- Extra LAC saving p.a. at Year 6 to TV LAs (negative = extra cost)
- Total saving p.a. (negative = extra cost)

Baseline 'do nothing' scenario

Conclusion

While the model takes into account a number of costs and benefits, the most significant factor by some way is the financial benefit that accrues from reducing LAC and the associated cost, through successful adoption.

For simplicity, the scenarios illustrated above includes the difference in this cost after 5 years of cumulative gains or reductions in the number of children exiting care due to adoption, relative to the current rate.

As explained above, the Medium Demand / Medium Performance scenario results in additional cost over time because the rate at which children are adopted is currently diminishing. With other things equal, such as the number of other permanence arrangements, this will result in a greater levels of LAC.

In the context of the medium term financial situation, with Children's Services budgets expected to continue to decrease until at least 2019/20, the capability of the Tees Valley LAs to secure adoptive homes for children who it is in the best interests of will be a very material factor.

These scenarios highlight the importance of making the most of the RAA opportunity, and of taking steps to realise the benefits and manage the risks.

This is why this OBC recommends a deliberate and robust approach to the further design of and eventual transition to the RAA, and why a further 'decision gateway' is proposed following the development of a Full Business Case.

Non-financial benefits

The section above shows the financial imperative. There is also a human and reputational imperative. The non-financial benefits (or potential dis-benefits) are set out below:

1. Improved life chances for more children as a result of finding a forever home more quickly;

2. Improved life chances for more children as a result of fewer breakdowns and improved adoption outcomes;

3. Reduced adoptive breakdowns and fewer LAC (benefit yet to be quantified financially);

4. Improved level of collaboration with and input from the community of adopters;

5. Wider benefits to society, the economy and the public purse, of thriving children;

6. Local and regional reputational benefits given external scrutiny e.g. Scorecard, ALB, Ofsted and the powers taken by Government to 'direct' Councils and even remove adoption services from local control;

7. Benefits of shared service learning across the Tees Valley, and potential blueprint for further collaboration, and

8. Scope provided by RAA for expansion e.g. to include other permanence arrangements.

9.   PLAN AND NEXT STEPS

This OBC has moved the RAA agenda forward by achieving greater consensus and detail on the ideal RAA practice model, and by setting out the human and financial case for a robust approach to implementation and benefits realisation.

To maximise the potential benefits of the new model, and manage the risks, it is recommended that the Tees Valley RAA Project Board now pursue a well organised and sequenced plan through to go-live and beyond.

In summary, this plan is divided across three stages:

1. **November 2016 – April 2017**

   - Detailed design, transition planning and Full Business Case, to enable the necessary local approvals for implementation

2. **May 2017 – November 2017**

   - Formation of and transition to the new RAA model, including necessary consultations, and go-live

3. **November 2017 – June 2018**

   - Focussed optimisation of the new model

These stages are summarised in the table below:

Table 9.1.1: The stages of work

Stage	Purpose	Activity required
Stage 1: Detailed design, transition planning and Full Business Case	The purpose of this stage is to provide a definitive design of front and back office operations, management and workforce, the new delivery vehicle (e.g. LATC), LA/VAA and RAA-side governance and the proposed risk and gain share arrangements which will govern the 'deal' between the RAA and the controlling partners (LA and VAAs).	Based on these designs, a detailed transition plan will be formulated to show what must be done to move to the new model. Based on the designs and transition plan, a final financial plan will be developed to show the targeted cost levels, intended funding flows, performance and returns. The above elements will be brought together into a Full Business Case ('FBC') report output which can be adapted locally to enable the necessary approvals to be secured and which will serve as a 'service specification' for implementation and governance.

Stage	Purpose	Activity required
Stage 2: Transition and go-live	The purpose of this stage is to bring the RAA to go-live readiness, and enable a smooth and successful transition and launch.	This will include a detailed plan for the 'first 100 days' of the new operation.
Stage 3: Optimisation	The purpose of this stage is to establish a transparent and effective approach to benefits realisation by testing and improving the monitoring, management and governance arrangements in the formative months.	The model of RAA proposed will require a new and formalised relationship between the Tees Valley LAs (and other controlling parties e.g. VAAs) and the delivery function within the RAA. To build the foundation for accountability and continuous improvement, this stage will therefore focus on building those relationships by putting in place the right levels of reporting and methods of governance.

Stage 1: Detailed approach

Some of the activities required during Stage 2 and 3 can be foreseen – such as the legal formation of the new RAA entity, contract novation, consultation and systems development – while others will depend on the detailed design.

The following section therefore focuses on the approach to Stage 1, with a view that the plans for Stages 2 and 3 will be firmed up throughout this stage.

Stage 1: Governance

Effective governance processes, with Director-level involvement and oversight, have already been established through the current project.

Figure 9.1.2: Governance structure
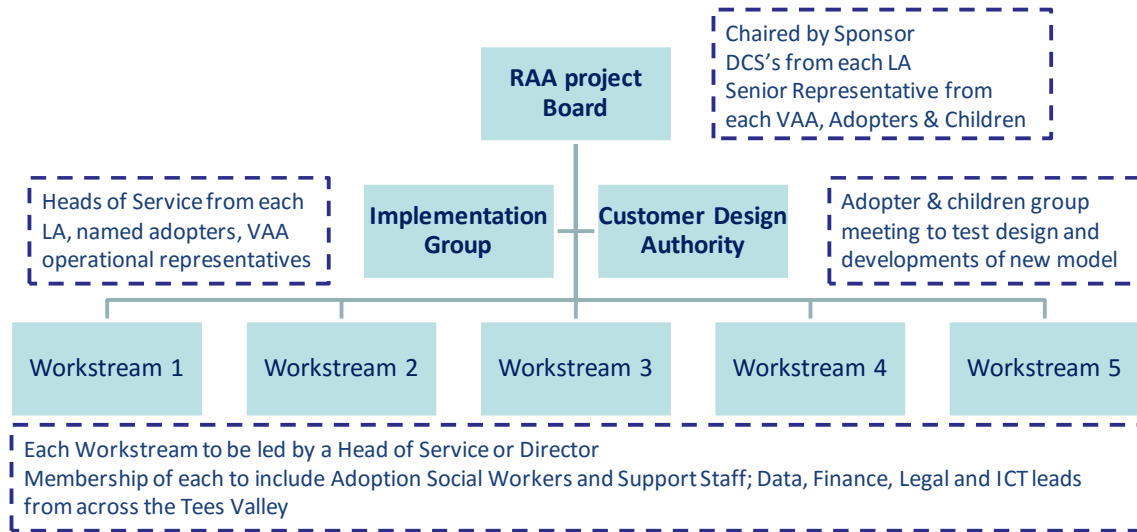
The associated roles and responsibilities and terms of reference of each group are set out below, and further detail can be found in Appendix F.

Table 9.1.3

RAA governance – key roles and responsibilities

RAA Project Board	• Sign off of strategy, plan, timelines, resources and costs
	• Meet monthly to ensure RAA Implementation is on track against plan
	• Responsible for sign off of key decisions and designs
	• Responsible for decisions regarding risk, issue and dependency management
	• Standard agenda includes adopter voice to ensure the RAA remains responsive to adopter needs
Customer Design Authority	• Regular meeting of adopters and children to test ideas and pathways for new RAA to ensure it is focusing on customer needs
	• As well as inputting into specific Workstream design activities, key materials such as allowance policy and post adoption support to be tested with CDA
Implementation Group	• Operational group responsible for ensuring detailed activities to set up RAA are underway and dependencies are tracked
	• Reporting up to Project Board and LA Sponsor on progress & for key decisions
	• Overseeing outputs from Workstreams to ensure fit for purpose

Workstreams	• Action-owning groups responsible for specific aspects of setting up the RAA, per the detailed Workstream plans
	• Leads for most Workstreams identified, members to be drawn from adoption teams and support workers
	• Leads report into Implementation Group to update on actions and identification of any risks, issues and dependencies

It is proposed that these continue and are adapted to accommodate a programme (versus project) approach, given the broader scope of work required and the need to effectively organise and co-ordinate activity and dependencies through Workstreams.

In practice, this will require that a more formal reporting and decision framework is established between the Workstreams and Implementation Group and the Implementation Group and Project Board.

To maintain the required pace and momentum, it is likely that the Implementation Group will have to meet more regularly – at least every two weeks – and that Workstreams will meet weekly.

On set up of the project, forward agendas and decision plans will be developed based on the plans and milestones for each Workstream.

When Stage 2 commences it is likely that the governance will be reviewed again, with the Project Board becoming a 'Transition Board' to provide the task-and-finish focus required.

Stage 1: Workstreams

Given the changes to the original Transition Plan prompted by a reduced DfE funding envelope for this first six months of 2016/17, it is proposed that the Workstreams are slightly re-oriented as follows:

Table 9.1.4

Workstream	Design and transition planning responsibilities
Practice and Organisational Design	Overall strategy
	Policies, processes and forms
	Post-adoption support design, including financial allowance policies and decisions
	Management, workforce and culture requirements and plan
	Business requirements for Infrastructure Workstreams e.g. ICT systems

Workstream	Design and transition planning responsibilities
	Transition planning, costing and readiness
	Risks and mitigation plan
Commercial, Legal and Governance	Legal form and set up
	Risk and gain share arrangements
	Transfer agreements, including identification of assets and liabilities within scope
	Governance
	Service specification and SLA agreements
	'Client-side' requirements
	Operational accountability
	Statutory registrations and compliance
	Contract novation, including leases and deeds
	Transition planning and readiness
	Risks and mitigation plan
Infrastructure Workstream 1: Human Resources	<u>Transition</u>
	Cross-Workstream advice and support
	RAA job descriptions and T&Cs
	TUPE requirements
	Consultation management, including Trade Union engagement
	Staff briefings and consultation
	RAA handbook and induction resources
	Appointment processes if required
	<u>RAA HR support arrangements</u>
	Requirements specification for HR and payroll functions, including policies
	Options identification, evaluation and selection
	Detailed design and costing
	Transition planning and readiness
	Risks and mitigation plan

Workstream	Design and transition planning responsibilities
Infrastructure Workstream 2: Finance and Performance	<u>Transition</u> Cross-Workstream advice and support Taxation advice and confirmation Insurances and assets Benefits realisation and reporting processes and tools <u>RAA Finance and Performance support arrangements</u> Requirements specification for Finance and Performance function, including bookkeeping, audit and management information reporting and statutory financial reporting requirements Options identification, evaluation and selection Detailed design and costing Transition planning and readiness Risks and mitigation plan
Infrastructure Workstream 3: Property and ICT	<u>Transition and RAA</u> Locations, property and ICT strategy and requirements (software and hardware), including business continuity and disaster recovery Consultation with local AM and ICT services Options identification, evaluation and selection Detailed design and costing, including procurement or development if required Transition planning and readiness <u>RAA ICT, FM and AM support arrangements</u> Requirements, proposals, plan and costs, based on the above Risks and mitigation plan

The above list is not exhaustive but provides a basis for the scope of work of each Workstream. This will be reviewed and developed into a plan as the Workstreams are set up and mobilised.

Stage 1: Workstream activity

While each Workstream will focus on different requirements, they will all follow a broadly similar pattern of work. This will involve:

Figure 9.1.5

Mobilisation and set up	• Confirmation of Workstream objectives, scope, resources, roles and responsibilities and ways of working
Design and planning requirements:	• Confirmation of Workstream design and planning requirements, and overall approach
Activity plan and resources:	• Development of a detailed Workstream project plan, and allocation of tasks to named Workstream resources
Design work:	• Identification of options, evaluation, selection (using common evaluation criteria), followed by detailed design
Costing:	• Calculation / confirmation of detailed cost implications
Transition planning / actions	• Development of transition plan or delivery of actions

The outputs from Stage 1 will be consolidated into a Full Business Case.

Resources

This is a complex body of work. There are dependencies both across the different Workstreams and the wide range of stakeholders.

Not only must the work be delivered in the right sequence, but it must also be brought together cohesively (in the FBC) within a challenging timeframe, while ensuring that all stakeholders are consulted appropriately.

Given the potential costs and benefits highlighted in the section above, and the risks outlined in the section below, it is crucial that the work is properly prioritised and organised.

To do so, a level of dedicated and professional change management capability will be required in addition to the strategic, operational and technical contributions needed from across the participating LAs.

Funding plan

As an important next step more work is required to revisit the original funding plan and identify the likely costs involved in delivering the activities included under each Workstream required to design and implement the RAA.

To provide assurance on the costs of transition it is recommended that the project proceeds to the planning stage and, if the funding confirmed is insufficient, then the overall model and plan be revisited.

Once design and implementation activity has been costed this should be considered by the Tees Valley RAA Project Board for a decision on how to proceed.

It is currently anticipated that the DfE will make available further funding of approximately £315,000 to cover the cost of design and transition.

The detailed Stage 1 activity and resourcing plan will be developed following Workstream mobilisation, by consolidating the Workstream plans.

Based on the responsibilities and high level activities and timelines above, it is likely that a significant amount of internal resource will be required from each participating LA, as well as a level of external support and advice. The ICT requirement and cost is also not yet known and this may add further cost.

10. RISKS

Through the service design workshops a range of risks were identified in relation to the development and implementation of the RAA. These are set out in the table below. For each risk the following is provided:

- Rating based on impact and likelihood (1=low, 5=high)
- Mitigating actions.

Risk matrix

Table 10.1.1

Risk	Impact	Likeli-hood	Score	Mitigation
Performance and finance				
Unable to secure children or adopters to sustain model	5	2	10	Best practice activity to secure and forecast potential adopters and children as early as possible has been built into processes
Demand continues to fall as courts are seen to increase evidence threshold for placement orders and / or lose confidence in ability of TV LAs to find and support appropriate and stable placements	5	2	10	Build relationships with the courts; build a good track record with of achieving good outcomes for children and monitor trends carefully
Rise in adoption breakdowns under RAA	5	2	10	Best practice, experience and expertise has been built into service model
Costs of RAA are too high and or unsustainable	5	2	10	Detailed design phase will set detailed business and cost parameters, and systems for monitoring. Performance and demand

Risk	Impact	Likeli-hood	Score	Mitigation
				ambition, and related KPIs, already identified
ICT systems cannot be aligned impacting on delivery	4	2	8	Detailed design phase will test feasibility of aligning ICT systems and establish a method for this
Sharing risk and gain - there is a risk that one or more TV authorities might not commit due to lack of assurance on cost / benefit	4	2	8	Transparency and open dialogue about the potential risks and gains between authorities
The different Workstreams are dependent on each other and the sequencing of activity (e.g. design of Performance requirements and spec IT requirements) which could impact on the timely delivery of the RAA	4	2	8	Programme approach to co-ordinating the change work
Under the RAA model the LA (who has first contact with children) and the RAA (who will recruit adopters) will be split which could impact on process and relationships required for successful matching and timescales	4	2	8	Well-designed and effectively implemented pathways should mitigate this risk
Workforce				
Unable to transfer LA / VAA staff resource to RAA where currently held across service areas	5	2	10	Develop and agree an approach to reconfiguring resource in each organisation to allow resource to be transferred in detailed design phase

Risk	Impact	Likeli-hood	Score	Mitigation
Unable to attract and retain the best adoption staff	5	1	5	Ensure RAA provides an attractive and supportive offer to existing and prospective staff
RAA fails to secure consistent high quality of service across internal and external workforce	5	1	5	Plan includes an Optimisation stage to support the RAA to achieve the practice model
Workforce and / or performance issues in RAA arising from 'culture clash' or failure to implement new processes and systems effectively	5	2	10	Include staff throughout the design and set up of the new service, ensure there is sufficient training on new processes
Wider stakeholders				
Fail to achieve buy in from RAA staff	5	2	10	Ensure model and implementation is co-produced with staff
Fail to achieve buy in from adopters / children	5	2	10	Ensure design, implementation and delivery is developed in collaboration with adopters and children
Fail to achieve buy in of LA / VAA operational staff (e.g. Children's Social Workers)	4	2	8	Ensure model and implementation is co-produced with LA / VAA staff, and regular formal + informal lines of communication/ feedback
VAA presence in region is threatened destabilised	5	2	10	Ensure VAA role is clearly clarified and formalised in the design phase

Appendices

Appendix A – Ideal experience from a child and adult perspective – pen pictures

A. Ideal experience from child perspective

1. Child becomes known to social care

Pen picture:
I was frightened and I needed someone I could trust. Me and my brother John met Jane who was a kind, easy to talk to person who made me feel safe. She talked to us and asked us how we felt and what was making us happy and sad.
She wrote down some of the things that we said and checked with us that she had written down the right things.
She explained to us that our family needed some help and we talked about some of the problems we had with mam. She said that she would make sure that we had everything we needed to be happy.
We were given information about the future and what might happen to us and our family. We were given a booklet which explained how our family were being helped and what this meant for me.
I started writing my life story.

2. Pre- care proceedings and planning initiated

Pen picture:
Jane, the same worker I had spoken to before, was honest with me and explained the different people who wanted to talk to me, who they were and why they wanted to talk to me.
Jane checked with me to make sure she had got things right about me, John and my family. She made me feel that I was being listened to and could have a say in my future.
Jane gave me, John and my family help and support so that I could stay with my mam. Jane explained all the options for the future to me and John so we knew what could happen.

Pen picture:
I was scared about leaving my home and everything that is familiar even though I was sometimes scared and unhappy there. I was also scared about being separated from John. Jane was always there and made me feel safe and reassured that me and John would be okay.

3. Care proceedings and planning

Pen picture:
Things got worse at home, I was scared and unhappy a lot of the time. John and I moved away from my mam and moved in with David and Pam, our foster family. I felt sad to leave mam but they were nice and made us feel like part of their family. Jane listened to me and explained the options for what could happen to me and John. Jane explained about a forever home. She asked us what we wanted and hoped for in the future, I said a lot more about what I wanted to David and Pam my foster parents, so I asked them to speak to Jane about what I wanted and she listened to them. Jane let me know that my mam is okay and isn't worrying or unwell. She made me feel like none of this was my fault. I looked forward to seeing my mam in contact. I sometimes felt very sad, frightened and confused and I got angry but I didn't know what to do. I needed someone to help me to feel better. A lady came to see me they called her a Children's Guardian and she talked to me about my mam, home and what I wanted for the future. Jane told me about the judge and that she would listen to everyone including my mam and she would decide where me and John would live.

4. Family finding

Pen picture:
Jane told me that she (and the people she worked with) were trying to find me a forever home with John. I was really excited about this but also scared that I would be separated from John or wouldn't get to see my mam. Jane reassured me that John and I would stay together, and I trusted her. Jane used all the things I'd said to her to continue writing a life story with me. It was really fun! She checked this with me and I thought it was great. She let me choose photos.

Pen picture:
I was also scared that if I found a forever family I wouldn't get to see my mam or foster carers again but Jane said I could stay in touch with them in the future, and that they could help me and John to find our forever family.
Jane made me feel that I understood what was happening, what adoption was and it might mean for me and John.
I still felt sad and scared, and sometimes didn't tell anyone. But I felt like I could trust Jane. She explained about the family activity days and asked me to go to one – I said yes.

5. Matching

Pen Picture:
Jane explained all about the activity day, what it was and who was going. David and Pam took me and John along to this. I was excited but also scared.
I was playing with some toys at the activity day when I met Linda and Peter. They talked to me and I liked them a lot. They seemed friendly and kind and we got on really well.

6. Placement and post adoption support

Pen picture:
Over the next few weeks John and I met with Linda and Peter a few times. They were really nice and we got on really well. Jane asked us what we thought about Linda and Peter being our forever family, I was really happy, Jane told us all about Linda and Peter and showed us a film they had made for us! She also explained how and when my mam and foster carers would be told what I had been doing and said that there was some one for us to talk to if we had any concerns.
We moved in with Peter and Linda. It was strange at first. Jane explained everything that she and other people she worked with would do for me, John, Peter and Linda to make sure we were happy.
In the first few months I felt like I needed to speak to someone as I sometimes felt nervous and scared after everything we'd been through. I spoke to Jane and she was really reassuring and supportive. She said there was someone who could help with how I was feeling and asked if I wanted to speak to them. They came to see me a few times and helped me to find a way to think about and deal with my feelings.
Sometimes I still felt like I wasn't like the rest of the kids at school and I was different because I was adopted. I met some other people who had been adopted at a fun day

for adoptive families and found it really useful talking to them about how I felt and what I had been through.

I felt like I hadn't been forgotten by Jane and the other workers who had helped me to find a forever home, and I felt that I had someone there outside of my family if I ever had a problem or a crisis that I couldn't talk to my family about. Overtime, living in my forever family felt normal, I was happy.

B. Ideal experience from an adopter's perspective

1. Pre enquiry

Pen picture:

I've noticed a lot of motivational stories from people like me on Twitter and Facebook who had adopted children. When I started to talk to people I knew about adoption, I was amazed to find out that quite a few friends and colleagues knew someone who had or had been adopted. Then I started to pick up on stories about adoption on TV, movies and magazines.

I wanted to know more so I started to do some research online – I found some really informative websites and articles which tackled some of my concerns (e.g. that age wasn't an issue) and told me about the process. I started to think that adoption could be right for me so I decided to make an enquiry.

2. Enquiry

Pen picture:

I went onto the website and it was easy to find the RAA adoption page. This had clear information about who I needed to call. I called and got straight through to someone without having to wait long or be passed around. The person I got through to was friendly, warm and knowledgeable.

They answered some of my questions about adoption and reassured me on some of my concerns.

I had a follow up visit with a worker very quickly after. They explained that I had a choice, clearly described the process and put me at ease. The worker gave me an information pack, and I was given the opportunity to speak to other adopters.

> **Pen picture:**
>
> At the end of this stage, there seemed to be few barriers and I had a good sense of how likely I would be to be successful in the process and had a clear view of what would be involved.

3. Preparation for training and assessment (Stage 1)

> **Pen picture:**
>
> I put in my registration of interest to start stage 1. At this stage the worker gave me and my family a clear overview of what was involved, timescales, processes and dates.
>
> They got me started on the preparation process by giving me suggested reading. During this stage I didn't have to wait more than 2 days for a response to my enquiry.
>
> The process took around 2 months in total, and felt tailored to my needs. My worker, Mary, managed this process sensitively and had the 'human touch' and was open, honest and transparent.
>
> On reflection I came to adoption with some preconceptions about the types of children I would adopt, but after the service introduced me to a range of different families, I realised there was a range of children out there who might fit in my family. Therefore, I decided to proceed to stage 2.
>
> I put in an application form and they got back to me two days later to confirm we'd be going ahead.

4. Training and assessment (Stage 2)

> **Pen picture:**
>
> At the beginning of this stage my RAA worker helped me to feel that I was ready and explained the key next steps and timescales, and made me feel involved and part of the process throughout.
>
> The training programme was really useful and involved adopters, young people and birth parents. I felt assured that the trainers were experienced and had relevant insight to share that wasn't 'off the shelf' or from a textbook. The stories I heard from adopters were really inspirational and many of them are still close friends today.
>
> The assessment was quite intrusive, and lots of personal questions were asked, however my worker was really sensitive and guided me through the process. The output was my prospective adopter report which was presented at my adoption panel.

> **Pen picture:**
>
> I was made fully aware of the panel procedure and the type of questions I would be asked. At the panel itself I was made to feel comfortable and welcome - it wasn't as intimidating as I'd feared. I was over the moon when they recommended me for approval.
>
> This stage took around 4 months in total.

5. Matching

> **Pen picture:**
>
> At the beginning of this stage my worker explained clearly how the matching process would work, the key milestones and next steps. I also received an informative leaflet which set out clearly what I could expect to happen next and was invited to a 'waiting adopters group' where I could meet people at a similar point in the process.
>
> I didn't have to wait long for a match. My worker mentioned an activity day and helped me to prepare for this, because I found the idea a bit strange at first. She also linked me up with a "buddy" who told me about their experience at activity days and put me at ease.
>
> There were a number of days on offer across the region and I found one which worked for me. I went along and met my little Sarah and John. Sarah was a lot older than the child I had imagined but like a lot of the children from the adoptive families I'd met before. We all clicked immediately!
>
> After a discussion with my worker I was able to look at Sarah's and John's 'Adopter passport' and family book which included a short biography and all the information I needed. I then met some key people in Sarah and John's life including their foster carers, school, nursery and social workers – several of us met on an 'appreciation day.'
>
> I spoke to their foster carers regularly in the time leading up to the match – we even organised a 'chemistry' day where I bumped in to them in the park and had a chat.
>
> Soon afterwards and following a number of supportive discussions with my worker, my match was approved and we began to discuss introduction plans.

6. Placement and post adoption support

> **Pen picture:**
>
> Sarah and John moved in with me and the transition was really smooth. My worker advised me that there may be some challenges later in life and worked with me to plan how to pre-empt them.

Pen picture:
I got a support plan and there were some things on there that the RAA arranged for me, like play therapy, early on. At the outset I felt like I needed quite a lot of support to help with the attachment process (which I learnt about in my adopter training). I received a tailored package of post adoption support, I spoke regularly to my buddy and, when needed, I was able to quickly access specialist support from a therapist. I also took my family along to a family fun day – I think that meeting other families like us was a reassuring and positive experience for all of us!   From then on we settled into normal family life, however we had some problems. For example, a couple of years later we had a few issues and I felt like I needed a bit more help on attachment. The children were having the identity issues that the service had prepared me for but I felt like I was failing. I spoke to my named post adoption support worker, they were supportive and worked with me to resolve my issue. My buddy was also there for me to speak to throughout, and I felt that I had a good support network around me to help whenever I needed it.

Appendix B - Child and adopter journey map

Attached separately as a PDF.

Appendix C – Details of attendees for workshops in August and September

NAME	ORG	18/8 (1)	23/8 (2)	24/8 (1A)	30/8 (2A)	31/8 (3)	06/9 (4)	07/9 (3A)
Laura Fenwick	Stockton BC		√					
Christine Regan	Redcar and Cleveland		√					
Tracy Bishop	Afrer Adoption			√	√			√
Donna Mease	Arc Adoption NE			√	√			
Clare Frankland	Hartlepool BC		√	√	√			√

NAME	ORG	18/8 (1)	23/8 (2)	24/8 (1A)	30/8 (2A)	31/8 (3)	06/9 (4)	07/9 (3A)
Sharon McBride	Redcar and Cleveland	√		√				
Orla Keating	Stockton BC			√				
Silvie Hertelova	Darlington BC	√		√	√	√		√
Louise Taylor	Darlington BC	√		√	√	√		
Lynn Woodhouse	Middlesbrough BC			√			√	
Chioma Unigwe	Middlesbrough BC			√				√
Gethin Richards	DFW			√	√			
Gemma Whiteley	DFW		√	√				
Jenna Harrison	Stockton BC		√	√				
Hannah Ditchburn	Stockton BC		√	√				
Katie Hammond	Hartlepool BC	√		√	√	√		√
Penny Thompson	Hartlepool BC		√	√		√		
Pam Norgrove	Darlington BC			√		√	√	
Amanda Wilson	Hartlepool BC				√			
Judith Henderson	Hartlepool BC	√			√			

NAME	ORG	18/8 (1)	23/8 (2)	24/8 (1A)	30/8 (2A)	31/8 (3)	06/9 (4)	07/9 (3A)
Angi Simmonds	Hartlepool BC				√		√	√
Jon Doyle	Stockton BC				√		√	
Karen Douglas Weir	Hartlepool BC		√		√	√		√
Joanna Lee	Stockton BC				√		√	√
Phil Whale	Barnardos				√			
Jane Shade	Darlington BC		√		√			
Jane Wilson	Middlesbrough BC	√			√	√	√	√
Liz Blanehard	Adopter				√			√
Denise Moore	Darlington BC				√		√	√
Christine Croft	Hartlepool BC	√	√		√	√		
Alyssa Dale	Redcar and Cleveland				√			√
Denise Allen	Redcar and Cleveland		√			√	√	
Terry Fitzpatrick	Arc Adoption NE		√			√		
Alison Myers	Stockton BC					√		√
Fiona McNaughton	Stockton BC					√		
Louise Addison	Middlesbrough BC	√	√			√	√	

NAME	ORG	18/8 (1)	23/8 (2)	24/8 (1A)	30/8 (2A)	31/8 (3)	06/9 (4)	07/9 (3A)
Lucy Graham	Barnardos					√		√
Karen Shepherd	Middlesbrough BC		√			√	√	
Cath Mapplebeck	Stockton BC					√		
Jenny Parkin	DFW					√	√	√
Mike Blackburn	Stockton BC						√	
Julie Aylesbury	Stockton BC							
Louise Becwith	Middlesbrough BC						√	
Carol Norcott	Barnardos						√	
Sam Ellis	Barnardos		√					
Diane Cox	Stockton BC							√
Sue Holton	Arc Adoption NE						√	√
Melanie Skelton	Stockton BC		√					
Kay Singlewood	Hartlepool BC		√					
Kate Proctor	Hartlepool BC		√					
Laura Jeffreys	Stockton BC		√					
Hilary Tillotson	Darlington BC							√

NAME	ORG	18/8 (1)	23/8 (2)	24/8 (1A)	30/8 (2A)	31/8 (3)	06/9 (4)	07/9 (3A)
Paivi Morton	Hartlepool BC		√					
Carol Lamplough	Hartlepool BC		√					
Helen Caswell	Stockton BC	√						
Judith Hutchinson	Stockton BC	√						
Kath Bishop	Hartlepool BC	√						
Maria Murrell	Stockton BC	√						
Rubina Hussain	Redcar and Cleveland	√						
Susan Moir	DFW	√						
Lindsey Thirkell	Middlesbrough BC	√						
		Total - 15	Total - 21	Total - 16	Total - 20	Total - 17	Total - 15	Total - 18

Appendix D – Detail of work completed to develop RAA between February and August 2016

The table below sets out the work completed to enable this Transition Plan, with support from iMPOWER:

Activity	Outcomes
Completed interviews and roundtable meetings with senior reps of LAs and VAAs in Tees Valley	Identified priority outcomes and organisational priorities to inform establishment of strategic objectives.

Activity	Outcomes
Established vision and strategic objectives for RAA	Developed consensus on aims and objectives of RAA across stakeholders, and the basis of criteria for evaluation of options.
Begun to identify best practice in LA adoption services across the adopter journey	Allowed best practice across the adopter journey to be drawn into new delivery model.
Completed and analysed a staff survey (across LA and VAA), with 82 respondents	Captured the views of staff across a variety of organisations including appetite for different delivery models, used to inform evaluation of options and detailed design in the next phase.
Completed and analysed an adopter survey, with 54 respondents	Canvassed the views of adopters across Tees Valley on priorities, existing services and involvement in service design. Information used to confirm strategic priorities of RAA as well as elements of adopter journey to ensure model is customer-centric.
Developed finance and performance baseline across LA's	A financial and performance baseline across the five local authorities.
Developed and submitted DfE Transition Plan	This provided outline proposals and a high level plan for April 2016 – April 2017, subject to funding.

Work completed in April and May 2016

The nature and scope of this activity is detailed in the table below:

Activity	Outcomes
Face-to-face meetings between Project Sponsor and senior VAA representatives	Captured each organisation's initial views on preferred role in design and delivery. Captured views and ideas on design of RAA model and commissioning approaches.
Two workshops with adopters to capture experiences and views (20 attendees)	Established key design principles based on service user experience of what currently works well/ less well, ideas for how services could be improved. Identified interest in involvement in Customer Design Authority.

Activity	Outcomes
Established approach to engaging adopted people through an appointed Operational Lead	Project is now well placed to to engage adopted people under guidance of appointed Operational Lead using agreed approach.
Detailed work with the five participating Local Authorities to develop baseline for staffing and finance	Established baseline for development of a service delivery model and financial model in the detailed design phase.
Developed and agreed proposals for Project Infrastructure (inc. terms of reference for Project Board and Implementation Group)	Infrastructure and platform established to support service design and implementation, and manage delivery of project activities and outputs in 2016/17.
Allocate a Project Manager (Penny Thompson, Hartlepool Council) and Operational Lead (Jane Wilson, Middlesbrough Council)	Identified and secured key project roles to support detailed design and implementation.
Convened inaugural Project Board and Implementation Group	Set up the key forums to make project decisions and oversee detailed delivery of workstreams.

Work completed in July – September 2016

Activity	Outcomes
Delivery of four service design workshops with cross-agency representation	Identified optimum child and journey experience, design principles, process, pathways, roles and functions.
Delivery of four Post Adoption Support workshops with cross-agency representation	Agreed consensus on how post adoption support needs to change and key next steps.
Completion of cost benefit scenarios and nice potential scenarios	Identified the range of cost/ benefit which could accompany the establishment of a Tees Valley RAA.
Production of Outline Business Case for Tees Valley RAA	Set out the potential benefits of establishing and delivering the Tees Valley RAA, an overarching vision and associated operating principles, and the processes,

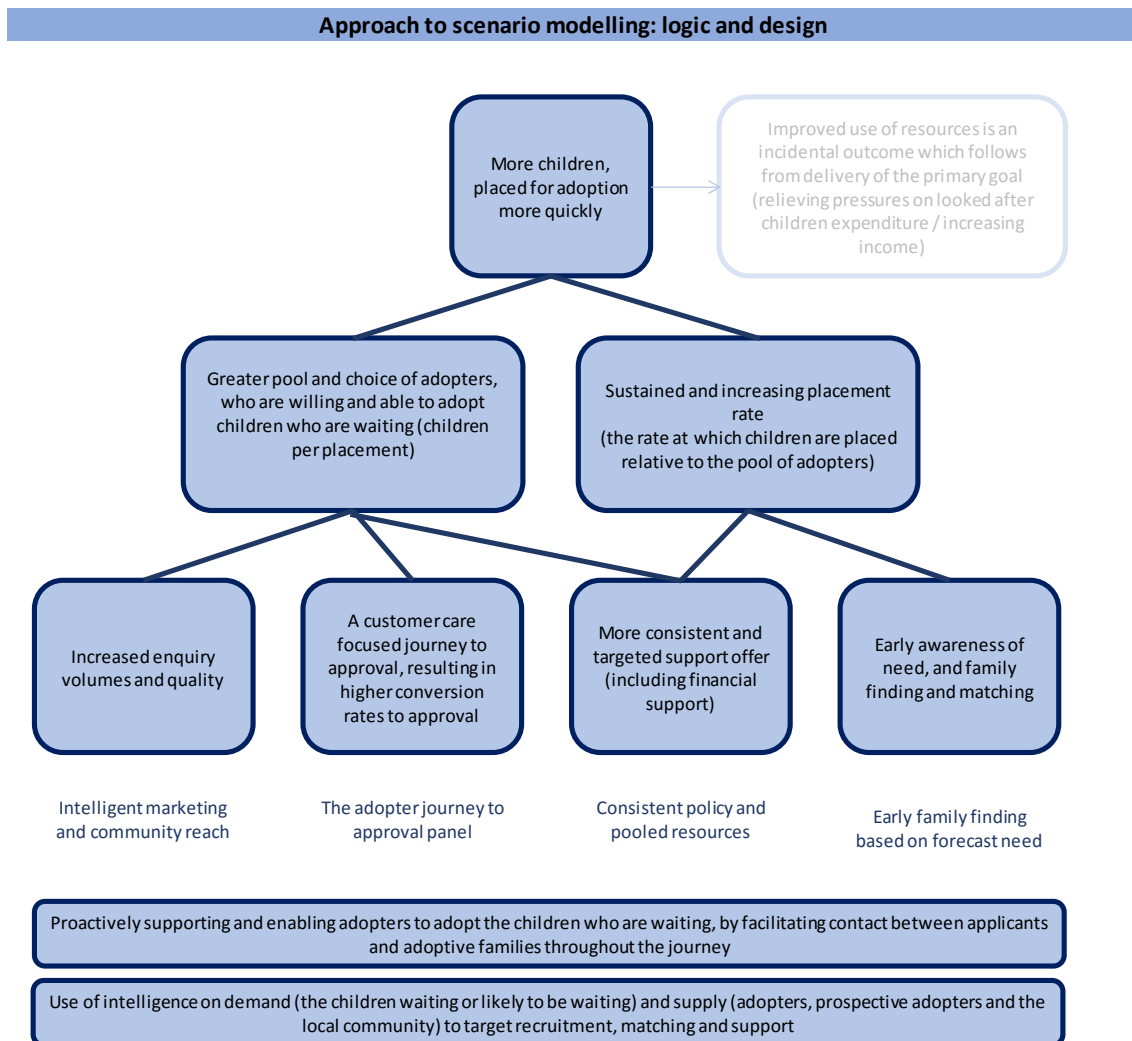| Activity	Outcomes
	roles and functions that are required to deliver it.

Appendix E: Scenario modelling and cost / benefit

Method

Performance scenarios

The three performance scenarios each contain a 'sub-scenario' regarding the four key 'levers' available to the RAA (and any adoption agency) to improve the sufficiency of adopters and the rate at which they are matched and placed with children waiting.

These levers and the logic behind the model are illustrated visually below:

Approach to scenario modelling: logic and design

More children, placed for adoption more quickly

Improved use of resources is an incidental outcome which follows from delivery of the primary goal (relieving pressures on looked after children expenditure / increasing income)

Greater pool and choice of adopters, who are willing and able to adopt children who are waiting (children per placement)

Sustained and increasing placement rate (the rate at which children are placed relative to the pool of adopters)

Increased enquiry volumes and quality

A customer care focused journey to approval, resulting in higher conversion rates to approval

More consistent and targeted support offer (including financial support)

Early awareness of need, and family finding and matching

Intelligent marketing and community reach

The adopter journey to approval panel

Consistent policy and pooled resources

Early family finding based on forecast need

Proactively supporting and enabling adopters to adopt the children who are waiting, by facilitating contact between applicants and adoptive families throughout the journey

Use of intelligence on demand (the children waiting or likely to be waiting) and supply (adopters, prospective adopters and the local community) to target recruitment, matching and support

The key performance levers, shown in bold above, are:

1. Applicant enquiry levels and 'quality' - modelled by calculating and varying the ratio of annual enquiry numbers to the level of looked after children;

2. Applicant conversion rates from enquiry to approval (%);

3. The 'placement rate' of children – this is a % measure of the number of children placed in a year relative to the total pool of available adopters, and

4. The number of children placed with each adoptive family.

The basis for each lever used in the scenarios is set out in the table below.

Performance: Levels and levers	High	Medium	Low
Enquiry numbers	Highest rate across TV LAs (relative to LAC numbers)	As now, based on an aggregate or average of the Tees Valley LA adoption services, or national average where proxy used	Lowest rate across TV LAs (relative to LAC numbers)
Conversion rates	Top national quartile		Lowest rate across TV LAs
Placement rates	Top national quartile		Low national quartile
Children / placement	Highest rate across TV LAs		Lowest rate across TV LAs

Demand scenarios

To further inform the OBC, a number of different 'demand' scenarios were also developed, in which the annual level of placement orders either remained the same, increased or decreased.

This was considered important by the Project Team given the fluctuations in placement orders over the past three years, and the sensitivity of future numbers to government policy, legislation and working relationships with the local family courts.

Each of these may be subject to significant further change over the coming one or two years and, after falling by 50% nationally over the past two years, it is possible that the level of placement orders will continue to diminish or alternatively return to or exceed the peak levels seen in 2013/14.

The basis of each demand scenario is set out in the table below.

Demand scenarios	High	Medium	Low
Placement orders (annual number of new orders)	50% increase over current levels (84 p.a.)	Current (56 p.a.)	50% decrease on current levels (28 p.a.)

Costs and benefits

In the first place, the above scenarios were modelled to indicate the potential annual number of adoptive placements that would be made by the five Tees Valley LAs, through the RAA and through other agencies (VAAs and other RAAs).

Secondly, based on the above and other relevant system flows, the results of the model were translated into potential financial outcomes. The approach to this was as follows:

Costs

For certain activities associated with recruiting, placing and supporting adopters, increased or decreased expenditure was modelled (varied with the level of activity) based on outline current unit costs or other assumptions.

Costs also took into account the additional or reduced income and expenditure from placing Tees Valley children with out of area adopters, or out of area children with RAA adopters.

The basis for this modelling was as follows:

Activity cost driver	Ref	Variable cost	£ / unit
Number of placements (all)	C1	Family finding costs	6,271
Number of internal placements	C2	Assessment costs	9,073
	C3	Financial allowances (new in yr)	5,000
	C4	Post-adoption support (new in yr)	5,375
Number of TV placements with external agencies	C5	Agency fee	27,000

Notes:

Ref Basis

C1 Based on an estimate of the cost of the current TV LA staffing base which relates to this function (see Financials - calculations sheet), iMPOWER's experience and this study (http://www.adoptionresearchinitiative.org.uk/briefs/DFE-RBX-10-05.pdf)

C2 Based on an estimate of the cost of the current TV LA staffing base which relates to this function (see Financials - calculations sheet) and iMPOWER's experience

C3 Based on iMPOWER's calculations in other LAs as to prevalence and level of payment (a blended average of £100 per week for all placements)

C4 Based on an estimate of the cost of the current TV LA staffing base which relates to this function (see Financials - calculations sheet) and CCFR / PSSRU Adoption VFM study

C5 Assumed for all placements

Benefits

Two principal benefits were modelled, these being:

1. LAC avoidance – at £35,000 p.a., per adoptive placement (whether made internally or externally): based on national average costs of foster care placements for LAC, per CIPFA CLA 2015/16 benchmark (£659 per month) - this excludes the cost of LA social work and other corporate parenting activity, and other indirect overheads (including these would increase the benefit).

2. Inter-agency fee income – at £27,000 per placement

Because they form such a large part of the financial scenario, it is particularly important to note how LAC avoidance costs have been modelled.

Where the level of placements in the given scenario exceeds the baseline (the current level), the LAC avoidance benefit shown is calculated as:

- The greater or lesser number of placements compared to the baseline

- Multiplied by £35,000 p.a.

- Compounded over a five-year period, as an illustration of the 'steady state' impact

For example, if ten more adoptive placements are anticipated each year than are achieved currently, the model calculates an annual benefit of £350,000 per year. In the illustration, this is compounded by five years, to £1,750,000 p.a. The illustration of the annual savings after five years is arbitrary and is intended to show a medium term, 'steady state' impact.

A 'steady state' position is used to illustrate all the scenario outcomes in this OBC for two reasons: 1) simplicity - to allow a single outcome to be described rather than the outcomes for every year, and 2) for more accurate representation, as it is only after the first few years that the impact of the change in demand or performance levels off to a steady run rate.

The demand, performance and financial outcomes can be seen by year in the detailed model if required.

Key assumptions and limitations

1. Based on information and explanations provided by TV LAs (queries raised where obvious material errors identified but no formal validation or due diligence undertaken)

2. Proxies used in event of gaps or apparent errors in data provision e.g. local, regional, national averages or quartiles

3. Scenarios shown for 'steady state' only so as to allow presentation of a single figure for nine scenarios, rather than for figures for each metric for each for each scenario – this was considered proportionate and more helpful at this stage (benefit of simplicity outweighing the benefit of detail), and further detail is within the model

4. Unless stated, all other factors held constant for modelling purposes e.g. LAC numbers, SGOs and other permanence orders, arrangements and placements

5. LAC avoidance savings calculations do not account for additional or reduced wider Children's Services or Council costs (including these would increase any avoidance savings and v.v.)

6. Assumes constant churn on financial allowances and PAS needs (new allowances / supports = allowances / supports ending each year)

7. As not within current remit of the OBC, assumes patterns of inter-agency placements continue as-is (see scenarios and detailed model) and that RAA placements are used first where available (on the assumption they are appropriate and timely)

8. Marginal costs assumed to increase when volumes exceed baseline, AND when they do not i.e. assumption that all costs including staff can be geared (and costs released) if level of business decreases, except in 'Worst case' scenario, when costs can only increase

9. Dis-benefit of decreased placements included, when lower volume

10. While external agency placement costs will be paid for by LA, the impact of this is included within this business case (it being part of the whole cost to TV LAs)

11. Assumes all RAA costs are passed in full to TV LAs

12. All current inter-LA placements are outside TV

13. Other than the marginal cost of providing post-adoption support, no costs or benefits have currently been modelled around post-adoption support improvement or otherwise due to lack of data regarding breakdowns.

Further detail on the approach and underlying workings, numbers and assumptions can be found in the associated working papers which have been provided to the RAA Project Team.

Appendix F: Roles and Responsibilities

Item	Project Board	Implementation Group
Membership	• Project Sponsor (Chair) • DCS reps from all five local authorities • Director level reps from all five VAAs • Project Manager • Delivery partner senior representative	• Service Managers from all five local authorities • Operational leads from all five VAAs • Project Manager • Delivery partner representative
Purpose	• Achieving project aims, objectives and realising benefits • Signing off final model and detailed working practices • Signing off project deliverables and documents (e.g. PID, business case) • Oversight of implementation and managing key project risks and issues • Agreeing changes in scope and high level budget decisions • Reviewing progress of project at key milestones and providing cross-organisational input, insight and direction	• Overseeing and quality assuring workstream deliverables • Providing resource, information and insight to deliver project outputs and activities • Planning and overseeing detailed project activities to set up • Managing key risks, issues and dependencies • Reporting up to Project Board and LA Sponsor on progress & for key decisions • Reviewing week by week progress of project and workstreams at key milestones
Meeting	• Monthly meetings (minimum 1.5 hours), using template agenda and chaired by Project Sponsor	• Monthly meetings (minimum 1.5 hours), using template agenda and chaired by Subject Matter Expert
Standard items	• Key decisions required by workstream • Key project risks and issues • Review of progress against plan and objectives • Key insight from children and adopters	• Key planned/ completed activities and deliverables by workstream • Project risks and issues • Review of progress against detailed plan and objectives

Role	Responsibilities
Project Sponsor	• Overall responsibility for delivery of project objectives aims and objectives • Managing relationship and liaison with DfE • Managing project budget • Managing commissioning of consultancy support • Overseeing Project Manager and delivery partners • Chair of Project Board
Project Manager	• Developing and updating Project Initiation Document, Business Case, Project Plan, Risk/ issues log and Communications Plan • Ensuring project deliverables meet agreed timescales and budget • Managing risks, issues and changes that may arise during the project • Making certain that action points from Project Board and Implementation Group meetings are met • Ensuring any deviation from scope is agreed by Project Board • Ensuring that the project is subject to review at appropriate stages • Monitoring and reporting progress to internal/ external stakeholders • Ensuring that the project is closed and lessons learned are captured
Operational Lead	• Responsible for communicating between Heads of Service • Supporting the Implementation Board and workstreams • Leading on engagement with Adopters and Children / Young People • Leading on engagement with Staff and key Stakeholders
Subject Matter Expert	• Providing expertise and advice on design, delivery and evaluation of adoption services • Lead specific tasks and activities in support of project deliverables and activities • Lead on engagement with children and young people • Chair the Implementation Group
Project Support	• Responsible for supporting the Project Manager to deliver against the project objectives • Help to keep project documentation up to date • Complete project focused research

Appendix G: Notice

Tees Valley RAA Project Board is responsible for determining whether the scope of the work iMPOWER Consulting Limited ('iMPOWER') have been asked to carry out is sufficient for the purposes of this report.

The designs, assertions and opinions included in this report are intended to be a reflection of those put forward by stakeholders from across the councils and other agencies involved in setting up the Tees Valley RAA. iMPOWER facilitated these discussions and, as accurately as possible, reflected consolidated them in this report.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis in this report is based on information, explanations and assumptions provided by the Tees Valley LAs and other stakeholders, as set out in this document or the associated working papers, for quality assurance by Tees Valley RAA Project Board. It should be noted and it is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to us iMPOWER has been made. We iMPOWER make no representation or warranty and give no undertaking as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the information contained received and used to develop in this report or any document or information supplied to us.

In this report iMPOWER have assumed, having raised queries as iMPOWER saw appropriate: that all of the information supplied to us was, when given, and remains, true, complete and accurate and not misleading; that the documents iMPOWER have examined are true, complete and accurate copies of the originals and that the signatures on those documents are genuine; that appropriate personnel at the Tees Valley RAA Project Board will have read the documents in case any such document reveals matters of significance which could only be identified by people with knowledge of the Tees Valley RAA Project Board's specific circumstances; and that no term of any agreement comprised in the documents received by us iMPOWER has been amended orally by the parties or by conduct or by course of dealing without our being aware of such amendment. In addition, there may be agreements which are wholly oral of which iMPOWER are unaware.

This report reflects the state of the Tees Valley RAA as at the date provided at the front of it. However, further information may be received, disclosures may be made or information identified which may change the position of this report after the date of it. IMPOWER do not accept any responsibility or obligation to update this report, correct any inaccuracies or provide any further information which may become known to it after the date of this report.

This report is addressed to the Tees Valley RAA Project Board and is for their sole information and use in connection with the matter. iMPOWER accept no responsibility for any reliance placed on this report for any purpose other than the matter or by any person other than the Tees Valley RAA Project Board.

iMPOWER shall not in any circumstances be liable to the Tees Valley RAA Project Board for any loss of profit or any other consequential or indirect loss (howsoever arising).