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## SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

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Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds on  
Thursday, 8th March, 2007 at 9.30 am

*(A pre-meeting will take place for ALL members of the Board at 9.00 a.m.)*

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### MEMBERSHIP

#### **Councillors**

- J Bale (Chair) - Guiseley and Rawdon
- J Chapman - Weetwood
- B Cleasby - Horsforth
- R D Feldman - Alwoodley
- A Harrison - Garforth and Swillington
- V Kendall - Roundhay
- J Lewis - Kippax and Methley
- L Mulherin - Ardsley and Robin Hood
- K Renshaw - Ardsley and Robin Hood
- B Selby - Killingbeck and Seacroft

#### **Co-opted Members (Voting)**

- Mr E A Britten - Church Representative (Catholic)
- Prof P H J H Gosden - Church Representative (Church of England)
- Mr R Greaves - Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)
- Mr C Macpherson - Parent Governor Representative (Special)
- Mrs S Knights - Parent Governor Representative (Primary)

#### **Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)**

- Mr T Hales - Teacher Representative
- Ms C Foote - Teacher Representative
- Mrs S Hutchinson - Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Representative
- Mr P Gathercole - NCH Representative
- Ms T Kayani - Youth Work Partnership Representative

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# A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p><b>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</b></p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 25 of the Access to Information Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded)</p>	
2			<p><b>EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p>To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public</p>	
3			<p><b>LATE ITEMS</b></p> <p>To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration</p> <p>(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes)</p>	
4			<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>To declare any personal/prejudicial interests for the purpose of Section 81(3) of the Local Government Act 2000 and paragraphs 8 to 13 of the Members' Code of Conduct</p>	
5			<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence from the meeting</p>	
6			<p><b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b></p> <p>To receive and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007</p>	1 - 8

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
7			<p><b>MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>To note the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2007</p>	9 - 14
8			<p><b>MEMBERS' QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which gives Members the opportunity to ask questions of the Director(s) who chair the Corporate Priority Board which matches the Scrutiny Board's portfolio, or the Director's nominee</p>	15 - 16
9			<p><b>SPECIALIST INCLUSIVE LEARNING CENTRES (SILCS)</b></p> <p>To receive a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which updates Members on the progress made in relation to Education Leeds' formal response and action plan, following the Scrutiny Board's inquiry into Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres and asks Members to determine whether any further action is required</p>	17 - 42
10			<p><b>THE IMPLICATIONS OF TRUST SCHOOLS FOR THE LOCAL AUTHORITY - INQUIRY SESSION TWO</b></p> <p>To receive a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which details the evidence to be considered as part of the second formal session of the Scrutiny Board's inquiry into the implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority</p>	43 - 68
11			<p><b>INQUIRY INTO ADOPTION IN LEEDS</b></p> <p>To consider and agree the Scrutiny Board's final report following its inquiry into Adoption in Leeds</p>	69 - 116

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
12			<p><b>WORK PROGRAMME</b></p> <p>To receive a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which details the Scrutiny Board's current Work Programme</p>	117 - 136
13			<p><b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at 10.30 a.m. in the Civic Hall, Leeds</p> <p>(Please note that a pre-meeting is scheduled for all members of the Board at 10.00 a.m.)</p>	

# Agenda Item 6

## SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 8TH FEBRUARY, 2007

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Bale in the Chair

Councillors J Chapman, B Cleasby, R D Feldman,  
J Lewis, K Renshaw and B Selby

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:  
(VOTING)**

Mr E A Britten	- Church Representative (Catholic)
Prof P H J H Gosden	- Church Representative (Church of England)
Mrs S Knights	- Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
Mr C Macpherson	- Parent Governor Representative (Special)

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:  
(NON-VOTING)**

Ms C Foote	- Teacher Representative
Mr T Hales	- Teacher Representative
Mrs S Hutchinson	- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Representative

### 96 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the February meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services), particularly Councillor J Lewis, who had recently been appointed to the Board as a replacement for Councillor Murray.

### 97 Exclusion of the Public

**RESOLVED** – That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of Annex 2 to both the reports referred to in Minute No 105. Both documents are designated as exempt on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public are present there would be disclosure to them of the exempt information so designated under the terms of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(1) and 10.4(2) and on the grounds that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, because Education Leeds has a duty to secure improvement and increased confidence in the schools concerned and this would be adversely affected by disclosure of the information.

### 98 Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared personal interests in relation to agenda items 8, 9 and 10 due to their respective positions as either school or college governors (Minute Nos 103, 104 and 105 refer):-

Councillors Bale, Chapman, Cleasby, R D Feldman, J Lewis, Renshaw, Selby, Mr E A Britten, Mr C Macpherson, Mrs S Knights and Mrs S Hutchinson.

Councillor Cleasby and Professor P H J H Gosden both declared personal interests in relation to agenda items 8, 9, 10 due to being members of the School Organisation Committee (Minute Nos 103, 104 and 105 refer).

Councillor Cleasby declared a personal interest in relation to agenda items 8, 9, 10 due to being a member of the South Leeds Fostering Board (Minute Nos 103, 104 and 105 refer).

Mrs S Knights declared a personal interest in relation to agenda items 8, 9 and 10 due to being a member of the Leeds Admission Forum (Minute Nos 103, 104 and 105 refer).

Mr T Hales and Ms C Foote both declared personal interests in relation to agenda item 9, due to being members of a trade union which had been invited to submit evidence to the Board as part of the inquiry into the Implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority (Minute No 104 refers).

**99 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors A Harrison, V Kendall, L Mulherin, Mr P Gathercole and Ms T Kayani.

**100 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007 be approved as a correct record.

**101 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Minute No 64 – ‘Implementing the Children Act – Update’

In response to enquiries about the availability of information relating to the staffing structure of the Director of Children’s Services Unit, which had been sought at the previous meeting, the Board was assured that such information would be circulated without delay.

Members then took the opportunity to extend their thanks to the Director of Children’s Services for keeping the Board informed of the current position with regard to recruitment within the Unit.

**102 Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

With regard to Minute No 64 entitled, ‘Scrutiny Inquiry – Narrowing the Gap’, Members highlighted the impact that the Ofsted inspection process had upon schools and recognised that such a process could also impact upon those areas which were being addressed as part of the Narrowing the Gap initiative.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2007 be noted.

### 103 Quarter Three Performance Report

The Board received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which highlighted the issues from across the council arising from the quarter 3 performance information which had been supplied in line with the new monitoring arrangements. Also appended to the report for Members' consideration was the quarter 3 data relevant to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) portfolio.

Chris Edwards, Chief Executive of Education Leeds, Dirk Gilleard, Deputy Chief Executive of Education Leeds and John Maynard, Performance Manager, Children's Services Unit, were in attendance to answer Members' questions.

Having received a brief overview of the background to the statistics detailed within the report from the Chief Executive of Education Leeds, a question and answer session ensued. The main areas of debate were as follows:-

- Following Members' enquiries into how the targets detailed within the report had been set, the actions which were being taken to meet them and how such targets compared to those established for other Local Authorities, the Board noted that the targets were agreed with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and that performance in Leeds was comparable to similar cities and statistical neighbours. A discussion relating to the nature of the targets set then followed;
- Members raised concerns over the link which had been made between the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions and the level of behaviour in schools. Having provided details of a specific individual who had been reported on numerous occasions for incidents relating to behaviour, the Board also raised concerns about the support given to staff when reporting such incidents. In response, Members were advised of the actions being taken to improve the relevant reporting mechanisms and in relation to the specific example given, the Chief Executive of Education Leeds undertook to pursue that particular case outside of the meeting. Board Members then identified behaviour issues as a potential area for further scrutiny;
- Clarification was sought on several issues arising from the report including those relating to fixed term exclusions, the methods used to improve attendance levels in Leeds, the procedures in place to compare attainment levels between authorities and the strategies which had been established to ensure that attainment targets were met in the future;
- Members requested a list of Leeds' statistical neighbours;
- Members made enquiries into the existence of targets for those young people on vocational pathways. In response, the Chief Executive of Education Leeds assured the Board that Members' comments on the issue would be taken into consideration;
- The Board enquired about the role of Area Management Boards (AMBs) in terms of provision for those young people who had been excluded from school and asked that information relating to the role of AMBs in Leeds was provided to Members for consideration;
- Members emphasised the fact that target based information, as detailed within the report, could not solely illustrate educational attainment and

discussed how the statistics within the report could be revised in order to gauge performance in a more holistic way;

- In conclusion, the Chair suggested that the Scrutiny Board's first meeting of the new municipal year could be used to reflect on some fundamental issues within the Board's remit.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a). That the information contained within the report and appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the issues identified by the Board as potential areas for further scrutiny be noted.

**104 The Implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority - Inquiry Session One**

Further to Minute No. 93, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007, a report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the information to be considered as part of the first formal session of the Board's inquiry into the implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority.

The Chair opened the debate by stating that this inquiry demonstrated the potential of Overview and Scrutiny to assist the Council and Executive with policy development, and to afford non executive Members the opportunity to shape the delivery of services.

Appended to the report for Members' information were the agreed terms of reference for the inquiry in addition to a report from Education Leeds which provided the Board with information about the legislative changes which had occurred and what the introduction of Trust Schools would mean in practice.

Chris Edwards, Chief Executive, Dirk Gilleard, Deputy Chief Executive and Pat Toner, Strategic Manager – Human Resources, all of Education Leeds, in addition to Patrick Murphy of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and Jack Jackson of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) were all in attendance to answer Members' questions and to submit evidence to the Board.

Having received a brief overview of the information detailed within the report from Education Leeds, the Chair invited the trade union representatives present to submit their views regarding the implications of the introduction of Trust Schools in Leeds. In summary, the following issues were raised:-

- The admissions arrangements which could be adopted by Trust Schools and how such policies could impact upon other schools in the area;
- The governance arrangements for Trust Schools and how the levels of community involvement in such arrangements would be affected;
- The impact upon the terms and conditions of service for employees working within Trust schools;
- The effect that the introduction of Trust Schools would have upon the standard of education delivered throughout Leeds.



A question and answer session then ensued which related to the possible impact that the introduction of Trust Schools may have upon the Local Authority. The main areas of debate were as follows:-

- The implications arising from the potential increase in the diversity of education provision in Leeds following the introduction of Trust Schools and the extent to which Trust Schools would have the ability to maintain an individual ethos;
- The ways in which Trust Schools and their partners would respond directly to the specific needs within their local community;
- How Garforth Community College in partnership with Trinity and All Saints Higher Education College had been identified as one of the pathfinder projects established to develop ideas about how the Trust arrangements could work;
- The impact of the proposed mixed economy of education provision in Leeds and the wide ranging implications that such a model could have;
- The potential for Trust Schools to operate over a number of Local Authorities and how such an arrangement would work in practice;
- The changing role of the Local Authority from the provider to the commissioner of education services and the implications of the shift in role;
- The form of governance arrangements which would be adopted by Trust Schools, whether this could lead to a decrease in community involvement in such schools and the extent to which governors' links to local schools would be maintained;
- The ways in which Trust Schools would operate their admissions policies, how such policies would function in relation to the Schools Admissions Code and the ways in which the admissions appeals process for Trust Schools would be administered in Leeds.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the issues raised during the first formal session of the Board's inquiry into the implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority be incorporated into the draft version of the Board's final report.

(Councillor Renshaw left the meeting at 10.55 a.m. during the consideration of this item and Mrs S Knights left the meeting at 11.30 a.m. at the conclusion of this item)

#### **105 Annual Report on Standards in Leeds Schools and Biannual Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern**

Further to Minute No. 49, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006, Members received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which introduced two reports from Education Leeds entitled, 'Annual Report on Standards in Leeds Primary Schools and Biannual Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern' and 'Annual Report on Standards in Leeds High Schools and Biannual Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern', both of which had been previously submitted to Executive Board for consideration. Also appended for Members' information was a report from the Royal Society

entitled, 'A degree of concern? UK first degrees in science, technology and mathematics' to which Members had referred at a previous meeting.

Chris Edwards, Chief Executive of Education Leeds and Dirk Gilleard, Deputy Chief Executive of Education Leeds were in attendance to answer Members' questions.

Having received a brief overview of the report from the Royal Society, Members discussed the issues arising from the current lack of skilled people in the fields of science, technology and mathematics and questioned how the situation could be addressed.

Following Members' enquiries into the reasons why attainment levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 had declined and the actions which were being taken to address the issue, the Board was advised that such a trend had been partly due to rigorous assessment in Leeds. A discussion relating to the assessment practices undertaken by other Local Authorities then ensued. In conclusion, the Board identified the decline in attainment at Key Stage 1 and the reasons for such a decline as an area for further scrutiny.

The Board made specific reference to the ethnic groups which had experienced a decline in attainment levels at Key Stage 1, enquired about the reasons for such a decline and the actions being taken to address the issue. In response, Members noted that the methods used to address the situation had focussed upon personalised intervention and learned that the reasons for such a decline often related to the length of time an individual had been in the country and the economic background of the young person. The Board then discussed the provision in place to support the variety of languages spoken in schools since the Community Language Team had disbanded.

With regard to the summary of Ofsted reports for both Primary and High schools, Members discussed the ways in which the Board could interface with those schools which had recently taken part in the inspection process and suggested that further consideration could be given to the most practical and appropriate ways in which the Board could liaise with representatives from such schools. Members also proposed that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector could be invited to a future meeting of the Board in order to discuss the issues arising from the inspection process in Leeds.

The Board then discussed the issues arising from the summary reports for those schools which fell within the 'Extended Partnerships' category. Having noted the reasons why certain schools were listed in this category, Members considered the ways in which schools undertaking the Ofsted inspection process could maximise their results.

Following consideration of Annex 2 to both the reports designated as exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(1) and 10.4(2), which were considered in private at the conclusion of this agenda item, it was

**RESOLVED –**

- (a). That the contents of the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the reasons for the decline in attainment levels in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 be identified as a potential area for further scrutiny by the Board;
- (c). That further consideration be given to the ways in which the Board can appropriately interface with schools who have recently undergone the Ofsted inspection process, and that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector be invited to a future meeting of the Board in order to discuss the issues arising from the Ofsted inspection process in Leeds.

**106 Work Programme**

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

Appended to the report for Members' information was the current version of the Board's Work Programme, an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2007 which related to the Board's remit, together with the minutes from the Executive Board meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2007 and the minutes from the Leeds Admission Forum meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2006.

Following Members' comments concerning the draft Scrutiny Board inquiry report into Adoption in Leeds, which had been previously circulated to Members for consideration, the Board was asked to forward any suggested revisions to the Principal Scrutiny Adviser.

In response to enquiries, Members were advised that the draft Scrutiny Board inquiry report into Youth Services was intended to be circulated to Members prior to the March 2007 meeting of the Board for consideration at the pre-meeting, with formal approval scheduled for April 2007.

**RESOLVED –** That the contents of the Board's Work Programme, as appended to the report, be noted.

(Mr C Macpherson left the meeting at 12.30 p.m. during the consideration of this item)

**107 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at 9.30 a.m.  
(Pre-meeting scheduled for 9.00 a.m.)

(Meeting concluded at 12.32 p.m.)

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MONDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY, 2007**

**PRESENT:** Councillor G Driver in the Chair  
Councillors B Anderson, J Bale,  
P Grahame, B Lancaster and T Leadley  
Apologies Councillor R Pryke

### **75 Late Items**

The Chair indicated that in accordance with his powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, he had agreed to allow Councillor Illingworth to circulate an e-mail dated 5<sup>th</sup> February 2007 on the subject of Information Management within the Council, and to also speak briefly on this item (Agenda Item 6, Minute No.77 refers).

### **76 Declaration of Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **77 Development of Information Management in Leeds - Update**

Further to Minute No 47, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2006, and Minute No 55, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006, the Committee considered a joint report submitted by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Chief Officer, Executive Support, updating Members on progress in implementing the recommendations contained in the Inquiry Report dated 27<sup>th</sup> April 2006 of the former Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services) relating to Information Management within the Council.

Mark Turnbull, Legal and Democratic Services and Lee Hemsworth, Chief Executive's Department, attended the meeting and responded to Members' queries and comments.

Later, in a follow-up to his concerns previously expressed to the Committee in November 2006 regarding access to information held by the Council, Councillor Illingworth addressed the Committee. He confirmed that in his view the officers report did indeed indicate that acceptable progress had been made in this area.

In brief summary, the main areas of discussion were:-

- The Committee noted that the development of an appropriate, corporate approach to information management was being developed by the Council as part of a wider strategic agenda around Information and Knowledge

Management. The report outlined four strategic drivers highlighted as important reasons for developing this agenda. These four drivers were:

- To support better decision-making
  - To promote efficiency and effectiveness
  - To meet legislative and regulatory requirements
  - To provide corporate 'memory'
- Whilst these strategic drivers were important considerations for the Council in determining the need for an Information and Knowledge Management agenda within the organisation, the final report of the former Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services) also rightly argued that in the first instance the Council needed to invest in its Information Governance structure at all levels within the organisation.

In this regard, the report noted the priorities for development over an 18 month period were focussed on developing this required governance. These priorities were:

- To develop and undertake Information Audits across functional areas adopting ISO 15489 methodology
- To develop corporate metadata standards utilising the national e-GMS standards
- To develop and implement a corporate Document Image Processing (DIP) solution.

The Committee felt that there was an important distinction to be drawn between Information Governance, which was about having proper systems in place to control access to information and deal appropriately and responsively to requests for information, and Information Management, which concerned the best and most appropriate methods of storing, cross-referencing and retrieving information;

- The Committee accepted that the development of a corporate approach to information management was a complex and long term project. There had been good progress made in a number of areas and that work undertaken to date provided a sound foundation on which to build.
- The Committee acknowledged that the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee had within its terms of reference the remit to review the adequacy of the Council's Corporate Governance. It was also noted that this Committee was due an update report on Information and Knowledge Management. The Committee indicated that it would wish to consider the outcome of that meeting in order to reassure itself that progress continued to be made.
- The Committee also acknowledged that there were capacity issues which were being addressed as part of the Council Change programme. The Committee felt that such a huge agenda should be adequately resourced, and recommended that the appropriate Director be given an

explicit remit for this function, and also recommended that a Lead Member was identified to take up the political mantle of Information and Knowledge Management .

The Committee queried the need to engage consultants in this area, feeling that the work could be adequately performed in-house, with appropriate resources being made available, and utilising the knowledge and experience of the Council and its partner organisations.

- With regard to how the Council manages Freedom of Information requests, the Committee was satisfied that overall the Council had a robust system for both dealing with requests made to the Council and supporting colleagues in their practitioner role. However, it was felt that currently there were too many inconsistencies in practice across different Departments.
- The Committee noted that for some requests, there were potentially six different access regimes to be considered, some of which the Information Commissioner had jurisdiction over and others for which he did not. This was confusing for both Members and officers. It was requested therefore that the Director of Legal Services issue a briefing note on how each of these six regimes are managed and the relationship between them;
- The Committee discussed the recommendation made last year by Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services) that the Director of Legal and Democratic Services make appropriate representations to the Secretary of State that the new code for employees should require, at the very least, Directors, who were now taking decisions under delegated powers, to disclose their interests. The Committee was advised that the consultation on the new proposed officer code of conduct had now closed, and that it would appear that the DCLG might now wait until the consultation on the changes to the Members' Code and Standards Board changes are finalised. The proposed new code stated that employees would have to comply with their authority's requirements for registering or declaring interests, so this may be left to the Council to decide.

The Committee reiterated that at the very least Directors, and those officers who have delegated powers from Directors, disclose their interests.

- As part of their recommendation monitoring role, the Committee made the following comments with regard to progress on meeting the recommendations made by Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services) in April 2006:-

### ***Recommendation 1***

***That the Head of Information and Knowledge Management seek the views of the following Officers and Management Groups on their role in supporting the Vision and delivery of the information management agenda as described and that the outcome of these discussions be reported to the appropriate Scrutiny Board at an early meeting in the new municipal year:***

- ***the Chief Officer (HR)***
- ***the Chief Officer (ICT)***
- ***the Council-wide Performance Management Group***
- ***the Corporate Governance Officers Group***

Progress on this is satisfactory and ongoing

### ***Recommendation 2***

***That the capacity issues outlined in the evidence presented to the Board and the costs and potential savings of the Vision for information management be considered further by the Council's Corporate Management Team and that the Head of Information and Knowledge Management report back to the appropriate Scrutiny Board at an early meeting in the new municipal year.***

Further information on this is required

### ***Recommendation 3***

***That the Director of Legal and Democratic Services explore whether improvements could be made to the Council's procedures which would enable the FOI and DPA rights to be used in a more proactive way to engage with clients and develop trust in the Council as an organisation.***

Progress on this is satisfactory and ongoing

### ***Recommendation 4***

***That the Head of Information and Knowledge Management submit to the appropriate Scrutiny Board later in the new municipal year a progress report on implementing the Vision for the development of information management within the Council.***

This recommendation is fulfilled by the Committee's consideration of today's report.

### ***Recommendation 5***



***That the Director of Legal and Democratic Services make appropriate representations to the Secretary of State that the new code for employees should require at the very least, Directors, who were now taking decisions under delegated powers to disclose their interests.***

See earlier bullet-point on this subject.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the report be noted, and the officers and Councillor Illingworth be thanked for their input;
- (b) That the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development produce a draft summary report of the Committee's deliberations for submission to the March meeting of the Committee.

**78 Performance Monitoring - Quarter 3 Highlight Report**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report relating to the Quarter 3 performance highlight reports submitted to the Council's officer Corporate Priority Boards, and drawing their attention to particular significant performance indicators.

Steve Clough, Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement, Chief Executive's Department, attended the meeting and responded to Members' queries and comments. In brief summary, the main areas of discussion related to the following topics:-

- Street lighting repairs;
- The number of families placed into temporary accommodation. It was felt that this should be referred to the Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing) for further consideration\*;
- Fuel poverty, and the effects of recent energy price rises;
- Numbers of rough sleepers;
- Management 360° feedback indicator – Members to be supplied with more detailed information;
- BV-201 – The number of adults and older people receiving direct payments per 100,000 population – this was being looked at by the Scrutiny Board (Health and Adult Social Care);

**RESOLVED –** That the report be noted, and Scrutiny Board Chairs consider whether there are any issues, other than the ones highlighted above (including \*above), which they would wish their Boards to consider further.

**79 Work Programme**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted the Committee's current work programme, updated to reflect decisions taken at previous meetings, together with a relevant extract of the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions and a copy of the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Monday, 5th March, 2007

**RESOLVED** – That, subject to any changes necessary as a result of today's meeting, the Committee's work programme be approved and accepted.

**80 Dates and Times of Future Meetings**

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2007

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007

Both at 10.00 am (Pre-meetings at 9.30 am)



Originator: Kate Arscott

Tel: 247 4189

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## Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

### Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 8 March 2007

Subject: Members' questions

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<b>Electoral Wards Affected:</b>	<b>Specific Implications For:</b>
	Ethnic minorities <input type="checkbox"/>
	Women <input type="checkbox"/>
	Disabled people <input type="checkbox"/>
	Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/>

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Last year, each scrutiny board was required to include a standard item on its agenda to enable members to ask topical questions of the relevant senior officers, without the need for a full inquiry or written reports.
- 1.2 Members' questions is no longer a required item for each scrutiny board meeting. However, the facility remains available for those boards that wish to do so to ask questions of the relevant director(s) at board meetings.
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) found this facility to be a useful way of developing a positive ongoing dialogue about current topics with senior officers, without the need for detailed work on every issue.
- 1.4 Following discussion at the board's meeting in July, members agreed to retain the facility but agreed that members' questions would be included as an agenda item only if prior notice of questions has been received by the time that the agenda for the meeting is published (normally eight days before the meeting).
- 1.5 The scrutiny support unit has received prior notice of a question for this meeting, and the Director of Children's Services or her representative will be attending the meeting to respond.

## 2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the board identifies any issues for further scrutiny arising from the members' questions session.

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## Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

### Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 8 March 2007

### Subject: Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs)

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2006, the Scrutiny Board received a formal response and action plan in response to the scrutiny inquiry report on the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs). The Board established a working group to monitor progress against the action plan in more detail.
- 1.2 The attached reports provide a summary of the working group's findings and conclusions (appendix 1) and a full update from Education Leeds on progress against the action plan presented in July 2006 (appendix 2).

## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is requested to consider the attached reports and decide:
- Whether to make any further recommendations arising from the working group's findings:
  - Whether any further monitoring of the action plan by the Scrutiny Board is required.

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**SILCs working group report to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)**

**Membership**

**Councillor Bale**  
**Councillor Kendall**  
**Mr Britten**  
**Ms Foote**  
**Mr Hales**

**Summary**

The SILCs working group met on three occasions during September and October 2006.

The first session focused on recommendations covering the operation of the SILCs themselves, including pupil numbers, accommodation, partnerships, outreach, finance and the North West SILC.

The second session focused on the remaining recommendations, covering broader issues of communications, training, parental involvement and consultation.

During the working group's discussions, members discussed extensively the levels of public and professional awareness of an overall strategy and direction for the future of special educational needs provision. They felt this needed articulating more clearly. As a result, a third session was held which specifically considered the experience of Norfolk County Council in conducting a consultation on their future strategy for SEN provision.

Some members of the working group also visited the East SILC and the North West SILC to see how practice on the ground was developing. In addition, the Chair of the Scrutiny Board was invited to attend part of a joint planning day with SILC principals and mainstream heads.

Overall, working group members were pleased to see evidence of the amount of in-depth work going on which would tackle the issues raised by the inquiry. Members felt that there was evidence of a more coherent strategic approach to the SILCs emerging.

However, there were some specific areas that were highlighted as key to the continued successful development of the SILCs strategy in the future. These are:

- The need for a clear and well-managed debate with all stakeholders about the principles and future direction of the SILC strategy. This should lead to the production of a baseline document to communicate the strategy and future areas for development to everyone, as a context to individual restructuring proposals in the future.

- The need for training in mainstream schools to equip all staff to deal appropriately with children with the levels of special educational needs that are now routinely met in mainstream schools. This capacity building is crucial to the successful development of the SILCs approach.
- The need to develop a sustainable financial model for SEN provision in Leeds

### **Session One**

The working group felt that if the lessons are to be learned from the implementation of the SILCs, and particularly the North West SILC, then there needs to be a clear and well-managed debate about the future, including the accommodation strategy and use of resources, involving **all** stakeholders.

If the strategy can be well articulated and widely understood (including the commitment that some provision will remain whilst there is demand from parents), it will provide a context within which people can understand individual proposals for future changes in provision. We recognise that further changes will be needed over time.

We were pleased to see evidence of the detailed work being undertaken to review funding models and pupil number projections, and stress that these need to be kept under ongoing review, to ensure that the funding model progresses and that pupil number projections remain robust.

### **Session Two**

Training continues to be a big issue for schools generally but particularly, in this context, training to improve staff awareness and competence in dealing with children's special educational needs in mainstream settings.

This is a national issue, identified as a key finding in the Parliamentary Select Committee's report on special educational needs, but is crucial if staff are to have the confidence to support and deliver the SILCs strategy.

We asked officers to feed back our strong support for ensuring that SEN was included as a key feature of the School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) and any other relevant teacher training programmes delivered locally.

We also discussed the demands on SILC staff to develop new skills in training colleagues and providing outreach support, as opposed to hands-on teaching. This was in addition to their own development needs, as each of the area SILCs moved from specialist to generic SEN provision.

We heard that one excellent approach was to develop networks, such as the autism network, but that it was important that such opportunities were widely available to relevant staff.



In terms of communication, we heard that Manchester City Council's Parent Partnership Service had produced a useful series of documents for parents and carers, on the special educational needs support.

We discussed the need for work to be done to improve communication with parents about their individual children's needs, including the need to rebuild confidence in local authority services such as Parent Partnership.

We also heard about the approaches adopted by Norfolk and Bradford to communicating their SEN vision for the future.

We stressed the need for improvements in communications both at an individual level and in relation to the strategic development of the SILCs.

### **Session Three**

At this extra session, we received information about the review of SEN provision carried out in Norfolk, and the consultation process that informed the outcomes of the review.

We felt that there were some useful examples of good practice, and were encouraged by the number of parents and young people who responded to the consultation.

In particular, we noted that in both cases, specific proposals for reorganising SEN provision were able to be set within an overall strategic context. We felt that this was an important lesson for Leeds.

We also highlighted the development of the Independent Living Project as a good local example of the involvement of people with learning disabilities and their parents and carers in planning strategic change.

### **SILC Visits**

The following issues were raised during the visits, which we felt need to be addressed:

- Transport is an issue, including the length of time children spend on buses in some cases
- The lack of quality local further education provision for pupils with SEN, with many pupils ending up at provision out of the authority
- The ongoing shortage of speech and language therapy
- Partnerships - a) the potential for some pupils to move off the SILC roll (as had happened with the ending of the Broadgate partnership); and b) the geographic distribution of partnerships

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Originator: Carol Jordan

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**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS  
REPORT TO SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)**

**SUBJECT: PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ACTION PLAN APPROVED BY SCRUTINY BOARD ON 13<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2006 IN RESPONSE TO THE SPECIALIST INCLUSIVE LEARNING CENTRE INQUIRY**

<p><b>Electoral wards Affected:</b></p>    	<p><b>Specific Implications For:</b></p> <p>Ethnic Minorities <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Women <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disabled People <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To update Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) of progress on the agreed actions in response to the Scrutiny inquiry into the specialist inclusive learning centres (SILCs)

**2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 A fall in the number of pupils on the roll of the North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre led to a significant budget shortfall and a managed staffing reduction in 2005. This caused significant concern to staff and parents and led to an inquiry by Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People).
- 2.2 Education Leeds responded to the recommendations of that inquiry with an action plan. A copy of the action plan is appended (Appendix 1) with a brief progress report against each recommendation. The SILC Strategy Group Strategic Objectives (Appendix 2) also reflect the Scrutiny Board recommendations.

**3.0 MAIN ISSUES**

- 3.1 The Scrutiny action plan has been refreshed to reflect recent developments.
- 3.2 A significant issue reflected in the Scrutiny inquiry was the information available to

stakeholders, including parents.

- 3.3 A document giving general information about the SILCs and SILC strategy is currently being produced. Each SILC has reviewed its communication with parents and is in the process of making further improvements with the support of Education Leeds Communication Team. The Parent Partnership Service has established a Parent Forum in the North West SILC which will shortly be followed by similar Forums in the other SILCs.
- 3.4 The Early Support Programme (ESP), a central government initiative, coordinates and develops information and support to the parents of young children with disabilities. The Children's Information Service of Children Leeds has developed a Children and Families Directory.
- 3.5 A Choice Advisor has recently been appointed to the Parent Partnership Service to support parents to make choices at key transition periods. The Service is also appointing an information officer.
- 3.6 The communication strategy is being reviewed over the Spring and Summer terms so as to ensure comprehensive communication is available to all stakeholders.
- 3.7 Over the Spring term we are gathering information on the specific numbers per area of Leeds educated on site in the SILCs, at Partnership Schools and in resourced provision over the last three years. These will enable us to predict future needs. Once this piece of work is completed further consultation will be required.
- 3.8 The current and anticipated demand for partnership provision continues to be monitored. The identified trend for primary schools being increasingly inclusive and therefore reducing the demand for primary partnership places continues. Secondary partnerships are proving very popular and the current Building Schools for the Future programme will bring a significant increase in the number of places. Demand will continue to be carefully monitored.
- 3.9 Five out of the six SILCs have recently been externally inspected by Ofsted. The East SILC was judged to be good with outstanding features, the West SILC, satisfactory with good features and the North West SILC and South SILC good. The BESD SILC has only recently undergone an inspection and a draft report is awaited.
- 3.91 In all of the Ofsted Inspections the quality of the inclusive opportunities provided by partnership working and the progress of pupils in partnership has been commented upon and described as outstanding.
- 3.92 A key focus of our work is to re-align the SILC Strategy, Inclusion Strategy and No Child Left Behind project into one overarching strategy. This will provide a greater coordination of approach towards the city's vulnerable pupils.

#### 4.0 **CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 Communication with all stakeholders, including parents is a key development area over 2007/08. A number of initiatives are already in place. Additionally a

comprehensive communication strategy is planned over the next year.

- 4.2 SILCs are prioritising the information they provide to parents, in order to improve communication and keep parents fully informed.
- 4.3 External evaluation by Ofsted has positively endorsed the outstanding practice in our partnership arrangements.
- 4.4 Re-aligning the key strategies across Integrated Children's Services into one comprehensive plan will bring greater clarity and coherence for stakeholders, including schools, parents and colleagues across Children Leeds.
- 4.5 Good overall progress is being made in addressing the recommendations made by the Scrutiny inquiry.

## 5.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) are asked to:

- note the contents of this report and endorse the good progress made to date
- endorse the refreshed action plan

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**RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)**  
**SPECIALIST INCLUSIVE LEARNING CENTRES (SILCS)**  
**Action Plan**

Recommendations	Actions proposed	Responsibility	Timescale
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p> <p><b>That Education Leeds reviews the funding model for the SILCs, to reflect changing patterns of service delivery and the levels of funding required to support them</b></p>	<p><i>SILC Strategy Group Priority 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding proposals have been agreed by SILC Strategy Group. Any proposed changes will be progressed through School Forum.</li> </ul>	<p>Paul Barker – Team Leader Integrated Children's Services</p>	<p>Initial audit by April 2007. Fundamental review completed and recommendations for change implemented by April 2008.</p>
<p><i>Progress report: Jan 2007 – An initial audit indicated the need for a more fundamental review of funding to SILC's, Partnership Schools and resourced provision needs to be undertaken over the next two terms. Recommendations and proposals for change will be taken through School's Forum ready for full implementation by April 2008. Given the scale of the work required to establish a future model for funding that will support future developments a new timescale of April 2008 is proposed.</i></p>			
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p><b>That Education Leeds carries out further analysis of the projected future numbers of pupils and their distribution between partnerships and SILC sites, in order to inform further work on funding, accommodation and partnership development.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over the spring term 2007 we are gathering information on the specific numbers per area of Leeds educated on the sites of SILC's, in Partnership Schools and resourced provision over the last three years. These will enable us to predict future needs. Once this piece of work is completed further consultation will be required.</li> </ul>	<p>Paul Barker - Team Leader Integrated Children's Services</p>	<p>Paper for consultation available by end of Summer term 2007.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p><b>That Education Leeds considers the place of partnership models such as Hollybush where specialised SILC units are sited on mainstream campuses within the overall accommodation strategy for the SILCs.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing partnerships such as Hollybush are a core part of the SILC Strategy.</li> <li>• As part of the planned review over 2007 present and future needs in partnership schools will be mapped out across areas. Transparency in relation to present provision and proposed future models will be highlighted in the consultation papers.</li> </ul>	<p>Paul Barker - Team Leader Integrated Children's Services</p>	<p>Paper for consultation available by end of Summer term 2007.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p><b>That the Director of Children's Services and Education Leeds produce clear, co-ordinated and updated information, in a readily accessible manner, to guide parents and professionals through the maze of services for children with special educational needs.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To work in partnership with Children's Services to prepare information for parents that enables them to make informed choices in relation to services for children with special educational needs.</li> <li>• Review and update the written information currently available to parents and review the circulation and availability of this information.</li> <li>• Review the web based information available to parents in order that it might be more easily accessed.</li> </ul>	<p>Frances Bernstein, Planning Team, Education Leeds</p> <p>Wendy Winterburn – Team Leader Integrated Children's Services</p>	<p>September 2007</p>



*Progress report, Jan 2007 – Amendments have been made to the Children and Families directory and DDA and inclusion awareness training has been delivered to the Children’s Information Service staff. A range of information for parents has been developed through the Early Support Programme and in recognition that this only provided national information, a local information section has been drafted. The Parent Partnership Service is represented on the Steering Group for the Leeds Parenting Strategy. A proposal to develop a Parent Partnership website is under consultation. Further information will be made available to parents over the Summer term as new models of service delivery are agreed.*

<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <p><b>That the Director of Children’s Services and Education Leeds devise a programme of training/ visits to enable professionals to gain first hand experience of current inclusion practice.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Leeds to liaise with colleagues in the Acute Trust to arrange an appropriate professional development programme for those professionals with a key role in the early support for the parents of children with disabilities.</li> <li>• A comprehensive training programme will be available to professions over the summer and autumn term 2007 that raises awareness of current Inclusion practice and enable professionals from services and agencies across Education Leeds and Children’s Leeds to gain first hand experience.</li> </ul>	<p>Frances Bernstein, Education Leeds</p> <p>Jean Basson – Integrated Children’s Services SILC Strategy group</p>	<p>January 2007</p>
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*Progress report, Jan 2007 – Meetings have been held with acute trust managers. Significant changes to initial and in-service training for staff was reported which will be further reviewed. Revised parent information documents will be shared with acute trust colleagues. Colleagues from the Child Development Centres are increasingly taking opportunities to visit inclusive settings. Work is presently being planned with social services and health to increase training opportunities for professionals.*

<p><b>Recommendation 6</b></p> <p><b>That Education Leeds leads in developing a communications strategy for the SILCs Strategy, to ensure that parents are engaged in the ongoing development of the SILCs and also kept informed of progress and choices in relation to their own child's educational provision.</b></p>	<p><i>SILC Strategy Group Priority 8</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce a city wide SILC Newsletter</li> <li>• Each SILC to produce a newsletter to share successes and achievements</li> <li>• Each SILC to identify a colleague to keep EL Communications Team informed of media opportunities</li> <li>• Review and update appropriate websites</li> </ul>	<p>Michael Purches, SILC Strategy Group / Dee Reid, Education Leeds</p> <p>Wendy Winterburn – Integrated Children's Services</p>	<p>March 2006 (date to be reviewed in September 07)</p> <p>September 2007</p>
<p><i>Progress report, Jan 2007 – Plan for a city wide SILC newsletter revised with a new plan to incorporate SILC news items into established newsletters, bulletins etc. News items to be generated at monthly SILC strategy group meetings and passed to Communications Team. The same process to be used to generate possible media opportunities. Each SILC has either developed a newsletter or has one in development. Further advice and support is to be given by Communications Team after half term to improve information sharing with parents. A Choice advisor and Parent Support Advisers have recently been appointed to support parents who find it difficult to choose appropriate schools for their children. At the first meeting of the SILC Forum it was agreed that parental representation will be sought. A project is underway to revise and update the Education Leeds website. Information leaflets for parents in relation to choice of placements will be further developed over the Summer term.</i></p>			
<p><b>Recommendation 7</b></p> <p><b>That Education Leeds considers how the outreach role of the SILCs can be further supported and developed.</b></p>	<p><i>SILC Strategy Group Priority 3e</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach services for pupils with Physical medicals needs are in place, supported by a Service Level agreement</li> <li>• The East SILC has been commissioned to manage the hospital and home teaching service. The service specification and service</li> </ul>	<p>Paul Barker – Team Leader Integrated Children's Services</p> <p>Gary Nixon – Team</p>	<p>March 2006 ( to be reviewed in September 06)</p>

	<p>level agreement are being finalised for April 2007.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrangements are presently being secured to commission the North West SILC to manage the outreach service for pupils with autistic spectrum condition. Again outcomes will be secured through a service level agreement.</li> <li>• Further outreach role of the SILCs in relation to other needs will be defined and agreed by the SILC Strategy Group and SILC Forum over the spring and summer term 2007.</li> <li>• Further consideration will be given over the summer term as to how the SILC's will work alongside the extended service schools in order to provide a complete range of outreach services.</li> <li>• Funding models to support outreach will be agreed with the SILC's, Education Leeds and mainstream schools over the autumn term 2007. Any proposed changes will be progressed through School Forum.</li> </ul>	Leader Integrated Children's Services	April 2007
<p><i>Progress report, Jan 2007 – At this time the Physical and Medical Needs Service is meeting demand. Regular monitoring is built in to ensure the service can meet current and predicted need. Demand for the STARS Service (for pupils with needs on the autistic spectrum) is growing. Plans are in place to address the capacity issues in relation to this service. The hospital and home tuition service is in the final stages of being transferred over to the East SILC. The final service specification and service level agreement will be in place for April 2007. Early planning is in place to investigate the requirements in the North West and West SILC's in relation to outreach activities for secondary aged pupils with moderate learning needs. An audit exploring the demand for further outreach support services is planned later in this academic year, this will also consider and consult upon funding levels and approaches.</i></p>			

<p><b>Recommendation 8</b></p> <p><b>That Education Leeds facilitates a strategic review of the partnership provision associated with the SILCs and in particular the number of partnerships operated by the North West SILC, informed by future funding, accommodation plans and pupil number projections.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Completed.</b> A review has been carried out based on the number projections as described in Recommendation 2 above.</li> <li>• The review of partnerships in the North West has been completed and as a result one Children's Centre partnership and two primary partnerships have been ended.</li> <li>• Further work in relation to Partnerships as described in recommendation 2 will be conducted over the spring term 2007.</li> </ul>	<p>Paul Barker – Team Leader Integrated Children's Services.</p> <p>Michael Purches, Principal, North West SILC</p>	<p>May 2006</p> <p>May 2006</p> <p>April 2007</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9</b></p> <p><b>That Education Leeds ensures that appropriate and robust professional support in relation to change management is available to all schools subject to reorganisation, in the best interest of the pupils whose educational experience will be affected by the changes taking place. Also that Education Leeds ensures that the resources for this support are explicitly identified when proposals for reorganisation are put forward.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Completed.</b> Since the transformation of special schools in 2004 the Organisational Change Team has been established and has the capacity to support all schools facing a significant change. Education Leeds ensures that resources for this support are explicitly identified when proposals for reorganisation are put forward.</li> </ul>	<p>Organisational Change Team</p>	

<p><b>Recommendation 10</b></p> <p><b>That Education Leeds continues to provide the support and resources that are required for the leadership and management of the NW SILC in order to continue to build the trust and confidence of all in the future provision of excellent education and care for its pupils.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Task Group, led by a Quality Assurance Adviser, and consisting of senior leaders from the SILC and Education Leeds has been operating since September 2005.</li> <li>• Organisational Change Team support to the Leadership Team and Governors</li> <li>• Consultant support to SILC Management Team</li> </ul>	<p>Helen Pemberton, Quality Assurance Advisor, Education Leeds</p> <p>Andrew Hobbs, Organisational Change Team Leader, Education Leeds</p> <p>Paul Barker - Team Leader Integrated Children's Services.</p>	<p>Initial priorities ran until July 2006. New priorities in place.</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Sept 06 – Aug 07</p>
<p><i>Progress report, Jan 2007 – The SILC task Group continues with revised objectives. Organisational Change Team and consultant support continue to be provided. The SILC has made excellent progress in the last year and was judged to be 2 overall ( on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being the highest)at the recent OfSTED inspection.</i></p>			
<p><b>Recommendation 11</b></p> <p><b>That the Director of Children's Services and Education Leeds work with partners to ensure the following issues which emerged during our inquiry are given further attention, and that they report back to us on the action being taken on each issue:</b></p>			

<p><b>11. (1) Clear transition plans for pupils at all stages, developed in conjunction with parents</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure current support for young children with severe and complex needs moving in to early years provision and then on to a school setting is established</li> <li>• Ensure that all pupils across the SILC's have personalised learning plans and programmes that support the continuation of their learning across transition.</li> <li>• Review primary secondary transfer processes with particular reference to pupils with the most severe and complex needs in all settings, including the BESD continuum</li> <li>• Progress Quality Inclusive Pathways project to improve 14+ offer to young people with lifelong support needs.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate pathways and curriculum opportunities are available in future 14 – 19 provision</li> <li>• Ensure secure arrangements are in place for all pupils for transition reviews and planning for all pupils with complex needs transferring at the end of key stages 2 and 3.</li> </ul>	<p>Andrea Richardson, Early Years Team, Children's Services Paul Barker – Integrated Children's Services</p> <p>Paul Barker – Team Leader Integrated Children's Services</p> <p>Pete Vickers, VINE Manager Children's Services Gary Milner – 14 – 19 Co-ordinator</p> <p>Margery Page – Team Leader Psychology and Assessment Service</p>	<p>April 2007</p> <p>September 2007</p> <p>July 2007</p> <p>July 2007</p>
<p><i>Progress report, Jan 2007 – Early Years Service are to implement a longer term structure for transition into early years settings from April 2007. Primary to Secondary transfer identified as a priority for further action in Education Leeds Draft Strategic Plan. Quality Inclusive Pathways launched on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007.</i></p>			

<p><b>11. (2) The inclusion of information about the SILCs in admissions information and on the admissions preference forms.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions information in relation to admission to the SILC's, partnerships and resourced provision will be embedded into new admissions arrangements and guidance from September 2007.</li> <li>• Guidance and information about admission to SILC's is being reviewed over the summer term 2007. Up-dated information will be published.</li> <li>• A Choice Adviser works within the parent partnership service to give independent advice and support to parents in relation to admissions</li> <li>• The year 5 process will be further reviewed as described in 11.(1) above</li> </ul>	<p>Viv Buckland, Admissions and Transport Team Leader, Education Leeds</p> <p>Wendy Winterburn - Team Leader Integrated Children's Services Paul Barker – Team Leader Integrated Children's Services</p>	<p>June 2006</p> <p>October 2006</p>
<p><i>Progress report, January 2007- Admissions information reviewed annually. Choice advisors have recently been appointed to support parents in making choices at key transition times. Closer working between admissions to mainstream provision and specialist provision identified as a activity in the Education Leeds Draft Strategic Plan</i></p>			
<p><b>11.(3) Ensuring that parents are kept informed from time to time of changes in policy or legislation which may affect the choices open to them for their children's education.</b> And: <b>11. (4) Ensuring that information on services available to parents incorporates non-statutory services.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the processes employed by Parent Partnership Service to carry out this statutory function.</li> <li>• Communication Strategy for parents to be reviewed over the summer term 2007. This will incorporate up-dating parents on policy and legislation that may effect their choices and information in relation to non-statutory services available to parents across Leeds</li> </ul>	<p>Wendy Winterburn – Team Leader Integrated Children's Services Paul Barker – Team Leader Integrated Children's Services</p>	<p>September 2007</p>

<i>Progress report, Jan 2007- The Parent Partnership Service has undertaken an internal review and realigned resources to provide a more coordinated approach. The Parent Partnership Service is recruiting an information officer to specifically support the communication strategy.</i>			
<b>11. (5) Development of the Parent Partnership Service's profile with SILC parents.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the current interface between SILCs, parents and the Parent Partnership Service which now has an identified officer for each SILC</li> <li>Further analysis will be conducted over the Summer term 2007 that reflects any further changes that may be required in relation to future delivery models for the parent partnership service</li> </ul>	Wendy Winterburn – Team Leader Integrated Children's Services	Initial work – September 2006 Finalised September 2007
<i>Progress report, Jan 2007- Each SILC now has a dedicated Parent Partnership Service officer. A parent forum has been established in the North West and will be followed with similar forums in the other SILCs.</i>			
<b>11. (6) The possibility of the direct payments scheme being applied to children's care needs in education.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for this to be explored with Social Services colleagues regarding the direct payments scheme and an options paper to be presented to the Leadership Team of Education Leeds to agree future action</li> </ul>	Paul Barker - – Team Leader Integrated Children's Services	July 2007
<i>Progress report, Jan 2007- There is no specific progress to report with regards to this complex issue. Direct payments have been raised in connection with the development of extended services and the funding of access to these services for pupils with disabilities. It is likely that this issue will be further explored in this context ( linked to 11(8) below)</i>			
<b>11. (7) Reviewing funding to the Portage Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since September 2005 the Portage Team has nearly doubled the number of families receiving services. The need for additional capacity will be reviewed in the Autumn Term 2006.</li> </ul>	Lorraine Farrington, Early Years SEN Team Co-ordinator	October 2006
<i>Progress Report, Jan 2007 – A post within the Team which has not been active for 2 years is to be filled which will result in a 15% increase in capacity. Case load remains high and the waiting list fluctuates. The referral process is being reviewed in order to discuss parents' needs and seek to provide a more flexible offer. The Education Leeds Portage Team are seeking a closer working relationship with the Hawthorne Nursery Portage Team. Further focussed work is required in this area.</i>			



<b>11. (8) Exploring opportunities for the SILCs and their pupils and parents to benefit from the Extended Schools Agenda.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focussed work is required over the Summer term 2007 to ensure that all children attending SILC's benefit from the Extended Schools Agenda</li> <li>• How the work of the SILC's develops in partnership with the extended services agenda will be communicated fully to all Stakeholders once future arrangements are secured.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	Mark Hopkins, Extended Schools Co-ordinator, Education Leeds Paul Barker - Team Leader Integrated Children's Services	Work started June 20 <sup>th</sup> 2006  Action Plan to be drafted by April 2007
<i>Progress report, Jan 2007- An audit of current extended services offered by SILCs has been carried out. A planning day is to be held on March 12<sup>th</sup> 2007 involving all the SILCs and the Learning Communities Team. Following this planning day an action plan will be produced highlighting key actions required.</i>			
<b>11. (9) Tackling contractual barriers to the SILCs working with existing PFI schools.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At this time there are no apparent barriers in relation to this area however any possible barriers are kept under review as we plan PFI builds.</li> </ul>	Shirley Parks – Strategic Manger Education Leeds Paul Barker - Team Leader Integrated Children's Services	Ongoing
<b>11. (10) Clarifying the meaning of '1:1' support to avoid misunderstanding of entitlement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek understanding between Education Leeds and schools of levels of support and appropriate descriptors</li> </ul>	Margery Page - Team Leader Integrated Children's Services	December 2006
<i>Progress report, Jan 2007 – 1:1 support is no longer written in to statements. Specific wording about resourcing levels are only included after discussions with the SILC principal and the parents and there is agreement that the levels are appropriate and deliverable.</i>			

<b>11. (11) Providing opportunities for staff development in both mainstream and SILC settings in relation to inclusion and appropriate curriculum delivery, particularly at secondary level.</b>	<i>SILC Strategic Priority 5b and 5c</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comprehensive staff development programme is planned for 2006-07 that supports this priority.</li> <li>• Consideration is being given to the appointment of additional advisory teachers into the National Strategies team that will support with curriculum development and the personalisation agenda</li> </ul>	Jean Basson Training co-ordinator - Integrated Children's Services SILC Continuing Professional Development Group	Reviewed and in place for September 2007
<p><i>Progress report, Jan 2007- SILC CPD Group have planned a significant professional development activity programme with a focus on skill sharing within and between SILCs through the development of learning teams. A training day for all SILCs was held on 24<sup>th</sup> January. A significant focus of the SILC staff professional development is acquiring the relevant skills to support the development of mainstream staff to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, behavioural needs and disabilities. The training need of mainstream staff continues to be addressed through the Education Leeds training programme which was reviewed by the Scrutiny Working Group. A significant number of programmes are delivered through the National Strategies Team. Additionally the Behaviour and Education support Teams in Bests support training for behaviour across mainstream clusters.</i></p>			
<b>11. (12) Developing an outreach role for staff in experienced partnership schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Recommendation 7. Above</li> <li>• In addition further exploration is being undertaken as to how staff in partnership schools can train, develop and build capacity across the school</li> </ul>	Jean Basson Training co-ordinator - Integrated Children's Services	September 2007
<b>11. (13) Partnership school representation on the SILC Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation on establishing a SILC Forum underway.</li> </ul>	Andrew Hobbs – Change Organisational Team	October 2006
<p><i>Progress report, Jan 2007 – The first meeting of the SILC Forum was held on February 8<sup>th</sup> and involved partnership school representation. The significant interest shown in attending the Forum by partnership schools has resulted in consultation with those schools on creating an opportunity for partnership schools to meet in a forum of their own.</i></p>			

<b>11. (14) Further development of health support to enable the most effective use of specialist resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developments in extending health support through; additional appointments, training of support staff and more flexible deployment of skills overseen by Health Inclusion Group.</li> <li>• Further work is required to identify adequate health support for those young people with complex social, emotional and behavioural needs and those with mental health issues.</li> </ul>	Health Inclusion Group- Chair, Jean Baker, Children's Services Manager East Leeds Primary Care Trust	Ongoing
<i>Progress report, Jan 2007 – Good progress continues through the Health Inclusion Group. The focus over the remainder of the current academic year being aligning health resources to the changing pattern of specialist sites and the development of high care partnerships. In addition further consideration is being given to health support requirements for those young people with acute social, emotional and behavioural needs.</i>			
<b>11. (15) The need for future consultation to inform realistic and challenging discussion of proposals</b>	Linked to recommendations 1, 2 and 3 above. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes of focussed work over the Spring and Summer term 2007 will result in further consultation on future options</li> </ul>	Paul Barker – Paul Barker - Team Leader Integrated Children's Services	September 2007
<b>11. (16) Consider appropriate governance structures to reflect the partnership nature of SILCs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New models of governance arrangements to be explored and proposals built into future consultation papers.</li> </ul>	Richard Smith, Governor Support Team Leader, Education Leeds	September 2007
<i>Progress report, Jan 2007 – Governance arrangements for SILC partnership now part of a larger project developing new governance arrangements for the growing number of collaborative arrangements between schools. Some of these are currently being piloted and if they prove successful should be transferable to SILC settings by September 2007.</i>			

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## SPECIALIST INCLUSIVE LEARNING CENTRES

### STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN – 2006-07

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

*Strategic objective 1 – Funding and Resources*

To develop and agree, following consultation, a revised funding and estate strategy for the SILCs to meet projected needs and demands.

*Strategic objective 2 – Change Leadership and Governance*

To build the capacity of the governance and leadership of SILCs at all levels to ensure the effective change management and implementation of all aspects of the SILC Strategy.

*Strategic objective 3 – Extended and Children's Services*

To create collaborative working practice between the SILCs and other services (Education, Health and Children's Services and voluntary organisations) to meet the needs of all children and young people with more complex special educational needs within the future organisation and provision of Extended Services.

*Strategic objective 4 – Outreach Services and the Capacity to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs*

To provide an outreach service from the SILCs which develops the capacity of mainstream schools to make provision for learners with a wider range of additional needs

*Strategic objective 5 – Children, Young People, Parents and Carers*

To develop programmes and strategies to increase the engagement of children and young people and parents/carers so that they have the opportunity to be involved in decision making processes and feel empowered and valued as partners.

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## Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

### Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 8 March 2007

Subject: The Implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority – Inquiry Session Two

<b>Electoral Wards Affected:</b>	<b>Specific Implications For:</b>
	Ethnic minorities <input type="checkbox"/>
	Women <input type="checkbox"/>
	Disabled people <input type="checkbox"/>
	Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/>

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At the board's December meeting, members agreed to carry out an inquiry into the implications for Leeds City Council of the new legislation relating to Trust Schools. A copy of the agreed terms of reference for the inquiry is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The first session of the inquiry was held at the last Board Meeting on 8 February 2007. The second session of the inquiry was scheduled for this meeting. This session will complete the formal evidence gathering stage of the inquiry.
- 1.3 Session two aims to gather information identified in the terms of reference from several representatives of organizations:
  - Children Leeds
  - The Schools Commissioner
  - Garforth Community College
  - Trinity and All Saints College
  - Temple Moor High School Science College
  - David Young Community Academy

- 1.4 Children Leeds has also provided a report about Trust Schools in the context of the Children's Services authority and partnership working. The report is attached as Appendix 2. The Deputy Director, Children's Services will be attending the meeting to present the report and respond to Members' questions and comments.
- 1.5 In accordance with the terms of reference for the inquiry, information about past experience of LEAs working with Grant Maintained schools has been gathered together in a short briefing paper, attached at Appendix 3.

## **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 The board is requested to consider the issues raised by the second session of this inquiry.



## Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) Inquiry

### The Implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority

#### Terms of reference

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Education and Inspections Bill, which is expected to come into force in the summer of 2007, will enable schools to become Trust schools.
- 1.2 According to the DfES:  
*"Trusts offer schools greater opportunity to secure the support of partners to strengthen their leadership and to develop their own ethos. In doing so, they will build diversity in the school system."*
- 1.3 In September 2006 the government announced 28 pathfinder projects to develop and refine ideas about how Trust arrangements could work for individual schools. A number of different models are envisaged.
- 1.4 Garforth Community College in Leeds, in partnership with Trinity and All Saints Higher Education College, is one of the national pathfinders.
- 1.5 At this stage, it is too early to know how many other schools may wish to explore Trust status in the short to medium term. Many rumours are circulating already. Whatever the situation, the Council will still be seeking to provide locally integrated services to children and young people, and needs to understand the implications of Trust status for this obligation.
- 1.6 At this early stage in the development of the Trusts schools concept, the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) felt it would be timely to look at the implications of Trust schools for Leeds as a Children's Services Authority, to ensure that we can be proactive in responding to the opportunities and any concerns associated with this potentially hugely significant change.
- 1.7 The board hopes that this inquiry will assist the Council in preparing for the impact of the introduction of Trust Schools in the summer of 2007.

#### 2.0 Scope of the inquiry

- 2.1 The purpose of the inquiry is to make an assessment of, and where appropriate make recommendations on, the following areas:
- The developing arrangements for Trust Schools
  - The potential impact in Leeds
  - Ways in which Trust Schools can help deliver the universal and targeted elements of children's services provision
  - The long term implications of the establishment of Trust Schools

### **3.0 Comments of the relevant director and executive member**

3.1 In line with scrutiny board procedure rule 11.4 the views of the relevant director and executive member have been sought and have been incorporated where appropriate into these terms of reference. Full details are available on request from the scrutiny support unit.

### **4.0 Timetable for the inquiry**

4.1 It is envisaged that the inquiry will take place over two sessions. The inquiry will conclude with the publication of a formal report setting out the board's conclusions and recommendations.

4.2 The length of the inquiry is subject to change in the light of emerging evidence.

### **5.0 Submission of evidence**

5.1 The organisation of evidence between the two sessions will be partly dependent on the availability of external witnesses.

#### **5.2 Session One – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

To consider general background information on:

- The government's Trust Schools proposals, including information on
  - Aspects relating to governance, including any new requirements or responsibilities for Governors of Trust Schools
  - Estates and assets
  - PFI schools
  - School admissions and the Admissions Forum
- Work being undertaken by Education Leeds in response to the proposals
- Any intelligence on the number of schools in Leeds that may be actively considering Trust status
- The initial views of trade unions on the implications of Trust Schools for employees

#### **5.3 Session One or Two (dependent on witness availability)**

To consider information on

- The Schools Commissioner's views on developments in Leeds
- The Garforth Community College/Trinity and All Saints College pathfinder project
- The David Young Academy as an example of alternative provision
- The views of Children Leeds on the impact of trust schools for the children's services authority and partnership working
- Any relevant experiences of working with Grant-maintained Schools from other LEAs

#### **5.4 Session Two – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

To consider the board's emerging conclusions and recommendations

## **6.0 Witnesses**

6.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- The Schools Commissioner
- Education Leeds
- Headteacher and Chair of Governors of Garforth Community College
- Trinity and All Saints College
- Director of Children's Services
- Principal of David Young Academy
- Joint Consultative Committee representative
- A school currently considering Trust School status

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Originator: Keith Burton

Tel: 0113 39 50216

**Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)****Report of: The Director of Children's Services****Date of meeting: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007****SUBJECT:****Scrutiny Inquiry: Implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority – The impact of Trust Schools for the Children's Services Authority and partnership working.**

<b>This Report is for;</b>			
Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/>	Information Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advice/consideration prior to taking a Key or Major decision <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Decision to be taken by:</b>			
Full Council <input type="checkbox"/>		Corporate Governance and Audit Committee <input type="checkbox"/>	
Executive Board <input type="checkbox"/>		Standards Committee <input type="checkbox"/>	
An Area Committee <input type="checkbox"/>		Member Management Committee <input type="checkbox"/>	
A Regulatory Committee <input type="checkbox"/>		A Director using delegated authority <input type="checkbox"/>	

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 This report considers recent legislation on Trust Schools in the context of Children's Services Arrangements in Leeds.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 It is noted that members of Scrutiny Board have already been provided with general background information on Trust School legislation, the status of Trust Schools and the role of the Local Authority in the Trust School process. Members may wish to refer to that briefing paper in the context of the further information provided below which specifically concentrates on Trust Schools in the context of the Children's Services authority and partnership working.

## **3.0 General Considerations**

- 3.1 In essence, Trust School status, although keeping the school in the LEA maintained sector, sets the relationship of the schools within the Children's Services authority, on more of an arms length basis. Although this is an alignment with a commissioner and provider model it does weaken the link with the Children's Services Authority.
- 3.2 It is helpful that the Education and Inspections Act makes it a statutory requirement on governing bodies to promote well-being and community cohesion and to have regard to the Children and Young People's Plan. It should be remembered that, prior to this, school governing bodies had not been named as relevant partners in the Children Act. It is clear that the development of the Trust Schools policy was an important point of re-consideration for the Government when writing in this statutory duty. This is important given the role of the Director of Children's Services in holding to account partners that may be failing in a duty to co-operate.
- 3.3 In another respect, the Government's goal of seeking to introduce greater diversity and choice to the schools system could be seen as running contrary to the type of collective response from providers which the Every Child Matters agenda requires. However, The Education and Inspections Act also reinforces changes to the school inspection framework and the inclusion in that framework of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. This will be important in maintaining focus on the Every Child Matters agenda within the strategic leadership of the school.
- 3.4 The latest published guidance for Head Teachers and Governors to help them to set out the potential advantages in seeking Trust status, also helps.
- 3.5 A number of "trust school proposal models" are illustrated in the guidance. These largely focus on more formal links with other schools, education establishments, business, or wider community considerations. Included in the possible models are trusts formed around the Every Child Matters agenda, the 14-19 agenda and the community regeneration agenda. Any guidance which places the emphasis on Trust School proposals that pull together providers in an area, as opposed to setting them apart, is important.
- 3.6 Local authorities were consulted on the original drafts of this guidance and part of the Leeds City Council's response was the suggestion that the proposals for a change to Trust School status should address the extent to which the change would assist a Children's Services Authority in delivering the Every Child Matters agenda. The final guidance includes this consideration.

- 3.7 The fact that acquiring trust status involves the transfer of land and buildings from the Children's Services authority to the incorporated governing body of the new trust could be seen as an inhibiting or complicating factor. It is clear that the infrastructure of publicly funded assets within communities and across Leeds needs strategic planning to facilitate new types of service provision in line with the concept of "wrapping services around the individual child".
- 3.8 It is interesting that the DfES has similar concerns in this regard. One of the first papers the DfES produced in the context of asset transfer was a clarification that separately funded City Learning Centres (most of which are integral to an existing school building or co-located on the site) should not be regarded as part of the transferring assets.
- 3.9 The DfES maintains that the safeguards described in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 above with regard to the schools inspection framework and the duty on Governing bodies to promote well-being and community cohesion and have regard to the Children and Young People's plan, mitigate these risks to integrated planning. However, this remains an aspect of Trust Schools that will need to be carefully watched, particularly with the advanced programme in Leeds for Children's Centres integrated with Primary Schools and Childcare provision co-located on school sites.
- 3.10 Finally, there will be the need to continually assess the impact on the Children's Trust Arrangements, and in particular, representation on the Children Leeds Partnership and Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board of any emerging Trust Schools. The emergence of local trusts as new registered charity interests in their own right and also any wider associations any new Trust Schools in Leeds may have should their trust partner be one of the national trust networks being planned, may need a new types of partners to be reorganised. This will be a developing picture so no key impacts can be assessed at this stage.

#### **4.0 Other considerations**

- 4.1 All Children's Services Authorities are charged with planning a workforce reform agenda around new types of induction, joint continuing professional development and possible new generic Children's Services jobs and careers, in order to ensure the supply of any new types of worker required under the Every Child Matters Agenda. There have already been developments in this regard in terms of the leadership of the new integrated Children's Centres and new types of posts covering aspects of individual pupil support, parenting and family support. Trust Schools will become new employers in their own right, and, whereas the guidance is clear in terms of preserving national pay and conditions for professional groups such as teachers, it is silent with regard to other staff under Local Authority conditions of service. An increase in the number and diversity of employers does make strategic workforce planning more complicated.
- 4.3 A key concept in the Leeds approach to Children's Trust Arrangements is locality planning. Leeds is one of only 16 authorities piloting Budget Holding Lead Professionals in localities. In one sense, proposals to form Trust Schools along the lines of the models mentioned in paragraph 3.5 above could be a driver to new capacity among providers in localities enabling us to commission new forms of services for children, young people and their parents through new combinations of providers.
- 4.4 On the other hand, in the context of the delivery of the extended services in schools programme, the emergence of Trust Schools could be a complicating factor. It is clear that not all local schools will individually offer all five of the required

components of the extended services offer. In a number of localities there will be a “best fit” strategic option. It is important that any consideration by governing bodies in terms of proposing trust status is complementary to that strategic fit process. A complicating factor would be where those rolling out the extended services agenda feel obliged to look at second best site options because of a possible Trust School proposal.

- 4.5 A further complication in this regard would be if a school which is already a key hub in terms of extended services coverage in a locality starts to investigate trust options which see the school in a different alignment. Whilst this may be seen as a new, fresh and exciting development from the point of view of the single school, it could actually represent a damaging move in the context of a wider strategic plans to secure city wide coverage of entitlements, (such as the Extended Services agenda and possibly the local youth entitlement). It is unclear, what weight will be given to this type of argument should a Children’s Services authority decide to oppose a trust proposal on such grounds.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

- 5.1 Board members are asked to receive the above points of consideration as evidence from the Director of Children’s Services on the potential impact of Trust Schools for the Children’s Services Authority partnership working.



## Grant Maintained (GM) Schools

*The terms of reference for the Scrutiny Board Inquiry include the consideration of any relevant experiences of working with GM schools from other LEAs.*

*Research by Halpin, Fitz and Power<sup>1</sup> undertaken in 1990-91 examined the early impact of opting out on a selection of 24 English LEAs:-*

### Initial response of LEAs to the GM policy proposals

During the consultation phase, prior to the introduction of the GM proposals, most local authorities did not welcome the idea of opted out schools, being either opposed in principle to the policy or concerned about its practical consequences. The concerns raised by LEAs were that it would affect the LEAs capacity to develop plans for the rationalization of surplus school places. That, if a school was threatened with closure, amalgamation or reorganisation, the school would try to become GM and this would undermine the LEA's capacity to plan strategically. Because the LEA was still under an obligation to remove surplus school places, this might lead to some LEAs closing schools that they would otherwise prefer to keep open and the "danger that surplus school capacity would simply be shuffled around rather than tackled strategically".

LEAs are still under an obligation to remove surplus school places, but unless the Secretary of State makes it clear that he would not view sympathetically applications for GM status which appear to arise largely from a school's desire to avoid the consequences of reorganisation, rationalization schemes will be inhibited. (The Association of Metropolitan Authorities, 1988).

Fears were expressed that the policy would be unfair and have unsettling effects and divisive consequences. That "LEAs could have little more than a residuary function providing education largely for those children who could not gain admission to, or who were excluded from, the other kinds of schools" (Brent LEA, 1988).

There were concerns about the financial implications for LEAs. That:

The more schools opt out, the more serious the problem will become. With each school that leaves the authority, unit costs will rise and eventually a critical point is reached where it no longer makes financial sense to have an authority (Barnet's Director of Education, 1989).

### Impact on LEAs once GM schools were in place

Two thirds of LEAs reported that reorganisation plans had been abandoned or postponed in the wake of schools seeking or having achieved GM status. One said that it had "put a complete brake on reviews right across the county in all sorts of

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<sup>1</sup> Sources: *The Early Impact and Long Term implications of the Grant Maintained Schools Policy* Halpin, Fitz and Power, 1993 and *Grant Maintained Schools: Education in the Market Place* Halpin, Fitz and Power, 1993.

respects". However, seven LEAs said their planning for school places had not been disrupted because of GM schools.

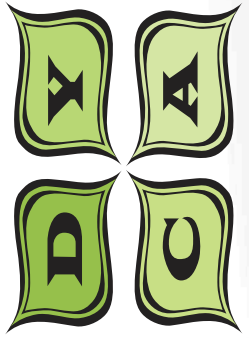
The researchers found "ample evidence to suggest that a single opted out school could have a major impact on its previous LEA, particularly if it formerly occupied a pivotal position within the local authority's existing or anticipated scheme of provision". They learned of several instances where a school faced by closure or a change of character had achieved GM status and thereby "sabotaged local plans to develop, in one case, a tertiary college, in another, non-selective co-education. For both the LEAs concerned, there appeared to be little further room for manoeuvre except, that is, for them to identify another school to close which it was then feared would also seek to opt out."

Although there was antipathy to the policy felt by many of the LEAs studied, most were keen to develop positive relations with the GM schools in their area.

We have always said, and it is one of the principles that we have tried to work on, that the children who attend the grant-maintained school are still our children. They are still part of the maintained sector; that hasn't changed because the school has become grant-maintained. We have a duty to those children. It has also been our policy stance from the start to continue to provide at cost any service the school wants. (LEA in an Authority with no overall political control).

Several LEAs were selling services to GM schools (cleaning, payroll, school meals and INSET). At least one had offered "associate membership" of the LEA to its 'opt-out' schools.

The researchers concluded that most LEAs were adopting a "pragmatic as opposed to political response to the GM schools policy. That is to say, while they mostly do not like or welcome the policy, they regard it as more expedient to work with, rather than against, its grain."



# David Young Community Academy

Building your Career and Community



Prospectus

## Academy Sponsors

David Young Community Academy is sponsored by the Church of England.

### Diocese of Ripon & Leeds

The Ripon and Leeds Diocese have a long and very successful tradition of supporting education in Leeds. Our investment in the David Young Community Academy represents a continuing commitment to education in the city, and a clear desire to contribute to the challenge of providing new resources suitable for the twenty-first century. The diocese will continue to support the Academy through its appointed governors and with the backing of its Board of Education.

We feel proud that the Academy has been named after David Young, Bishop of the Diocese from 1977 to 1999. During this time, Bishop David was a keen supporter of education, locally and nationally, and cared a great deal for the opportunities afforded to young people and communities within the Diocese.

We will seek to ensure that the Academy will be open to all. It will provide both academic and vocational education of the highest quality in exceptional surroundings. Whilst it will develop a character and ethos clearly based upon Christian principles, the Academy will value the faith and spiritual development of all. It will seek to promote those attitudes and values which will stand each individual in good stead for the future and which can be supported by all faiths.

### The Governing Body

The DYCA has an active Board of Governors, led by Mr Hartley Moyes, and appointed by the sponsors together with co-opted members from the community and elected members from the staff and parents.

The Governing Body has determined the Mission, Ethos and all the policies of the Academy, which are available on request from us, including our Complaints Procedure and Sex and Relationship Education Policy.

## Biography of Bishop David Young



David Young first studied Mathematics at Oxford University, obtaining a first class honours degree, before undertaking further study at Oxford in Theology whilst continuing to work as an engineer. After ordination he spent some time in Sri Lanka with the Church Missionary Society setting up the Department of Buddhist Studies at the Ecumenical Theological College. On returning to England he lectured in Buddhist Studies at Manchester University before being appointed Vicar of Burwell and then Archdeacon of Huntingdon.

He was appointed Bishop of Ripon in 1977 and entered the House of Lords in 1984. He was a regular contributor to debates on a range of issues including asylum and education. In 1994 he was appointed Chairman of the Church of England Board of Education. This Board is responsible for maintaining an overview of the church schools of England and Wales, and contributing to the shape of educational legislation. During debates he was careful to represent the views of other faiths as well as that of the Church of England. He retired from this influential role and as Bishop of Ripon in 1999 and was awarded CBE in 2000.

During his time as Bishop of Ripon he took a close interest in the work of schools both in the rural areas and in the city of Leeds, especially inner city schools. His last act as Bishop was to change the name of the Diocese to Ripon and Leeds.



### **Message from the Principal**

**Thank you for your interest in David Young Community Academy. We are very proud of DYCA – the first academy in the area – which is a centre of excellence in the education world.**

**DYCA is a place where all are valued and where respect for ourselves and others is promoted through all aspects of academy life. Our students are expected to aim high and our parents to support us in ensuring that students achieve at the highest levels.**

**DYCA is a safe and happy school where everyone enjoys teaching and learning. We expect that every member of our community takes responsibility for their own learning and understands their role in supporting the achievements and learning of others.**

**We have high expectations and demand the best, we celebrate success, embrace innovation and we deliver excellence.**

**Ros McMullen**

## Mission

The David Young Community Academy provides a safe and secure environment in which Christian values underpin and support the development of a lifelong learning community. We work within the wider community to build together a better future promoting our specialism, Design and the Built Environment, to benefit all learners and contribute to local regeneration by:

- ❖ valuing all faiths and actively celebrating diversity
- ❖ appreciating the uniqueness of every person and working to build self-esteem
- ❖ ensuring that each student receives the highest possible quality of education suited to their individual needs and aptitudes
- ❖ focussing on excellence and challenging everyone to achieve their best
- ❖ nurturing supportive and productive relationships based on mutual respect and trust
- ❖ valuing and fostering creativity, imagination, responsibility and a love of learning

## Ethos

In keeping with the mission set out above, and the values embodied there, the ethos of the Academy will be demonstrated in its daily life. In the Academy we:

- ❖ Actively seek to develop a love for learning
- ❖ Promote inclusive learning for all
- ❖ Work within a framework of discipline which is also confident of forgiveness
- ❖ Value worship as a part of daily life
- ❖ Respect the faith of all members
- ❖ Encourage an appreciation for the beauty of creation and recognise our responsibility to care for the environment



## Uniform

David Young Community Academy has a very strict uniform code which has been developed by the students themselves. They have designed the uniform in order to look prepared for the world of work and business. We do not tolerate any breaches of our uniform code. All uniform, other than shirts and blouses, has the DYCA logo and is available only from DYCA, where it is sold at cost price to parents.

DYCA skirt or DYCA trousers  
(boys and girls styles available)

White shirt and DYCA tie **or** open-neck white blouse and DYCA scarf (standard shirts and blouses may be purchased elsewhere)

DYCA jacket (boys and girls styles available)

DYCA bag

Black shoes – strictly no trainers or boots

Headgear only permitted if required by religious observance (eg. Sikh turban). Strictly no baseball caps.

No jewellery, other than a wristwatch

No mobile phones, cameras, or portable music players.  
(If such items are brought into DYCA, they will be confiscated and returned only to parents.)

Indoor PE Kit - Our PE Kit consists of bottle green shorts, white DYCA polo-shirt, black football socks and non-marking soled trainers.

Outdoor PE Kit - A DYCA tracksuit is available if required for outdoor lessons, with the option of a black sweatshirt/training top. Please note that only these are allowed.

Recommended - It is recommended that gum shields and shin pads are worn during contact sports as appropriate.

## Student Council / DYCA Code

The students have elected a Student Council which meets regularly with the Principal. In the time before the opening of DYCA, they have assisted in the selection of Vice-Principals and other senior staff, designed the uniform, helped develop a range of policies and written the DYCA Code:

### Respect for others

- ❖ We all speak to one another with respect
- ❖ We never try to make anyone feel bad about themselves
- ❖ We share with each other and help each other

### Respect for learning

- ❖ Teaching is varied, fun and very good
- ❖ Students want to learn, do their best and complete homework
- ❖ No-one is allowed to spoil the learning of others

### Respect for environment

- ❖ Everyone is given the necessary resources to succeed
- ❖ Everyone looks after DYCA, taking responsibility for the environment
- ❖ We all make sure the atmosphere is calm and purposeful

### Respect for achievement

- ❖ We celebrate and reward achievement which is consistent
- ❖ Achievements in citizenship, attendance, sport, arts and learning are recognised
- ❖ We are proud of our own achievement and that of others



## Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning at DYCA is different to other schools in the following ways:

- ❖ Students are grouped according to ability during Key Stage Three, rather than age, allowing highly-targeted teaching which enables students to make rapid progress through the National Curriculum.
- ❖ Students can progress to GCSE and Level 3 (A-level) courses when they are ready and don't have to wait until they are 16 years old.
- ❖ Teaching is delivered in larger "chunks" of time, rather than one hour lessons, allowing teachers to focus on developing the skills students need across a range of subject areas.
- ❖ Students and teachers work in a highly ICT-rich environment.
- ❖ All students benefit from two "Session Three" lessons each week.

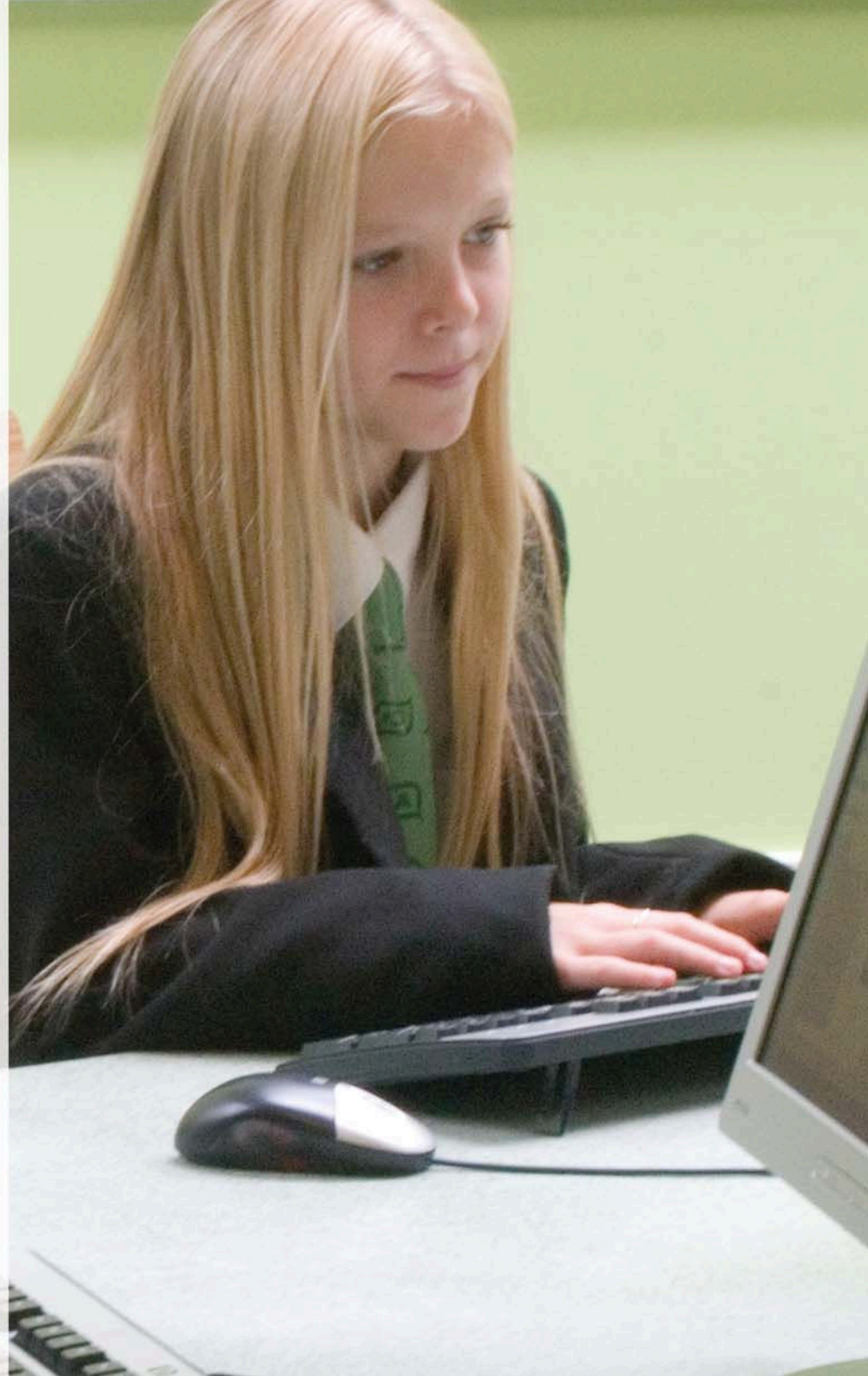
## Curriculum

The curriculum at David Young Community Academy ensures that all students receive their full National Curriculum entitlement and, as a result of our innovative approach to teaching and learning, is also able to focus on the core skills and enrich the curriculum experience.

During Key Stage Three the curriculum is structured to ensure that students develop the following core skills:

- |              |                         |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| ❖ Drawing    | ❖ Oracy                 |
| ❖ Enterprise | ❖ Problem Solving       |
| ❖ ICT        | ❖ Social Responsibility |
| ❖ Literacy   | ❖ Study Skills          |
| ❖ Making     | ❖ Team Building         |
| ❖ Numeracy   | ❖ Thinking Skills       |

We believe that these are vital for the ability to achieve at the highest levels in the world of work and in Further and Higher Education.







At Key Stage Four students have a range of GCSE, BTEC, and other Level 2 courses to choose from. All students will receive high-quality work experience and mentoring from either employers or those involved in Higher Education. Every DYCA student is expected to move into Post-16 education or employment with training at the age of 16.

### **Post-16**

DYCA has a unique Post-16 provision offering routes directly into Higher Education and employment. Our courses are run in collaboration with Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds College of Building, Leeds College of Art, and many local employers. Our Post-16 provision has Thorpe Park as one of its sponsors and for any student wishing a career in Architecture, Engineering, Design, Multi-Media, Hospitality and Catering or Building, there is a specific Post-16 prospectus available.

### **Information and Communication Technology**

We are resourced for the modern world. Students will be trained to use a variety of ICT and will produce much of their work on PC or laptop.

The learning environment of the school promotes ICT and students will be able to access homework and lesson notes on-line. As the new learning platform develops parents will be able to follow the programs of study being undertaken by their children.

DYCA is a major resource for the whole community and training in ICT will be available to adult community members and our partner primary schools

## Individual Needs

The staffing structure, the ICT infrastructure and the unique shape of the school day and year mean that at David Young Community Academy we are able to respond to individual need, treat each learner as a unique individual and deliver personalised learning.

We accept that "One size fits no-one" and we expect that no two students will require exactly the same curriculum diet.

There are enrichment programmes running in all areas of school life and targeted at individual talents and needs.

## Catering Services

DYCA employs Richard Belt and Sam Fish, two experienced Executive Chefs who are committed to providing the best possible healthy meals that will be following government guidelines in delivering DYCA's ethos on "The Balance of Good Health". The restaurant menus have been designed with the help of students and staff.



## Chaplain

Rev. Mark Umpleby is the DYCA Chaplain. He ensures that the Academy maintains its Mission to actively value and celebrate all faiths and to respect diversity. DYCA has a multi-faith Worship Room which is available to students of all faiths and none, for group and private prayer or quiet reflection. Our Chaplain manages the Worship Room and our contact with other religious leaders.



## Supporting Learning

To benefit from the wide range of opportunities at David Young Community Academy students need to:

- ❖ Attend everyday
- ❖ Conform with dress code
- ❖ Comply with our high expectations of behaviour
- ❖ Study out-of-school hours
- ❖ Have their physical, emotional and spiritual needs met

We have a department dedicated to work alongside parents and carers to support learning by monitoring and addressing all these needs. A team of experienced staff from a wide range of relevant disciplines ensure no student is left unsupported. Every student in the Academy has a named member of this team to help them throughout their time with us.



## A Specialist College

David Young Community Academy specialises in Design and the Built Environment. This means that in addition to the National Curriculum and enrichment programmes, we have a particular expertise and resources for training students to design our towns and cities of the future.

Our students will shape our future. They will become Architects, Engineers, Interior Designers, Town Planners, Managers of Social Provision, Multi-Media Designers and citizens who understand their responsibilities to work collaboratively to improve the quality of life for all.

We work with the Leeds College of Building, the College of Art, School of the Built Environment at Leeds Metropolitan University, a range of employers and universities to ensure that all our students are prepared for the role they play in the adult world.



## Applying for Admission

David Young Community Academy will admit 180 students into Year 7 in June 2007.

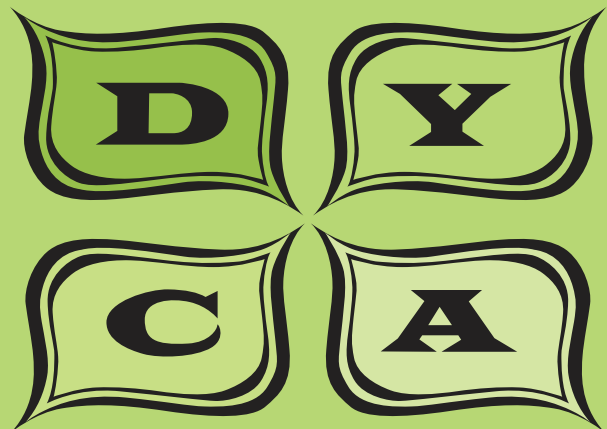
Students will be admitted strictly in accordance with the DYCA Admissions Policy and admission will be coordinated through the Education Leeds Coordinated Admissions to Secondary Schools process.

To gain admission students should apply on the common preference form distributed by Education Leeds. All applicants will then be required to take the Fair Banding Assessment on Saturday 18th November 2006 at 9.30am.

**Only students who have taken this assessment can be considered for admission.**

DYCA will then admit a fair representation of students from each band of ability. Within each ability band priority will be given to students according to DYCA published criteria.





# David Young Community Academy

## Building your Career and Community

### Academy Day

08.25	Students to arrive
08.35	Session One including Breakfast Break
11.10	Tutorial Administration and Assemblies
11.50	Session Two including Lunch Break
14.50	Transition time. Buses
15.05	Session Three* including Tea Break
16.35	End of Academy Day

\* All students will attend 2 Session Threes each week.

### Academy Calendar 2007 – 08

Beginning Academy Year	Monday 4th June
End of Block	Friday 13th July <i>(Summer holiday 16th July – 10th August)</i>

Beginning of Block Two	Monday 13th August
End of Block	Friday 21st September <i>(Holiday 24th – 28th September)</i>

Beginning of Block Three	Monday 1st October
End of Block	Friday 9th November <i>(Holiday 12th – 16th November)</i>

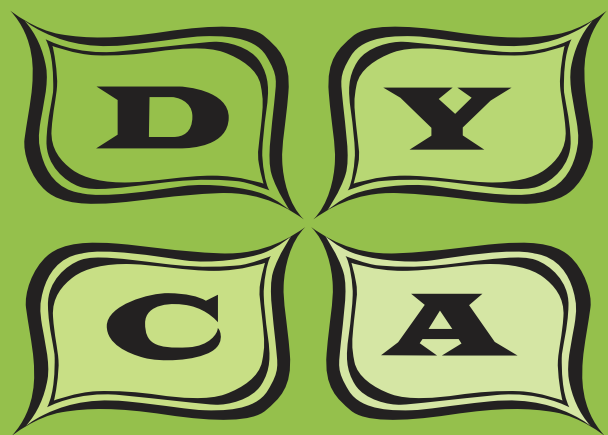
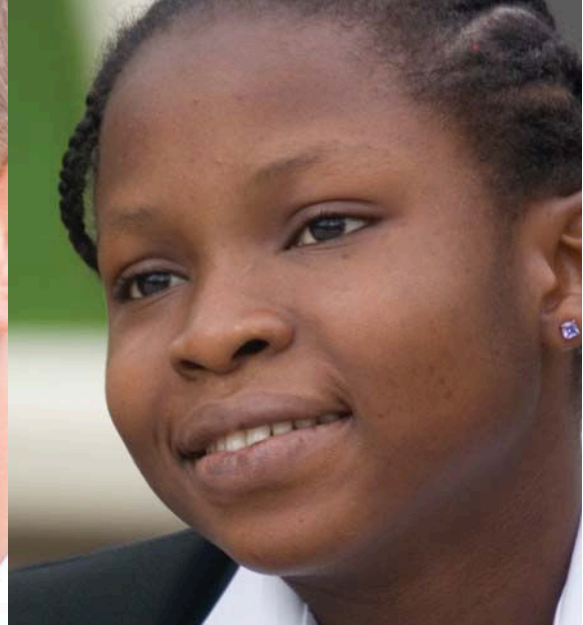
Beginning of Block Four	Monday 19th November
End of Block	Friday 21st December <i>(Christmas holiday 24th December – 4th January)</i>

Beginning of Block Five	Monday 7th January
End of Block	Friday 8th February <i>(Holiday 11th – 15th February)</i>

Beginning of Block Six	Monday 18th February
End of Block	Friday 14th March <i>(Easter holiday 17th – 28th March)</i>

Beginning of Block Seven	Monday 31st March
End of Academy Year	Friday 16th May <i>(End of Year break 19th – 30th May)</i>

<b>Return for Academic Year 2008-09</b>	<b>Monday 2nd June</b>
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**David Young Community Academy**

**The David Young Community Academy**  
North Parkway  
Seacroft  
Leeds  
LS14 1RG

0845 634 0007  
[www.dyca.org.uk](http://www.dyca.org.uk)

Information available on the DfES website:-

## **School pathfinder projects – the schools involved**

School pathfinder projects are the latest development in the Government's Trust schools programme. Alan Johnson, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, announced the 28 projects on 7 September 2006.

The pathfinder schools that are applying for Trust status have many reasons for their decision, and are looking for a wide range of Trust partners. Pathfinders are profiled here, region by region.

**Garforth Community College**, a secondary Community school in Leeds, would like to establish a Trust in partnership with Trinity and All Saints HE College. It hopes that acquiring a Trust will empower the school to foster and strengthen collaboration with other schools in the area as well as contribute to community cohesion by helping to deliver improved children's services.

It also anticipates that Trust status would give students a wider range of opportunities. The school would like a Trust to focus on two areas: developing a Garforth Learning Community to manage collective responsibility for the Every Child Matters agenda across a range of local schools; and building on existing work developing support and intervention services for underperforming schools in the region.

The headteacher Paul Edwards says, "We would like the Trust to create an environment that will support the learning needs of the whole community, offering inclusive lifelong learning opportunities and improved children's services in a seamless locally identifiable organisation. It will provide local solutions for local needs."

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**Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development**

**Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)**

**Date: 8 March 2007**

**Subject: Inquiry into Adoption in Leeds**

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**Electoral Wards Affected: All**

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) has now completed its Inquiry into Adoption in Leeds. The Board is now in a position to report on its findings and its conclusions and recommendations resulting from the evidence gathered.

1.2 The draft final report is attached for consideration, along with a summary of the evidence considered during the inquiry.

**2.0 Consultation**

2.1 Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 16.3 states that "where a Scrutiny Board is considering making specific recommendations it shall invite advice from the appropriate Director(s) prior to finalising its recommendations. The Director shall consult with the appropriate Executive Member before providing any such advice. The detail of that advice shall be attached to the report".

2.2 The relevant Directors have indicated that there is no specific advice that they wish to provide at this stage, before the Board finalises its report.

2.3 Once the Board publishes its final report, the appropriate Directors will be asked to formally respond to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations in the new municipal year.

**3.0 Recommendations**

3.1 The Board is requested to:-

- (i) Agree the Board's final report and recommendations.
- (ii) Request that officers formally respond to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations in the new municipal year.

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**Adoption in Leeds**

**Draft**

**Scrutiny Inquiry Report**

# Introduction and Scope



## Introduction

- 1 Through its regular performance monitoring activity, the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) identified rates of adoption as an issue of concern in February 2006. As a result the board suggested that adoption in Leeds should be a topic for scrutiny in 2006/07; this was agreed at the first meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2006. Adoption had also been highlighted as an area for improvement in the Annual Performance Assessment process.
- 2 In order to decide on an appropriate and manageable focus for the inquiry, the board commissioned a small working group from amongst its membership to scope the inquiry. The working group met with a senior officer from Social Services on 30<sup>th</sup> June.
- 3 The working group discussed adoption as one of a range of options for achieving permanence and stability for children who are not able to remain with their birth parents. Members recognised the immense value of other alternatives including fostering, special guardianship and residence orders in achieving this.
- 4 In order to provide a clear focus for the Scrutiny Board, the working group decided to recommend that the inquiry concentrate on looking at possible ways of increasing adoption rates, reflecting the view that a secure permanent parental relationship is the ideal outcome for our children.
- 5 Members were keen to examine the causes of any delays in the systems for approving adopters, identifying children as available for adoption and subsequently matching children with adoptive parents. They were also concerned to look at strategies to increase the pool of people prepared to adopt children who are considered harder to place for whatever reason, for example older children, sibling groups, children with developmental difficulties and children of African, Caribbean or mixed heritage.
- 6 The Board is also aware, from its previous work in relation to Looked After Children, of the amount of preventative work that takes place involving various agencies working to try and keep families together, and how children can end up needing to be adopted.
- 7 During the inquiry we spoke to representatives from all of the agencies involved in the adoption decision-making process. We also visited Newcastle and Liverpool adoption services in order to discuss examples of good practice elsewhere. We were very pleased to meet with a number of adopted

# Introduction and Scope

children and adoptive parents as part of our inquiry. Their personal experiences added an extremely valuable perspective to our work.

- 8 We are grateful to all those who contributed to this inquiry for the enthusiasm and honesty with which they have responded to our questions and shared their knowledge with us.

## Scope

- 9 The purpose of our inquiry was to make an assessment of, and where appropriate make recommendations on, the following areas:
- The 'supply and demand' aspects of identifying and matching children and adoptive parents
  - Funding and capacity issues, and other potential causes of any delays or tensions in the adoption processes
  - The role of regional co-operation and work with voluntary agencies.
- 10 The board hopes that this inquiry will assist the council in securing better outcomes for children and young people in relation to the 'staying safe' theme of Every Child Matters and the Children and Young People's Plan.

# Conclusions and Recommendations



- 1 Since the initial trigger for our work was our concern about a fall in adoption rates, it is only right that we acknowledge that the number of adoptions in Leeds is rising again. We welcome this improvement, which was also recognised in the recent Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services carried out by Ofsted.
- 2 From the extensive evidence presented to us during this inquiry we believe that Social Services has analysed and addressed some of the systematic weaknesses that were previously affecting performance in this area, and as a result, impacting on the lives of some of our most vulnerable children and young people.
- 3 We are satisfied that recent changes, including the restructuring of the adoption service, mean that things are now generally moving in the right direction. We were particularly impressed with the work of the post-adoption support team.
- 4 We are also very pleased to hear that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) has now given the go ahead for an additional medical adviser, which will enable a much needed third Adoption Panel to be set up in Leeds. This will increase the capacity to process adoption cases.

## Recommendation 1

**We recommend that the Director of Children's Services informs us of the timetable and action plan for the third Adoption Panel to become fully operational, so that we can monitor progress.**

- 5 Although we recognise and welcome the improvements brought about by the creation of two dedicated adoption teams, we were interested to see whether further improvements could be made to administrative procedures and timescales throughout the adoption process to reduce unnecessary delays.
- 6 In particular we heard from all parties to our inquiry about the frustrations caused by delays in producing reports, capacity and staffing issues. We noted that the Adoption Panel annual report acknowledges the need for social workers in area teams to be enabled to give priority to complete reports required for court applications on time.
- 7 Parents expressed concern to us about the turnover of staff, the number of part-time staff, and the impact of these factors on the length of time that progressing cases could take. This was coupled with anecdotal evidence of 'drift', where chance conversations between social workers had apparently led to matches that

# Conclusions and Recommendations



could perhaps have been formally identified earlier.

## Recommendation 2

**We recommend that the Director of Children's Services reports back to us within three months on action that will be taken to reduce administrative delays throughout the adoption process.**

- 8 When we visited Liverpool, we were told that the adoption team there takes on a child's case as soon as adoption is confirmed as the plan for the child's future. This change was made in response to problems with cases 'drifting', as child protection crisis responses were (understandably) prioritised over family finding by social workers.
- 9 The transfer of cases (and staff) into the adoption team had allowed social workers in the team to progress adoption cases more quickly, and was singled out as the most effective measure taken by the authority to tackle delays.

## Recommendation 3

**We recommend that the Director of Children's Services considers whether a similar organisational approach to that taken in Liverpool would benefit adoption in Leeds, and reports back to us with a view within three months.**

- 10 We were concerned to learn that the courts are also unable to meet their target times - to deal with 70% of care orders within 40 weeks - although we acknowledge that performance in Leeds is better than in most of the rest of the country. We understand that one of the reasons for the increased pressure on the courts is an increase in the number of private family cases, involving for example custody disputes between separating couples. We are concerned that this is causing unacceptable delays in providing a resolution for children awaiting adoption and believe that action needs to be taken to redress the balance. This may require a national increase in resources.

## Recommendation 4

**We recommend that the courts service advise us how a higher priority or additional resources can be allocated to redress the balance with private cases and improve performance against the targets for dealing with care orders. The Scrutiny Board will raise this issue at a national level with the Local Government Association.**

- 11 Overall, although some of our members were already experienced in adoption through their membership of Adoption Panels, professional background or approval as prospective adopters, the majority of us were struck by the sheer complexity of the process leading up to a child's adoption.

## Conclusions and Recommendations



- 12 When we analysed the various stages, as described to us by the respective practitioners, we were led to wonder whether the current statutory procedures make the most effective use of resources, and also to question whether they unnecessarily prolong the time that an adopted child spends in the care system.
- 13 In summary, a child will have been identified at some point as being at risk, leading to intervention by Social Services and possibly a number of other agencies. Preventative work aimed at family support or rehabilitation may have taken place and there will have been a multi-agency case conference before adoption is considered as an option for the child.
- 14 At this point a social worker will produce a detailed report on the child's situation, which will be the subject of departmental supervision before the case goes to an Adoption Panel for a recommendation, and then to the Chief Officer - Children and Families to decide that Social Services believe the child should be adopted.
- 15 Then an application must be made to the court. The court will appoint another social worker – the independent guardian – who will make their own report, before magistrates or a judge finally make the legal decision that the child can be placed for adoption.
- 16 Given the national and local shortage of social workers, the pressures on all agencies' resources, and the recognised damage to a child's prospects caused by delays, this protracted process does not appear at face value to be the most effective organisation of the combined scarce resources.
- 17 Nevertheless we also acknowledge that it is important that all the relevant information is available and that the decision made is truly in the child's best interests.
- 18 We understand that national legislation and guidance largely determine how these process work. However we would like to ask the local inter-agency group of social services, Cafcass and the courts service to consider whether there is a case to be made for change.

### Recommendation 5

**We recommend that the Director of Children's Services explores, with the inter-agency group, the case for change in adoption processes to make more effective use of combined resources, whilst protecting the integrity of decision-making in the child's best interests. We request a report back within three months.**



## Conclusions and Recommendations



19 We were pleased to hear of the success of the regional adoption consortium in helping to match children and adopters. In particular we were impressed by the points system which reduced bureaucracy and fees between authorities. Compared to other authorities, this seems to have been a real benefit in promoting use of the consortium locally.

20 In other areas of the country, notably the north west, we heard how consortia had developed in different directions. Adoption 22 (the north west consortium) tends to take a more strategic role: for example the development of new protocols in response to the new Adoption and Childcare Act had been shared across authorities. In addition the members of the consortium have effectively used their combined influence to draw up protocols for consistent working with Cafcass (the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) across the region, to tackle areas of regular disagreement.

### Recommendation 6

**We recommend that the Director of Children's Services reports back to us within three months on the potential for the regional consortium to develop a more strategic role to complement its successful 'marketplace' function.**

21 The process of identifying a child for an adopter can take time, and we were conscious that potential adopters can feel quite isolated while they wait to hear about a potential match. The adoptive parents we spoke to told us that they did not want to 'pester' busy staff for news. Although we are sure that staff are happy to be contacted, we also recognise the reticence felt by some prospective adopters, who do not wish to appear a 'nuisance'.

### Recommendation 7

**We recommend that the Director of Children's Services develops arrangements for keeping prospective adopters engaged and informed whilst they await matching, and reports back to us within three months.**

22 The recruitment and retention of adoption staff was an issue that arose during our discussion. We were already aware of the shortage of social workers generally; and we learned that the requirements for post qualification experience can exacerbate this situation in relation to adoption work. We heard some interesting ideas from Liverpool particularly about their general success in recruiting and retaining, which we commend to the department.

23 We explored one particular issue in a little more depth, namely the

## Conclusions and Recommendations



apparent inability of the authority to match an applicant's existing employment benefits if they transfer from the voluntary sector – a key alternative source of staff in this field. (The same was also true vice versa – where a council employee transferred to the voluntary sector.)

- 24 We recognise that there are wider implications at stake here for the authority as a whole arising from national agreements on working conditions, and regulations about where staff can transfer between employers and retain accrued benefits. The issues we considered are set out in slightly more detail in paragraphs 158-161 of the summary of evidence which accompanies this report.

### Recommendation 8

**We recommend that the Chief Officer – Human Resources reports back to us within three months on the potential for addressing the barriers to recruitment where staff face losing accrued employment benefits.**

- 25 Having considered the capacity within the adoption system, we also looked at the recruitment of adopters, which was the other key factor we identified as potentially delaying a child's chances of adoption.

- 26 We were particularly struck to hear from the local NCH manager that an ICM poll on attitudes to adoption commissioned for National Adoption Week had revealed a surprising lack of information about who can adopt. The widely held public perception still reflects the historical position of adoption as a white middle-class activity, rather than the reality of its being open to all. There was a clear message here for publicity.

- 27 This view was reflected in our discussion with social workers when we asked whether prospective adopters coming forward were generally aware of the kinds of children needing to be adopted. We were told that there are still a number of people coming forward who cannot have their own birth child and want to adopt a freely given baby. The preparation training gives people an awareness of the types of issues they are likely to face and the skills they will need. It is important for prospective adopters to be realistic about what they can cope with.

- 28 The authority also needs to be clear about the sort of people it is looking for as adopters, and to get this message across in recruitment as well as training and assessment. We felt that the public understanding of adoption is out of date, and therefore the service is likely to be missing out on people who could help.

## Conclusions and Recommendations



29 Newcastle adoption service told us about some of the successful methods they had used to recruit adopters. Liverpool employed someone specifically with a media background. We also heard from adoptive parents how effective word of mouth and personal recommendation was. They also welcomed the mobile information bus, as a way of reaching people who might not otherwise have considered adopting.

30 In particular we are conscious of the need to raise awareness and interest in adoption among black and minority ethnic communities, and we welcome the work being done by Social Services and in partnership with local voluntary adoption agencies to tackle this.

### Recommendation 9

**We recommend that the Director of Children's Services commissions appropriate activity to raise general awareness of the range of people who can adopt children and reports back to us on initiatives proposed within three months.**

### Recommendation 10

**We recommend that the Director of Children's Services reports back to us regularly on the progress of the adoption recruitment strategy and the number of black and minority ethnic prospective adopters recruited.**

31 One aspect of the Leeds policy on adoption that we did not see explicitly included in the small sample of other adoption agency policies that were sent to us as part of this inquiry, was an assumption about an upper age limit of 60 for adopters, by the time their adopted child reached 18. We question whether this limits the pool of potential adopters unnecessarily.

### Recommendation 11

**We recommend that the Director of Children's Services reviews the upper age limit policy and reports back to us on the outcome of that review within three months.**

32 We were particularly impressed by the post-adoption support services provided in Leeds. We heard first-hand from both adopted children and adoptive parents about how important this is in supporting families at very different stages in their experience of adoption.

33 All of the parents were extremely appreciative of the post-adoption support services, and we heard how crucial a role it has played in some cases in providing the ongoing support that has enabled adoptive placements to continue in situations where they may have broken down in the past. Parents acknowledged that this support might be needed at any time during a child's growing up, not necessarily close to the time of

## Conclusions and Recommendations



adoption. They also benefited from mutual support that has been established between adoptive parents.

- 34 We also learned that Newcastle has been very successful recently in preventing disruptions. Following a number of breakdowns a few years ago, an independent reviewing officer (IRO) for adoption was appointed in 2002 and there had been no disruptions since November 2004. This was attributed to a combination of good matching, and also the proactive role of the IRO. Where the IRO identified a need for support, the resources were quickly assigned to provide this at an early stage.

### Recommendation 12

**We recommend that the Director of Children's Services considers the appointment of an independent reviewing officer for adoption, and reports back to us with a view within three months.**

- 35 One particular issue that played a significant part in our discussion with adoptive parents was around schools and education. Because this issue was raised right at the end of our evidence gathering, we did not have the opportunity to seek clarification from Education Leeds during our inquiry.
- 36 Topics raised included: a general lack of awareness from some

teachers of how to meet the needs of adopted children, for example how to handle work about families; the extent of bullying of adopted children; meeting resentment from other parents when an adopted child was perceived as disruptive; and fighting to have a child's special educational needs, recognised, assessed and met.

- 37 During the discussion, it was suggested that the liaison with education had improved for looked after children, but that adopted children perhaps still had a tendency to fall through the net. Many of them would be vulnerable to developing special educational needs at some point as a result of their early experiences, yet because they were no longer in care and had a new family, their needs were not being proactively promoted to the same extent.
- 38 Despite this, we also heard from some parents about good examples of school responses, particularly led by individual headteachers who were more aware of the needs of adopted children.
- 39 We also learned that a transition group for Year 6 pupils is planned for this coming year, to help with preparation for secondary school. We welcome this, especially given our ongoing interest in the importance of good transition experiences for all pupils.

## Conclusions and Recommendations



### Recommendation 13

**We recommend that the Director of Children's Services, in conjunction with the Chief Executive of Education Leeds, produces an action plan within three months for improving the education support to adopted children, in order to ensure a more consistent quality of experience for adoptive families. This should cover awareness raising for schools; social services staff awareness of education resources; and adoptive parents' awareness of education support particularly for special educational needs.**

40 We would like to see more resources available for adoption generally, and particularly for post-adoption support. If there are efficiency gains to be made as a result of some of our recommendations, we would like to see them being used to increase the capacity of the service.

41 There were two other specific issues that came up during our visits to other authorities which may be worthy of further consideration by Social Services.

42 One was the possible emergence of a trend in terms of an increasing number of babies being adopted due to maternal drug or alcohol misuse, and the implications for the adoption service.

43 The second was Newcastle's very low use of residential homes for looked after children, and whether there are any learning points for Leeds from this achievement.

44 Finally, when we met with the adopted young people they completed a brief questionnaire for us. At the end we asked if there was anything else they wanted to tell us. One of them wrote "I am happy!"

45 We hope that our conclusions and recommendations will assist all involved in the adoption service to help more children and young people in Leeds to find happiness with their adopted families.

# Evidence



## Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

## Reports and Publications Submitted

- Report of the Chief Officer Social Services – Inquiry into Adoption Services in Leeds -Session One – September 2006
- Report of the Chief Officer Social Services – Inquiry into Adoption Services in Leeds -Session Two – September 2006
- Adoption Register – Information for Adopters – leaflet
- Adoption and Childcare Act 2002 briefing
- Extract from Chapter 2 of Guidance on the Adoption and Childcare Act 2002 – Considering and deciding whether a child should be placed for adoption – flowchart
- Leeds City Council Adopters guide
- Briefing on Special Guardianship Orders
- Leeds City Council – Considering a Residence Order – A guide for carers
- Social Services Adoption Implementation Plan 2006/2007
- Adoption Panel statistics
- Children currently on referral for adoption
- Number of adopters approved and awaiting a match
- Adoption Service budgets
- Recruitment Strategy – Fostering and Adoption – 2006/7
- Training Outline for prospective adopters
- Barnardo's Futures – Adoption Supported lodgings – leaflet
- Adoption Linking Services – leaflet on adoption contact agreements
- After Adoption Yorkshire – leaflet
- After Adoption Yorkshire – search service – leaflet
- Adoption Support Services – leaflet
- Adoption Support Presentation
- Adoption Support 3 Year Plan 2004-2007 – Updated November 2005

## Reports and Publications Submitted (continued)

- Yorkshire Adoption Consortium – Information sheet/adoption statistics
- Yorkshire Adoption Consortium – Information for adopters – leaflet
- Newcastle City Council – Adoption Information Pack
- Newcastle City Council – Birth Parent Information Pack
- Newcastle City Council – Parents Affected by Adoption – leaflet
- Legal Briefing – November 2006
- Her Majesty’s Courts Service – Adoption – A guide for Court Users – booklet A20
- Report of the Chief Officer Social Services – Inquiry into Adoption Services in Leeds - Session Three – Adoption Panel - November 2006
- Adoption Procedures
- Functions of the Adoption Panel
- Leeds Social Services Adoption Agency Policy
- Annual report on Adoption Panel Activity 2005-2006
- The Cafcass Practitioner in Adoption – booklet – 2005
- The Role of Cafcass – booklet – 2005
- Internet pages – About Cafcass/Adoption
- Adoption NCH Yorkshire – Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose
- NCH – Adoption Agency Annual Report 2005 to 2006
- Adoption Barnardo’s Yorkshire – Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose 2005/2006
- Adoption Barnardo’s Yorkshire - booklet
- Report of the Chief Officer Social Services – Inquiry into Adoption Services in Leeds - Session Four – November 2006
- Local Government Employers – The Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government etc) (Modification) Order 1999
- Leeds City Council – Considering Permanency Options – A Guide for Foster Carers – draft document

NB Some of the information considered relates to individual adopted children and adoptive parents and is therefore confidential.

# Evidence



## Witnesses Heard

Rodger Walker	Resources Team Manager, Social Services
Val Hales	Team Manager Adoption and Adoption Support, Social Services
Sarah Johal	Team Manager Adoption, Social Services
Debbie Church	Coordinator, Yorkshire Adoption Consortium
Steve Oliver	Adoption Team Leader, Liverpool City Council
Karen Simmons	Looked After Children Manager, Newcastle City Council
Deborah Herring	Adoption Manager, Newcastle City Council
Janice Turnbull	Birth Families Social Worker, Newcastle City Council
Claire McDermott	Adoption Support Worker, Social Services
Sarah Ryan	Adoption Support Worker, Social Services
Marie Travis	Connexions Personal Adviser
Lynne Buckle	Principal Caseworker Adoption Support, Social Services
Judge Hunt	County Court Adoption Judge
Stephen Boorman	Section Head, Social Services (Legal)
Martin Lee	Leeds Magistrates' Court
Stephanie Martin	Service Manager, Cafcass
Jemima Sparks	Social Services (former Adoption Panel Chair)
Alison Share	Adoption Panel Medical Adviser, Leeds PCT
Donal Mullally	NCH
8 adopted children and young people	
13 adoptive parents	

## Dates of Scrutiny

30 June 2006	Working Group (Councillors Bale and Cleasby and Mr Gathercole)
7 September 2006	Scrutiny Board meeting
10 October 2006	Visit to Liverpool City Council (Councillor Kendall, Mrs Knights, Rodger Walker and Kate Arscott)
11 October 2006	Visit to Newcastle City Council (Councillors Bale, Cleasby and Kendall, Mrs Knights, Kate Arscott, Rodger Walker and Sarah Johal)
14 November 2006	Meeting with Cooking Crew (Councillor Bale, Mrs Knights and Kate Arscott)
15 November 2006	Meeting with adoptive parents (Councillor Bale, Mr Gathercole and Kate Arscott)
16 November 2006	Scrutiny Board meeting



## Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

### Inquiry into Adoption in Leeds

#### Evidence Considered

##### National Context

1. Over the last few years there has been a great deal of attention given to adoption issues. National Adoption Standards were introduced in 2001, which included for the first time qualitative requirements and timescales to be met in individual adoption cases. Government targets were set for the proportion of children adopted from care. In April 2003 the Local Authority Adoption Service Regulations introduced National Minimum Standards which prescribe in detail the way in which adoption agencies carry out each aspect of their work. Leeds City Council had its first inspection against these standards in March 2005.
2. The Adoption and Childcare Act 2002 (which followed the Prime Minister's Office's review of adoption law and practice in 2000) aimed to make the adoption process more efficient and transparent, and to increase the opportunity for looked after children to be adopted where appropriate. The Act also brought in new arrangements for post-adoption support and contact with birth families. Although passed in 2002, much of the Act did not come into force until 30 December 2005.

##### Situation in Leeds

3. There has been a decrease in the number of people being approved as adopters in recent years in Leeds, and a consequent decline in the number of adoptions. It was this information that initially triggered the Scrutiny Board's concern and prompted our inquiry.
4. We were told that there were a number of reasons identified as contributing to this fall:
  - A decision was taken two years ago to prioritise long term fostering applications as a response to existing problems with a shortage of such carers. At this time the Fostering and Adoption service was delivered jointly so staff prioritised these cases over adoptions. The service was restructured into distinct teams in November 2005.
  - The types of children needing adoption have changed so that more children have complex needs in terms of behaviour, age and cultural heritage (particularly mixed heritage children) but it takes longer to find, assess and match them with adopters. Adoptive parents are also waiting longer before applying for Adoption Orders (in some cases up to two years) because they want to be sure that their relationship with the child has stabilised and that they feel that they will be able to cope in the long term.

- A shortage of field workers led to considerable delays in report writing and responding to potential matches, with adoption not being given priority. We were assured that this situation had improved.
  - Allowing prospective adopters to attend the Adoption Panel meeting has slowed down the approval process. A third Adoption Panel is required to manage the level of business, but this has not yet been achieved because of the need for a third medical adviser. We were told that this was the subject of ongoing negotiations with the Health Trust.<sup>1</sup>
  - Understaffing of the adoption section. The size of the team has been increased in response to comments in external inspection reports. However it will take time for the effects to be seen.
5. We were told that as a consequence of the actions taken in response to the issues identified above, the numbers of adoptions in Leeds was rising again. The recent Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services carried out by Ofsted recognises this.
  6. Nevertheless, the annual report on Adoption Panel activity for 2005/06 acknowledges the need for Social Workers in area teams to be enabled to give priority to complete reports required for court applications on time.

#### The adoption process – adopters

7. Leeds Social Services, as an adoption agency, is responsible for recruiting, assessing, matching and providing support for adoptive parents. In brief, once a prospective adopter comes forward they will be assessed for suitability and receive training through Social Services. Some authorities carry out preparation training after approval to adopt, others carry it out before, often using it as part of the assessment process. In some authorities, including Liverpool, training is now competency based. Whilst this is the case for fostering in Leeds, it is not yet the case for adoption.
8. A home study report will be completed for the prospective adopter. This will entail a number of home visits by social workers and a detailed investigation of the family background, as well as interviews with referees. The report includes details of the age range and number of children that the prospective adopter and the agency agree they wish to adopt. This report is known as Form F and will later be shared with the social workers of children identified as a possible match.
9. An Adoption Panel will consider the assessments and decide whether to recommend that the prospective adopter is suitable to adopt. The final approval rests with the designated Adoption Agency decision-maker, which in this case is the Chief Officer – Children's Services<sup>2</sup>. The Panel

<sup>1</sup> We were subsequently informed that a third medical adviser was agreed in November.

<sup>2</sup> The Chief Officer – Children's Services is now the Chief Officer – Children and Families

may give advice to the Agency on the age and number of children that may be adopted.

10. There is a right of appeal for prospective adopters whose applications are turned down, including an Independent Review Mechanism. This can result in a recommendation that the Adoption Agency changes its decision, although it cannot be required to do so.
11. Once approved as an adopter, the agency will seek to match a prospective adopter with a suitable child or children. Depending on how specific the adopter's requirements or preferences are, this may take some time, and can involve access to the registers of children available regionally through the Yorkshire Adoption Consortium or nationally through the National Adoption Register.
12. Any potential match will be presented to the Adoption Panel for consideration, and a decision made by the Chief Officer – Children's Services, before the adult and child meet up and a placement can begin.
13. During the matching process the prospective adopter will have access to a child profile report which contains information including health, education, birth family history and placement needs, as well as a profile of the child's personality, behaviour and abilities. This may be supplemented by additional reports where appropriate, for example from a foster carer or a specialist.
14. We heard that authorities are careful to share as much information as possible with prospective adopters. This follows past cases elsewhere where adopters have sued other authorities for withholding information at the time of the adoption.
15. The authority must assess the family's support needs before the Adoption Panel is asked to approve a match and adopters are requested to comment on why they feel they are suitable parents for the child and any potential adoption support issues. A further assessment can be requested at any time until the child is 18.
16. Once a potential match has been considered by Adoption Panel and approved by the Chief Officer – Children's Services, then arrangements can be made to introduce the child or children and the adopter(s). This process is overseen by the respective social workers who will review progress with the placement and advise when the adopter(s) can formally apply to the court to agree the legal adoption. The timescale for settling in during placements can vary, particularly dependent on the child's age. An Adoption Order cannot be applied for until a child has been in their placement for at least 10 weeks.
17. Prospective adopters are reviewed after one year if still awaiting a placement by the adoption agency and re-submitted to the Adoption Panel if there are any concerns about their continued registration.

## The adoption process – children

18. There are three different ways a child can become adopted:
  - The child is part of a step-family and wishes to be adopted by their parent's new partner. In this instance the new partner makes an application to the court and the Adoption Agency's role is limited to providing a report for the court (non agency adoption)
  - The parents decide it is better for their child to be adopted – 'relinquished' children (agency adoption)
  - Social Services are involved and believe it is in the child's best interests to be adopted by a new family (agency adoption)
19. Non-agency adoptions also include adoption by close relatives or anyone who has cared for the child for three years (or in the case of foster carers after one year).
20. We did not look at inter-country adoption as part of our inquiry.
21. Where a child is relinquished, the birth parents will receive counselling, and an independent worker from Cafcass (the Reporting Officer) is involved to ensure that the parents understand the steps they are taking before a decision is made. The Reporting Officer also witnesses the parents' formal consent. There are a number of points at which the birth parents may subsequently change their mind and Social Services are obliged to either return the child, or seek a Placement Order if they feel the child should not be returned. No formal consent to adoption can be given before the child is at least six weeks old.
22. In making adoption decisions, the court and adoption agencies must have regard to a welfare 'checklist' to ensure that the child's welfare is given paramount status. This checklist includes consulting with birth parents and ascertaining the child's wishes and feelings. We heard in our visit to Liverpool that their early experience of the new Act was that this could lengthen the adoption process for relinquished babies, as time might have to be spent tracing family or persuading a reluctant mother to tell her family of the baby's existence, in order to consider the family as alternative carers.
23. In most cases however, adoption will follow on from a decision that a child can no longer live with their birth parents. Preventative work may already have taken place with the family to try and ensure the family can stay together. The child may be on the child protection register or be looked after by the local authority. In the first instance a care planning meeting will take place to consider possible options for the child. These include foster care, family network care or residential care as well as adoption. The options actively considered will vary dependent on the specific circumstances and the age of the child – for example it is unlikely that a child under ten would be placed in residential care.

24. The key process is the assessment of the birth parents' ability to care for the child. Although all the professionals try to minimise the time taken by such assessment, it is such a draconian step to remove a child from its birth parents permanently that those making the decision need to be sure that they have all the relevant information. Where this requires specialist reports for the purposes of care proceedings, the shortage of experts in a particular field can lead to delays.
25. If Social Services believe that adoption is the best option, the child's social worker will prepare a permanency report for an Adoption Panel – known as a Child Permanence Report (CPR) Form E.
26. We noted that CPR Form E does not make any specific reference to the five Every Child Matters outcomes. It is focused rather around the Adoption and Childcare Act requirements to meet the long-term interests of the child. The two frameworks are clearly not incompatible.
27. The Adoption Panel will consider the proposal for adoption and make a recommendation to the agency decision-maker, the Chief Officer – Children's Services. If the Chief Officer – Children's Services decides that the child should be placed for adoption an application for a placement order will be made in the relevant court.
28. Prior to the implementation of the Adoption and Childcare Act in December 2005, some cases were twin-tracked, ie a child's case was presented to Panel to recommend adoption whilst other options were being explored. For example in 2005/06 84 children were accepted for adoption, but of these 84, 17 never actually proceeded to adoption. 7 returned home, 3 went to live with family network carers and 7 were placed in long term foster care with a view to a future Special Guardianship Order. However, since the introduction of the new Act this is no longer possible.
29. In some circumstances Social Services will carry out a pre-birth assessment, for example where an expectant mother's previous children have been adopted. Such children may go into foster care at birth, but the courts may insist that an assessment be carried out after the child's birth before adoption can be pursued.
30. Babies may be adopted by a family which has already adopted their older siblings.
31. Only a magistrate or a judge can make the legal decisions that lead up to a child being adopted. This follows three stages:
  - A Care Order - this allows the local authority to carry out the child's Care Plan
  - A Placement Order – to allow a child to be placed with a prospective adopter
  - An Adoption Order – this confirms the adoption of a child by the adoptive parent(s)

32. Adoption Order applications can be determined by
  - A Family Proceedings Court (magistrates' court)
  - An Adoption Centre (designated County Court)
  - High Court
33. We heard from Judge Hunt about the role of the county court in adoption proceedings. He told us that there are seven judges in West Yorkshire who deal with adoption proceedings. Adoption work is a speciality within the family work specialism, with 21 circuit judges in West Yorkshire carrying out such work. Appointments are made by the Lord Chancellor on the basis of individual willingness and aptitude.
34. We learned that in general, in the courts' experience, solicitors are able to accurately judge which cases should go to which level of court. In the main, the magistrates court will only deal with uncontested cases.
35. Once an application has been received a 'first directions' hearing will take place, usually after about 4 weeks. This hearing will set a timetable for receiving any reports the court needs in order to make a final decision, and any other arrangements. It may also set a date for the final hearing. In some cases, a first directions hearing may decide to transfer a case to a higher court, usually on the grounds of complexity.
36. In most cases it is anticipated that the local authority will apply for a Placement Order at the same time as the Care Order. The Care Order is significant in that the threshold criteria is met "that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm" and the making of the Placement Order suspends the Care Order allowing the agency to place the child for adoption once a match has been identified and approved by the Chief Officer – Children's Services on the recommendation of the Adoption Panel.
37. In most cases the application for a Placement Order can be made during the Care Order proceedings. This is dependent on scheduling the Adoption Panel date for recommending that the child should be placed for adoption and the Placement Order should be applied for within the required timescale set by the court.
38. The witnesses involved in the legal process recommended twin-tracking as a precautionary measure ie building in dates for Adoption Panel from the start even when rehabilitation was being considered, in order to avoid delays later in the process.
39. We heard that the court and social services timetables did not always run together smoothly. This could be due to something as simple as a particular member of staff being on holiday. We also heard from adoptive parents how frustrating administrative delays were, when the process was already fairly lengthy and any additional wait was seen as a significant proportion of a very young child's life.

40. Judge Hunt urged all concerned to work to ensure that all the processes are so streamlined that the Care Order and Placement Order can be made at the same time. He considered that it is damaging for all concerned when this cannot be done, as the test of a child's best interest in both cases is virtually the same and it is very distressing for the birth parents to be put through two very similar hearings.
41. In all Placement Order applications the court appoints a Cafcass officer as the child's guardian to protect the interests of the child.
42. Cafcass - the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service – is a national non-departmental public body, set up in 2001. It is independent of the courts and social services. Cafcass functions in family proceedings in the courts are to
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of the child
  - Give advice to the court
  - Make provision for the child to be represented
  - Provide information, advice and support for children and their families
- Cafcass officers are qualified social workers.
43. The guardian will make a report for the court explaining the inquiries they have made and say what they think should happen. This is a detailed report which contains similar information about the child to that prepared for the Adoption Panel. An important part of every practitioner's work is to spend time talking and listening to children to find out what they think and how they feel.
44. It is the role of Cafcass to be independent of the birth parents and the local authority, to act as the voice of the child. In the main they will endorse the proposals in the local authority's care plan.
45. Ultimately it is the court that decides what will happen, based on what it thinks is best for the child. In coming to this view it will take account of the guardian's views and also the child's wishes and feelings as reported by the guardian. Our adoption managers perceived Cafcass guardians to have a strong influence on the decisions made in relation to individual cases.
46. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 includes requirements to ensure that the consent of the birth parents is addressed at an earlier stage in the adoption process than previously. The court must be satisfied either that the parents agree to adoption or the court must decide to dispense with consent on the grounds that the parents cannot be found, are incapable of consenting or that the child's welfare requires it.
47. The local authority can later apply to revoke a Placement Order if the plan for the child changes, for example if an adoptive placement has not been found and it is felt long term fostering may be a better option.

48. Until an Adoption Order is made, parental responsibility is shared between Social Services, the birth parents and the approved adopters, although social services will determine how each party can exercise that parental responsibility. The continuation of parental rights after the making of a Placement Order is a change from previous legislation when a child was 'freed for adoption'.
49. Subsequent to the making of a Placement Order, birth parents are able to apply for leave to oppose the making of an Adoption Order. To be granted leave they will have to show that there has been a change in circumstances since the Placement Order was made.
50. We asked about birth parents' right of appeal against a decision to take their child away from them, and the potential for this to delay a resolution of the case for the child involved. We were informed that there are very limited grounds for appeal with strict time limits and criteria for any legal aid. Whilst a parent might not accept the decision for the child to be adopted, very few actually actively challenged it. Very few cases lead to an appeal as a basis for appeal has to be demonstrated before leave to appeal is granted, and in most instances the court will have covered all the relevant issues in coming to its original decision.
51. Because the birth parents maintain a share of parental responsibility until the point where an Adoption Order is made, albeit they can only exercise this through Social Services, they have a right to be notified of the final hearing.
52. Adoptive parents told us that this can cause anxiety about the possibility of birth parents successfully challenging the making of an Adoption Order. This anxiety persisted despite the low probability of it actually occurring, and the very limited circumstances in which the courts would allow the birth parents to oppose the Order. It seems that as adopters approach the final hurdle they become increasingly anxious about a last minute problem. This is understandable at the end of such a long and complex process.
53. The effect of an Adoption Order is to extinguish the parental responsibility of a child's birth parents and to transfer it permanently and solely to the child's adopters, who become the legal parents. The child's birth certificate is replaced by an adoption certificate showing the adopters to be the child's parents. A child may apply for a copy of their original birth certificate once they reach the age of 18 and indeed may already have a copy as already as part of Life Story Work materials supplied during work done earlier with the child.
54. Locally, adoption hearings are dealt with in two stages. The prospective adopters are only required to attend the second hearing, which is essentially a celebration of the legal adoption, with the child and adoptive parents attending court to receive a certificate of adoption. Photographs are taken and a present is often given.



55. There is a fee for adoption applications, but in some cases financial assistance is available on a means tested basis. Leeds City Council meet the cost where a child is adopted from care.
56. There is a setting up grant for adopters of £500 for each child placed by the Agency. Ongoing financial support is banded according to the child's support needs and is means tested in most cases. The new Act allows more flexibility than in the past. Sometimes a one-off payment might be made, for example to assist with adaptations for a disabled child or a bigger car for adopters taking a large sibling group.

### Adoption Panels

57. Leeds currently has two Adoption Panels meeting monthly. Discussions have been ongoing for some time to establish a third panel in order to deal with the volume of business more effectively and minimise delays for all parties. At present the authority is awaiting the PCT's decision on a business case to provide a third medical adviser.<sup>3</sup> In the meantime existing panels are meeting more frequently to try and clear some of the backlog.
58. Each Adoption Panel has the following membership:
- Chair (an independent person)
  - Vice Chair (senior social worker)
  - 1 social worker
  - 2 councillors
  - 1 medical adviser
  - 1 education representative
  - 3 independent people (eg an adoptive parent, adopted adult, social worker from a voluntary agency or community representative)
59. Each Panel has the services of a legal adviser and a professional adviser. They are not members of the Panel. The professional adviser is a social worker with at least five years relevant post qualifying experience and management experience.
60. The Panel is quorate when at least five members including the chair or deputy, social worker and an independent member are present. The agency decision-maker (the Chief Officer – Children's Services) approves new Panel members. At least two of the adoptive parents we met during our inquiry were Adoption Panel members.
61. The Adoption Panel makes recommendations in the following areas:
- Whether adoption is in the best interests of the child, including advice about contact issues and whether an application should be made for a Placement Order
  - Whether a prospective adopter is suitable to be an adoptive parent
  - Whether a prospective adopter would be a suitable match for a particular child

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<sup>3</sup> This has now been approved

62. The Panel also considers disruption reports, which are prepared when an adoption breaks down, in order to learn any lessons. The Panel produces an annual report on its work.
63. Since January 2006 prospective adopters have been able to attend the Panel meeting where they are being assessed as suitable adopters. This has lengthened the time taken to deal with each case to about 50 minutes, but initial feedback has been positive from both the Panel - who are able to clarify quickly and directly any outstanding questions - and from adopters, who feel more fully involved and assured that the Panel is getting full and accurate information.
64. At present adopters in Leeds do not attend Adoption Panel discussions about potential matches. This is under consideration for the future, but when asked for their views about this during evaluation of attendance at the earlier stage of the process, some adopters felt that any issues would have been addressed at the first session and they would not feel as strong a need to attend again.
65. The average number of items for a Panel meeting across all three categories of its work is 11 items, with paperwork running into hundreds of pages needing to be read in advance of the meeting.<sup>4</sup>
66. The Panel's medical adviser evaluates health information about children put forward for adoption, their birth parents and prospective adopters, and advises on the implications for adoption. Where necessary the adviser will seek additional information and report this to the Panel.
67. The medical adviser also guides Social Services on the information about the child's health that should be provided to the prospective family before placement, and will meet to discuss this with prospective adopters on request.
68. Some reports, eg health reports, are only considered to be valid for a specific time period and may therefore need to be updated between stages of the process, depending on how quickly an adoption proceeds.
69. We spoke to a social worker who had chaired one of the council's Adoption Panels and to one of the medical advisers. We learned that the medical information can be hugely influential in the process, identifying the child's health and any special needs, as well as assessing adoptive parents' suitability.
70. The medical adviser told us that she carried out 101 medicals last year, with a simple case taking 3-4 hours. She visited each child being considered for adoption at home. Her role included trying to collate the

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<sup>4</sup> By February 2007 the average number of items had been reduced to 8. This had caused delays in some applicants coming to Panel, but this should be resolved with the establishment of the third Adoption Panel.

birth family's medical history and trying to predict future needs, although it was not always possible to do this. She will meet the prospective adopters to discuss a child's medical history and give them a balanced view of potential future issues, as far as they can be predicted.

71. However it was acknowledged that during the matching process the optimism and excitement of all parties could lead adopters to have a slightly 'rose tinted' view and perhaps not ask all the questions they wish they had when they look back later, or perhaps not to fully understand the significance of the answers they are given. Staff do not wish to be overly negative. Nevertheless it was clear that over the last five years medical advisers had become far more open to discuss medical issues with adopters than they had been in the past. Today's adopters had far more information available to them before adopting than ever before.
72. For prospective adopters, the GP carries out an initial medical, and the Panel's adviser will seek clarification of any queries arising from this.

### Contact Arrangements

73. We learned that it is increasingly common for contact agreements to be drawn up as part of the adoption process. In most cases these take the form of exchanging letters and photos at specified intervals to keep birth children in touch with their birth parents and vice versa. Social Services provide a letter-box exchange service to maintain confidentiality of identity and addresses. In a limited number of cases there may be face to face contact with siblings and birth parents.
74. The increasing expectations of contact can present a challenge for some adoptive parents, although in other cases it is seen as a positive way of responding to a child's natural curiosity about their birth family. Some of the adoptive parents we met told us about meeting with their child's birth parent at the time of adoption and, although it had been a stressful experience, they felt it meant they could share that knowledge with the child later. In another case there was regular contact with birth siblings. In other cases adoptive parents had deliberately chosen not to meet the adoptive family in order to retain their anonymity due to the families living in close enough proximity to be recognised later.
75. We also heard that it can be upsetting for some children if the agreed contact is not made by a birth parent, or they do not access information sent by the adopters.
76. It can be upsetting for adopted children if they are not able to see their siblings. However sibling contact is more problematic where one sibling remains with the birth parents, as there may be a risk of manipulation by the parents.
77. As a minimum, the Social Services Adoption Archive maintains a record that the adopted child can access when they reach adulthood.

78. All forms of contact are voluntary arrangements, unless a court order is made. However adopters do sign up to the agreements. It is rare for the courts to attach a contact order to an adoption order.

#### Post Adoption Support Service

79. We learned that the department has led in the area of post adoption support, having had a specialist post since 1999, before a team of four was formally established three years ago.
80. It is now recognised that many children who are adopted will present extra challenges to parents, often years after the adoption. Other children within the family may also need support, as well as the adopted children themselves.
81. Patricia Swanson's article 'Why Adoption is Different' included in Barnardo's adopter recruitment pack reminds us that "no child placed for adoption reaches this point unscathed. There is always something that's gone wrong." The evidence from parents we met at the support group emphasised this. However early a child is adopted, there are likely to be some issues that the adoptive family will need to address at some point in the future.
82. Overall, we recognised that the climate of adoption has been and continues to change. It is becoming more difficult to place children for adoption as ever younger children have difficult needs. The new arrangements seek to recognise and respond to this by providing more resources for support to adopters to parent children likely to have problems from the outset.
83. Whereas in the past, there was little post adoption support or financial help, adoption was no longer a 'cheap option' for the authority, with a range of community support needed to deliver successful permanent placements in the long term.
84. It is hoped that the availability of post adoption support will increase the number of adopters willing to consider older children and those with more complex needs. It will also reduce the risk of disruption once a child has been adopted as this is extremely distressing for all concerned. The evidence we heard from adoptive parents certainly bore this out.
85. Some post adoption support is provided through voluntary agencies. This includes supported lodgings provided by Barnardo's Futures as a support to older adoptees and their families, who may need a break from each other.
86. The authority is obliged to provide an independent source of advice on adoption to birth parents. A voluntary agency based in Leeds, After Adoption Yorkshire, provides this support under contract with the Council.

We learned that support, counselling and advice may be requested at the time of adoption or later, sometimes many years on. When we visited Newcastle, we met with a member of their adoption team whose role is specifically to provide support to birth families. She carries out her role in conjunction with the independent provider, including holding a monthly support group meeting.

87. We were told that one of the reasons for contracting out support to birth families was that they may, understandably, not wish to receive support from the very agency that oversaw their child's adoption from them.
88. Some of the strategies and services provided by the department's adoption support team to adoptive families include:
  - Support groups for adoptive parents and adopted children
  - Soft play sessions for young children and their parents
  - Telephone advice line
  - Joint working with the Education Support Worker, to provide training in schools.
  - Life stories and later life letters to provide young people with information on their family and early life
  - Letterbox arrangements for continued exchange of news with other family members including siblings
  - Attachment skills, including play based attachment work. The importance of attachment is recognised in the current popularity of attachment therapy, although there are very few trained practitioners in the UK yet compared to the US where parents and children expect access on an ongoing basis.
  - Referrals to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
  - A regular newsletter for all adoptive families
89. We also learned that a transition group for Year 6 pupils is planned for this coming year, to help with preparation for secondary school.
90. Having been extensively assessed during the adoption process, some adoptive parents persist in feeling they should be able to cope themselves with whatever happens after the adoption, despite the message about the availability of post adoption support being stressed from the training course onwards.
91. The regular newsletter for adopters highlights the availability of the various support services. A growing number of parents access this support, but not the majority.

### Adoption Policy in Leeds

92. In common with other agencies whose policies we saw, Leeds Social Services adoption agency eligibility criteria make it clear that applications are accepted from couples (whether married, unmarried, in civil partnerships and including same sex couples) as well as single people.
93. Most criteria we saw would not consider couples whilst they are undergoing fertility treatment; would seek to match children with adopters from their own heritage for preference but not at the expense of prolonging the child's wait for a family indefinitely; and would not normally place young children under two in families with smokers.
94. One area within the Leeds policy that we did not see explicitly stated in those other examples was a presumption that adopters would still be under 60 by the time the adopted child reached 18, or exceptionally that only one member of a couple would be over 60.
95. Also there was a presumption in Leeds that children under two would not be placed in adoptive families with birth children, unless they were part of a larger sibling group or had special needs. Whilst we did not see such criteria applied elsewhere, this may be a method of managing the higher levels of demand for younger children. Newcastle, for example, reserved the right to apply special criteria to manage demand.
96. We asked about the policy on keeping siblings together. We learned that wherever possible Leeds aims to keep siblings together. However, the overriding concern should be the needs of individual children and in some cases this may lead to the use of different placements. The experience of the children had to be taken into account in making such decisions, as well as the practical considerations of how many children an adoptive family could take on. If siblings are split up a high level of contact, preferably direct contact, would normally be sought.
97. We were told that it was felt to be preferable wherever possible to match a child with parents of the same heritage, but that if this was not possible within a reasonable period, then parents of a different heritage would be considered, as successful placement with a family was the paramount consideration.

### Adoption Panel Statistics

98. We heard about the number of children placed for adoption over the recent past. The Adoption Panel provided us with the following statistics about adoption in Leeds.

	Adopters approved by Panel	Children accepted for adoption	Children matched with adopters
2000/2001	59	94	83
2001/2002	72	108	94 (12 inter-agency)
2002/2003	81	81	84 including (12 inter-agency 7 Consortium 1 Voluntary agency)
2003/2004	55	98	63 including (8 inter-agency 1 Consortium )
2004/2005	43	76	63 including (2 inter-agency 2 Consortium 4 Voluntary agency)
2005/2006	59	86	66 including (9 inter-agency 6 Consortium 4 Voluntary agency)

99. As further background, we received anonymised information about the 54 children currently on referral for adoption and the 32 approved adopters awaiting a match. We learned that managers review these profiles at a regular 3 weekly meeting to ensure potential matches are identified and pursued as quickly as possible.
100. During 2005/06 one placement disrupted during the introductory period and one after eleven months. In the former case a new placement was found. In the latter case long term foster care was considered to be a better option. The older the child at adoption, the greater is the risk of disruption to the adoption. Nationally the rate of disruption is around 10% for children of 8 and over. Leeds' record is better than the average.
101. 5 children were matched with their foster parents during 2005/06, a small decrease on the previous year.
102. Of the children accepted for adoption in 2005/06 62 were White British, and 22 of other, mainly mixed, heritage. 49 of the 59 families approved for adoption were also White British. Of the matches agreed 53 out of 66 were White British children.
103. We learned that sometimes it is not appropriate to place black and minority ethnic children within the Leeds area, due to the close knit communities that exist for some ethnic groups.

## Yorkshire Adoption Consortium

104. As an adoption agency, the local authority is obliged to belong to a local consortium of adoption agencies. Leeds was instrumental in establishing the Yorkshire group.
105. We learned that the consortium brings together all adoption agencies in the region including voluntary agencies, with the aim of increasing the possibilities of matching for children and families in the area. The consortium has appointed a coordinator based at NCH in Leeds, who identifies potential matches from the information provided by the various adoption agencies, and provides information to the child's social worker for follow-up. Leeds placed 16 children through the Consortium between 2002 and 2004.
106. Inter-agency matches between local authorities via the consortium are made on a no charge basis; instead the authority incurs credit or debit points for providing or taking a child from the register. Should an individual authority's balance go beyond a debit or credit of 10 points, then they would expect to be charged or receive a fee, in order to maintain a balance between partners. Inter-agency fees remain payable to voluntary agencies.
107. When we visited Liverpool and Newcastle we discovered that the operation of regional consortia varies considerably. Neither region operated the points scheme used in Yorkshire. In the North West the consortium was seen more as a policy and strategy development forum than as a marketplace.
108. The appointment of the consortium administrator had improved the number of matches made through the Yorkshire consortium. This was particularly important for children who cannot be placed locally either for their own safety, or because some local minority ethnic communities are very localised.
109. With the consortium we learned that smaller authorities tend to place children on the register immediately as children are more likely to need to be placed outside the authority's area than in a big city like Leeds.
110. The debit and credit system operated by the Yorkshire Adoption Consortium was seen as a bonus. Inter-agency placements through the national register can cost between £12,000 and £20,000.
111. The consortium administrator confirmed that recruitment issues were similar across the region, as was the profile of families involved in adoption.



112. From our visit to Liverpool we learned about Adoption 22. This is the recently established consortium for the North West region, although previously Liverpool had been a member of the well-established Merseyside consortium. Whereas the Yorkshire and Humber consortium operates predominantly as a marketplace, Adoption 22 tends to take a more strategic role. For example the development of new protocols in response to the new Act had been shared across authorities. In addition the members of the consortium effectively used their combined influence to draw up protocols for consistent working with Cafcass across the region, to tackle areas of regular disagreement.
113. It was later suggested that the lack of a BAAF (British Association of Adoption and Fostering) office in the north west region may account for the enhanced role being taken by this group. There are BAAF regional offices in both Leeds and Newcastle.

#### National Adoption Register

114. The authority must also provide details of people approved as adopters and children awaiting adoption to the National Adoption Register. The aim of this is to maximise the opportunities for matching. Last year 7 children and one adopter from Leeds were matched in this way.
115. The National Adoption Register uses a national database to identify possible matches which are then referred to the respective local social workers to pursue on behalf of the children and prospective adopters. In most cases, children and adopters are referred to the register within 3 months, unless it is recognised at the outset that they are unlikely to be matched quickly locally, when they may be referred immediately.

#### Voluntary Agencies

116. Adoption Barnardo's Yorkshire and NCH are voluntary adoption agencies operating across the region including Leeds. Both agencies specialise in matching children who are more difficult to place. This includes older children (school age), larger sibling groups, children from minority ethnic communities, those with disabilities and younger children with a family history of mental health problems or drug or alcohol abuse.
117. Voluntary agencies recruit, assess and prepare prospective adopters for matching with children identified for adoption by Social Services. The voluntary agencies have their own Adoption Panels.
118. NCH operates a same race placement policy. Barnardo's is committed to this where possible but will consider other matches.

## Range of permanency options

119. We were conscious right from the outset of our inquiry that current thinking and practice in relation to providing security to children unable to live with their birth families emphasises permanency as opposed to any one solution such as adoption. Therefore, although our inquiry has deliberately focused on adoption, we recognise that this will not always be either possible or desirable as an outcome for some children and young people, and we also looked briefly at some of the other permanency arrangements that provide an alternative outcome.
120. This range of permanency options recognises that for some children, especially perhaps those who come into the care system at an older stage, their attachment to their birth family is strong and needs to be maintained. In his report 'Children's Views on Standards' the national Children's Rights Director passes on a number of messages about adoption from young people, including "make sure no foster child feels that they have to be adopted."
121. Leeds, like many other local authorities, is keen to encourage foster carers, particularly family network carers, who are looking after children under Care Orders to consider other permanency options where appropriate, such as adoption, Special Guardianship Orders or Residence Orders. To ensure that such decisions are made with paramount regard being given to the child's welfare rather than financial issues, Leeds has tried to ensure a level playing field in terms of the financial benefits associated with each option.
122. Leeds Social Services has produced a draft guide for foster carers on considering permanency options. The booklet sets out the process for a foster carer wanting to move to a Residence Order, Special Guardianship Order or adoption. It also seeks to clarify the financial support that can continue to be made available, and the impact on benefit eligibility. The aim is to facilitate foster carers moving to provide a greater level of permanency for children in their care, without financial considerations acting as a barrier.
123. Children who are looked after are likely to have suffered from adverse early circumstances and this can have a profound effect on the way that they manage their relationships within their family, peer group, school and in their wider lives. A stable home life can help these children make progress in all aspects of their lives.
124. Research shows that the most stable and beneficial placements for looked after children are with long term carers. Where children know that their carers are committed to bringing them up to adulthood they are able to put down roots and concentrate on other aspects of their lives. This generally results in better educational, health and social outcomes for children.

125. If Social Services agree with the proposal for a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order they can apply to discharge a Care Order and invite the court to make a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order in favour of the foster carer. The carers themselves must apply for the Order. Social Services will pay the fee where they agree this course of action is in the child's best interests.
126. The transfer to Adoption Agency regulations means that there are some differences between the ongoing allowances payable to foster carers who adopt as opposed to those who are granted a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order.
127. Authorities will differ in their emphasis on particular permanency options, especially perhaps as a child grows older. For example a long-term foster placement might be seen as a faster and more appropriate route to stability than adoption.
128. Cafcass commented that they sometimes feel very disappointed when a child is considered to be 'too old' for adoption and never presented to the Adoption Panel, because the social worker believes that there is no realistic chance of them being adopted. This was particularly distressing given that the hardest group to place is boys over three years old. Nevertheless Cafcass acknowledged the existence of good schemes for long-term foster care that do sometimes turn into adoption or Special Guardianship Orders. They also accepted the resources required for the sort of targeted recruitment required to secure suitable adopters for 'harder to place' children.

#### *Special Guardianship Orders*

129. A Special Guardianship Order transfers most parental rights, but does not sever the formal connections with a child's birth family. As with adoption, there is no longer a requirement for Social Services involvement. A Special Guardianship Order ceases to have effect when the child reaches 18.
130. The Special Guardianship Order is seen as particularly attractive for foster carers, as it removes the need for continued social work involvement in an established care arrangement, without formally severing the ties with a child's birth family.
131. 7 Special Guardianship orders were currently being pursued. It was felt that a Special Guardianship Order would be most attractive to long-term foster carers providing a stable 1-1 placement and who were unlikely to consider fostering another child, or perhaps repeat foster carers who did not feel the need for Social Services input.
132. Local experience suggested that the biggest barrier currently for foster carers considering a Special Guardianship Order was a concern that Social Services may no longer be able to supervise any ongoing contact arrangements with the birth family, as was the case presently. Social

Services subsequently confirmed that support may be available in some cases.

133. There is a Special Guardianship Officer to provide support to those seeking Special Guardianship Orders, and this service will be reviewed as the number of children on Special Guardianship Orders increases.
134. It was acknowledged that it would be important to monitor trends to ensure that the pool of foster carers available for new children entering care was maintained. This highlighted the potential impact of seeking the best outcome for an individual child on the authority's duty to meet the wider needs of Leeds children.
135. The number of Special Guardianship Orders were being counted alongside adoption figures in government monitoring of local authorities' performance.

#### *Residence Orders*

136. A Residence Order is a court order that decides who a child or young person should live with. A Residence Order also ends Social Services involvement, but balances the parental responsibility between the birth family and the carer.

#### *Long-term foster care*

137. A permanent foster care placement enables the continued involvement of a Social Worker whilst providing greater stability for the child.

#### Recruitment of adopters

138. We asked whether prospective adopters coming forward were generally aware of the new context and the kinds of children needing to be adopted. We were told that there are still a number of people coming forward who cannot have their own birth child and want to adopt a freely given baby. The preparation training gives people an awareness of the types of issues they are likely to face and the skills they will need. It is important for prospective adopters to be realistic about what they can cope with.
139. The authority also needs to be clear about the sort of people it is looking for as adopters, and to get this message across in recruitment as well as training and assessment. We felt that the public understanding of adoption is out of date, and therefore the service is likely to be missing out on people who could help.
140. We discussed the Leeds Social Services target of 90 adopter approvals per year and the rationale behind it. We learned that the adoption staff had agreed that this was a realistic target if the teams are fully staffed (7 assessment staff). It was not based on the demand for adoption. Clearly the larger the pool of prospective adopters, the better chance of a good match for children, although there could also be implications for the length of time some adopters wait, for example for the most popular categories

such as younger girls. There are only a limited number of adopters willing to take on the more difficult children.

141. Assessments are sometimes prioritised if prospective adopters are identified as a possible match for a harder to place child or children, for example to match the child's heritage or for a sibling group.
142. We learned that under the new legislation unmarried couples, including same sex couples, are now able to adopt jointly provided they are deemed to be in an 'enduring family relationship'. This is a change from the previous situation where only one partner in such a relationship could legally adopt the child. This may increase the number of unmarried couples willing to adopt.
143. Staff felt that it was too early in the operation of the new arrangements to judge the impact, for example in relation to increased rights for birth parents and the impact on prospective adopters. We wondered whether the growth in contact arrangements would begin to blur the distinction between adoption and other permanency options.
144. We queried whether it was possible to recruit people more generally to look after children in care, rather than specifically as foster carers or adopters. It appears that the current approvals process does not enable this. However one option for the child is concurrent planning. This is considered particularly suitable for very young children. Concurrent planning involves the simultaneous development of two care plans – one for rehabilitation with birth parents and a parallel plan for adoption (possibly by a foster carer) if rehabilitation fails.
145. However concurrent planning is considered to be resource intensive, and involves risks for the potential adoptive parents, so has not been used extensively locally at this point.

#### Black and minority ethnic (BME) adopters

146. We were told that the lack of sufficient BME adopters is a national problem. NCH has set up a specific agency to recruit BME adopters in London, and both NCH and Barnardo's are used locally to help match BME children.
147. Social Services now employ two part time Asian workers, one African Caribbean worker and one white worker to carry out development and outreach work to increase the pool of adopters. It can take time for such work to pay off, but so far there seemed to be more success in the Asian communities than the African Caribbean communities. Seven new BME adopters had been approved in the first five months of 2006/07.
148. The representative from NCH told us about the Black Families Project they set up in London a couple of years ago with an all black staff to provide

role models for adopters. Following successful results they are seeking a national roll out.

149. We asked his views on why there was a shortage of BME and mixed heritage adopters. He told us that an ICM poll on attitudes to adoption commissioned for National Adoption Week had revealed a surprising lack of information about who can adopt. The widely held perception still reflects the historical position of adoption as a white middle-class activity, rather than the reality of its being open to all. There was a clear message here for publicity.

#### Resources for adoption

150. A national protocol introduced three years ago set a target of 70% of Care Orders to be dealt with by the courts within 40 weeks. Leeds achieves a rate of just over 50% which is better than most of the rest of the country. Nowhere achieves the targets due to a shortage of judges. Numbers have not increased in line with the doubling of family case loads in the last 15 years.
151. The court is under a duty to allocate an appropriate share of resources to each case, and to actively manage cases to minimise delay for the child.
152. We also learned that the protocols for judicial case management specifically acknowledged that delay is considered harmful in law, but recognises the need to balance this against the importance of making the right decision for a child's future.
153. We learned that the court paperwork had increased with the application of the new Act, which we found regrettable.
154. We asked about delays with checks such as CRB checks. Judge Hunt told us of the importance he attached to checking the family background of prospective adopters. He suggested that the system would be more effective if responsible authorities could have instant direct access to the appropriate records on computer.
155. We also heard from Judge Hunt and Cafcass about their involvement in private law cases, for example where a separating couple are disputing future arrangements for the custody of their children between themselves. Judge Hunt told us that such cases were taking up an increasing proportion of the resources available for family cases, and that this had a knock on impact on the time taken to deal with adoption proceedings.
156. We learned that there are quarterly meetings between representatives of Social Services, Cafcass and the courts to address common issues. Our visit to Liverpool demonstrated how these types of meetings were being used to good effect to develop consistent practices.

157. The local authority must appoint Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to monitor the cases of all looked after children. Their role is to prevent 'drift' in implementing a child's Care Plan. Although part of the Social Services department, Independent Reviewing Officers are line managed separately from the Social Workers whose cases they are reviewing.

#### Recruitment and retention of staff

158. We discussed recruitment and retention as Social Services had recently had a number of adoption team vacancies to fill following the restructure. We learned that a good applicant had withdrawn after being offered a post as they would lose benefits accrued in their previous job in a voluntary agency. The NCH representative on our Board confirmed that this could be an issue for staff moving in either direction between local authority and voluntary sector adoption agencies. Adoption workers are required to have at least one year's post qualifying experience, therefore the pool of staff is limited. The loss of accrued benefits such as leave entitlement, sick pay and redundancy protection was a deterrent to movement between the sectors. Even where an applicant may have had previous local government service this would not count, as continuous service was the prerequisite.
159. We learned that Leeds City Council's membership of the Joint National Council (JNC) for local authority employment means that the City Council is tied to national terms and conditions such as those relating to leave entitlement. Terms and conditions are only transferable between agencies designated nationally as 'associated employers'. This does not currently cover staff working (as in this case) in another sector but where the overall pool of staff is limited.
160. Where an authority has withdrawn from the JNC it may decide to honour the existing terms and conditions of an employee joining from another organisation. The only discretion currently available to Leeds City Council would be to offer a financial incentive to offset any loss of benefits, and this would need to be carefully considered in terms of setting precedents.
161. The only other possibility would be to make a case at national level for the inclusion of staff from other adoption agencies within the scope of 'associated employers', or to encourage the JNC to modify their stance. The wider implications of such a move would need to be taken into consideration.
162. We heard that the ceiling for Social workers in the adoption teams is spinal column point 38, whilst in child protection it is spinal column point 40.
163. Staff often work at evenings and weekends for home visits, and there is a need to be flexible to accommodate this on both the employee and employer's side. We were not sure whether flexible working patterns were promoted in recruitment literature.

## Evidence from Visits

164. As part of our inquiry we visited Liverpool and Newcastle City Councils to discuss how they organise their adoption services and to learn from any good practice. We also met with some young people who had been adopted and some adoptive parents. The remainder of the summary of evidence presents the key messages from each of these meetings.

### Liverpool

#### Structure

165. As in Leeds the adoption and fostering teams are separate. The adoption team includes 12 Social Workers and 2 Team Leaders, one of whom takes a lead on strategic and financial issues and advises the Adoption Panel, with the other having more of an operational focus. The team also includes a ½ time therapeutic Social Worker and a ½ time drama therapist. This is a bigger team than in Leeds.
166. A key difference is that in Liverpool the adoption team take on a child's case as soon as adoption is confirmed as the plan for the child's future. This change was made in response to problems with cases 'drifting' once the adoption plan was approved, as child protection crisis responses were understandably prioritised over family finding by Social Workers in the Safeguarding and Support team.
167. The transfer of cases (and staff) into the adoption team has allowed Social Workers in the team to progress adoption cases more quickly, and was singled out as the most effective measure taken by the authority to tackle delays.
168. An additional benefit is that the adoption team is now automatically notified as soon as adoption is identified as a possible plan for a child. A member of staff in the adoption team will then work with the allocated Social Worker to advise them on the process as it develops, until the point at which a decision is made and the case transfers to the adoption team. For example they will advise on the early commissioning of adoption medical reports, to avoid delays at the Adoption Panel.
169. A 300% improvement had been achieved in adoption figures between 2002 and 2005, but this had now peaked. The increase can be partly attributed to the encouragement of long term foster carers to adopt, a policy also followed in Sheffield with similar results.

#### Family finding

170. Liverpool has around 60 children with adoption plans at any one time. At the current time there were only 8 children for whom they were having any difficulty finding a family. Difficulties were mainly due to significant special needs or behaviour issues, or complex family contact arrangements. The authority had been successful in placing sibling groups but mainly due to nationwide recruitment through 'Be My Parents'.



### Children relinquished for adoption

171. There was always a balance to be struck between considering extended family care and the lower chance of a successful adoption later if this option should break down. Experience in Liverpool suggested that it was much harder to achieve successful adoption for boys over 4 years old, and slightly older for girls. For this reason, children were tracked to ensure their long-term best interests were protected.
172. Nevertheless, we also learned that the majority of foster carers in the city were extended family carers.

### Recruitment of adopters

173. The authority had appointed a specific recruitment and advertising officer for the fostering and adoption services. This was someone with a media background rather than a social worker.
174. Monthly information evenings were held for people wanting to explore adoption. Potential adopters were prioritised, for example those willing to take sibling groups.
175. The training for adopters consisted of 3 days of preparation training and 1 day's assessment, and was competency based. The feedback from prospective adopters was very good. The competency basis to assessment seemed to be the trend, including with foster carer training.

### Recruitment and retention of staff

176. This was not an issue for the adoption service. The introduction of senior social worker grades up to £33,000 helped. Consideration is also currently being given to loyalty payments after 3 and 5 years. In addition staff in Liverpool worked 37.5 hours per week for 35 hours pay, thus accruing an additional day off every 4 weeks and a day and a half every 12 weeks.
177. The authority's massive investment in technology meant that all of the adoption team had a laptop, mobile and blackberry, and many of the team members were teleworkers, which was popular in terms of organising their work life balance.

## Newcastle

### Structure

178. Two notable roles in the adoption team include a Social Worker for Birth Families, and a dedicated Independent Reviewing Officer for adoption cases (line managed outside the team).

### Family Placement

179. Newcastle does not make a lot of use of the regional consortium for placements. When advertising children for adoption they advertise nationally for preference over the local area.

180. Locally, there has been a rise in the last 6 months in the number of babies and pre-birth cases identified for care.

Degrees of permanency

181. Only 7.2% of looked after children under 16 are in residential care, with only 3 units containing 19 beds available within the city. No children under 10 are in residential care. The shift from residential care to foster care had been a deliberate policy.

Recruitment of adopters

182. Newcastle recruits adoptive parents from within a 50 mile radius of the city. They hold an information evening once every two months in the city centre, coinciding with late night shopping. There is a presentation, and social workers on hand to talk to everyone individually.
183. Preparation groups also run every two months, so people are not waiting too long. In fact some people have come forward from other authorities because they had no planned training in the near future.
184. Advertising has included Yellow Pages, Metro stations, bridge banners, website, and the Centre for Life. Feedback collected from prospective adopters has made reference to all of these sources.
185. There are no specialist workers within the team for black and minority ethnic adoption. The local diversity of minority ethnic backgrounds makes it difficult to target such work. The authority relies on the Sahara Project through the local consortium. Through the consortium they can assist potential adopters to access every authority in the region and carry out a joint assessment.

Disruptions

186. Newcastle has been very successful recently in preventing disruptions. Following a number of breakdowns a few years ago, an independent reviewing officer (IRO) was appointed in 2002. There have been no disruptions since November 2004. This is attributed to a combination of good matching, and also the proactive role of the IRO. Where the IRO identifies a need for support the resources are quickly assigned to provide this at an early stage.

Recruitment and retention of staff

187. There have been no vacancies in the adoption team for 2½ years, despite problems across Social Services in attracting experienced staff. The team includes senior practitioner roles.
188. We talked about post qualification (PQ) training, and learned that Leeds City Council is piloting a family placement qualification as an alternative to the existing childcare scheme. It was hoped that this would be a more relevant PQ option for some staff.

### Timescales

189. Newcastle expected the time taken for adopters from initial inquiry to the Adoption Panel decision to be 6-8 months. For children in care, the 4 month review should lead to a permanency plan. Concurrent planning was also discussed, with adoption staff in both Newcastle and Leeds highlighting that it required a high level of resources to support the adults, and is therefore not often used.

### Cooking Crew

190. We met with 8 young people from the 'Cooking Crew' at Pizza Hut. The Cooking Crew is a support group for adopted children, run by Social Services. The group was set up about 18 months ago to help young people who have been adopted in forming peer group relationships. The young people meet weekly on a Tuesday evening. They take part in a range of activities and cook and eat together.
191. Young people make a commitment to attend regularly in order that they can all get the maximum benefit from the mutual trust, support and friendship that develops within the group. They attend for about a term. Normally the group would not allow two pupils from the same school or siblings to attend the group at the same time.
192. Some of the young people who have attended the Cooking Crew will also receive support from other services, including one to one support from a Connexions Personal Adviser, and also CAMHS services.
193. The young people completed a brief questionnaire for us before we met up with them. The information from this is summarised below:
- Two of the young people were less than 6 months old when they were adopted; three were between 2 and 3 years old; and two were eight years old.
  - Of those who were old enough to remember, most felt that they had been listened to before a decision was made and that their views made a difference. Nobody said that this was not the case.
  - Five of the eight young people were told what was happening while they were being adopted, at least some of the time, including three who said they were told all of the time.
  - When we asked who had helped the young people when they were being adopted, besides their mum and dad, they mentioned foster parents, social workers and siblings.
  - We also asked who helped now. Answers again included mum and dad, siblings and named adoption support staff.
194. We gave the young people the opportunity to tell us anything else they wanted to. We received two comments – "I'm happy!" and "I think most people should adopt older children because they need parents – not much time left."

195. Other things that the young people told us during discussion covered the following topics:
- Contact – they liked the letterbox contact arrangements, which seemed to work well. Some of them kept in contact with siblings as well as birth parents through this route. One young person had been upset by a birth parent finding and ‘watching’ them from a distance.
  - Siblings – several of the young people told us about their siblings. Some had contact with siblings and others did not. One young person was upset that she is not allowed to contact her sister until she is 16. Another told us that they had been separated from siblings in foster care but brought back together when they were adopted.
  - Bullying – some of the young people had experienced bullying at school because they were adopted. In some cases people had made lurid suggestions about why they had had to be adopted, based on media horror stories of violence etc. This was in no way true of their own circumstances but was based on a media image of some of the reasons for family breakdown, and was very hurtful, especially if the young person did not know their own full history.
  - Foster care – several of the young people had had a number of short-term foster carers before being adopted. Staff confirmed that a shortage of foster care placements meant that children were likely to be moved frequently, especially where they had to be removed from their birth family urgently.
  - Social workers – we were concerned that some young people might also have had several different social workers dealing with their case
  - The Cooking Crew group – there was clearly a strong bond of mutual support throughout the group and with the staff. Several good friendships had developed. The young people clearly enjoyed the activities.
196. We are very grateful to the young people for sharing some of their thoughts and experiences with us, especially as we appreciate that sharing these experiences can be difficult and painful.

#### Adoptive Parents

197. We met with 11 adoptive parents, who we contacted through the post-adoption support service. Some of them were regular attenders at a support group for adopters run by Social Services. We also received written comments from two parents who were unable to attend the meeting.
198. The parents we met with were a mix of couples and single parents. Some had their own birth children and others had decided to adopt because they were unable to have their own children. Some were going through the adoption process for a second time to increase the size of their family, and they were able to compare their experiences across time.

199. On the whole, this was a positive comparison, as adoptive parents felt that attitudes had improved, for example to single adopters. The preparation and training was felt to have improved. Also the timescales and delays had improved from the past, although there were still frustrations and concerns about the length of time some parts of the process took, and understandable frustration about avoidable administrative delays. For example when told that a report could not go to the Adoption Panel because it was waiting to be typed, one parent just wanted to offer to type it herself.
200. This frustration was compounded by the knowledge that any delays meant longer in a foster placement or placements for a child. Adoptive parents felt that this was particularly important in terms of the attachments that a young child might be forming with a range of adults, and the extension of any negative and unsettling behaviour that could result. Adopters were concerned that delays could significantly extend the proportion of a young child's life experience in care, when the accepted wisdom was that the earlier a child could be settled with a permanent family the better.
201. Interestingly, a couple of the parents were now independent members of Adoption Panels, and one told us how she now recognised some of the delays that had previously frustrated her as being normal.
202. The parents also found the increased rights of birth parents within the court process a challenge to deal with. It caused anxiety right up until the final Adoption Order stage that the birth parents might successfully challenge the adoption, even where adopters knew this was highly unlikely in reality. Adopters also highlighted the extensive assessment work carried out even where birth parents had had a number of previous children removed from their care. They felt that the increased rights of the birth parent to have the opportunity to prove they could be a successful parent put some children at greater risk than would have been the case in the past.
203. Another issue that came up during discussion was the sense of isolation between approval as a prospective adopter and the time of matching. Adopters often felt nervous and guilty about being seen to 'pester' busy staff to see if a match might have been found.
204. Parents expressed concern about the turnover of staff, and the number of part-time staff, and the impact of this on the length of time that progressing cases could take. This was coupled with anecdotal evidence of 'drift', where chance conversations between social workers had led to matches that could perhaps have been formally identified earlier.
205. Some parents felt that they had not fully appreciated the extent of the difficulties that a child might face when they were originally approached about a match. It was suggested that the excitement felt about a positive match needed to be complemented by a clear understanding of the reports

that had been produced about a child. With the benefit of hindsight some parents wished they had asked more questions at an early stage to prepare adequately. They commented on reports being written 'in code'.

206. Some of the parents told us that they had recruited friends as adopters as a result of their own experiences, as well as returning themselves to adopt more children. In addition they praised the information bus that had been used to provide publicity and initial information about adoption. They felt this was an effective way of encouraging people to find out a little bit more, if they felt that they might be interested, as people might just pop in.
207. All of the parents were extremely appreciative of the post-adoption support services, and we heard how crucial a role it has played in some cases in providing the ongoing support that has enabled adoptive placements to continue in situations where they may have broken down in the past. Parents acknowledged that this support might be needed at any time during a child's growing up, not necessarily close to the time of adoption. They also benefited from mutual support that has been established between adoptive parents.
208. Contact was an important issue for the parents we met, and clearly was one where some struggled to know how best to respond to the needs of their child to know about the birth family, whilst managing the stresses and upset that contact – either direct or indirect – could bring in the short term. Contact could include the adoptive parent meeting birth parents at the time of the adoption. In some cases children met up regularly with siblings.
209. All the parents recognised and promoted the importance of life story work with their children. We learned a lot about the change in attitudes, and how adopted children are now expected to be told that they have been adopted much earlier in life than had been the case in the past, when many may not have known until they were teenagers or adults, if then. We began to get a little bit of a sense of the challenge that this can pose for families, despite the recognised benefits of children knowing the truth about their background.
210. A strong theme of the discussion was problems at school. These included: a general lack of awareness from some teachers of how to meet the needs of adopted children, for example how to handle work about families; the extent of bullying of adopted children; meeting resentment from other parents when an adopted child was perceived as disruptive; and fighting to have a child's special educational needs, recognised, assessed and met.
211. During the discussion, it was suggested that the liaison with education had improved for looked after children, but that adopted children perhaps still had a tendency to fall through the net. Many of them would be vulnerable to developing special educational needs at some point as a result of their early experiences, yet because they were no longer in care and had a new family, their needs were not being proactively promoted to the same extent.

212. Despite this, we also heard from some parents about good examples of school responses, particularly led by individual headteachers who were more aware of the needs of adopted children.
213. One parent told us about the difficulty of funding assessments that were required to diagnose their child's special needs in the first instance. Had the child remained in care then this expense would have fallen to the local authority. However it was now an unanticipated financial strain for the family. Funding to address the special needs of adopted children was highlighted as an area of growing concern as children with more significant ongoing issues are adopted.
214. Overall, we gained a sense of the determination of these parents to face the challenges and provide their adopted children with a loving environment, and their appreciation of the support that they needed to do this successfully.

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Originator: Kate Arscott

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## Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

### Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 8 March 2007

### Subject: Work Programme

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A copy of the board's latest work programme is attached for members' consideration (appendix 1).
- 1.2 The programme reflects decisions made at the board's February meeting.

### 2.0 Work programming

- 2.1 Attached to this report are the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions (appendix 2) and the minutes of the council's Executive Board meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> February (appendix 3), which will give members an overview of current activity within the board's portfolio area.

### 3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Board is requested to agree the attached work programme subject to any decisions made at today's meeting.

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Item	Description	Notes
<b>Meeting date: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007 - The deadline for reports for this meeting is 10.00am on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February</b>		
<b>The implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority</b>	To receive evidence as Session two of the board's inquiry	
<b>Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs)</b>	To receive a further update on progress in implementing the board's recommendations arising from the inquiry on the SILCs	The board received a full response to its recommendations in July 2006, and set up a working group to monitor progress
<b>Inquiry Report – Adoption</b>	To agree the board's final inquiry report	
<b>Meeting date: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007 - The deadline for reports for this meeting is 10.00am on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March</b>		
<b>14-19 Review</b>	To consider and comment on the 14-19 review of educational provision in the city	The Board agreed to hold an additional meeting in order to have an input into this strategic review

Item	Description	Notes
<b>Meeting date: 19<sup>th</sup> April 2007 - The deadline for reports for this meeting is 10.00am on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April</b>		
<b>Children and Young People Plan</b>	To discuss a final draft of the plan	This plan is part of the council's budget and policy framework
<b>Inquiry Report – Youth Services</b>	To agree the board's final inquiry report	
<b>Inquiry Report – Trust Schools</b>	To agree the board's final inquiry report	
<b>Annual Report</b>	To agree the board's contribution to the annual scrutiny report	
<b>Children Act</b>	To receive an update on the implementation of the Children Act 2004 in Leeds	This is a regular update. To include budgetary information
<b>Young People's Scrutiny Forum</b>	To receive the forum's final inquiry report	The Young People's Scrutiny Forum is carrying out an inquiry on bus use by young people in Leeds
<b>Working Group</b>		
<b>Communications</b>	To review communications from Education Leeds and Children's Services	The Working Group was set up in December 2006, following a referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

LEEDS CITY COUNCILFORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONSEXTRACT RELATING TO THE SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

For the period 1 March 2007 to 30 June 2007

<b>Key Decisions</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>Expected Date of Decision</b>	<b>Proposed Consultation</b>	<b>Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b> (To whom representations should be made)
Review of Primary Provision in Alwoodley Primary Planning Area To consider statutory representations received and, if necessary, to refer to SOC for a determination on the closure of Fir Tree and Archbishop Cranmer Primary School in August 2007 and the establishment of a new school on the Archbishop Cranmer site in September 2007	Executive Board (Portfolio:Children's Services)	14/3/07		The report to be considered with the agenda for the meeting	Chief Executive of Education Leeds

<b>Key Decisions</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>Expected Date of Decision</b>	<b>Proposed Consultation</b>	<b>Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b> (To whom representations should be made)
Primary Review:Proposals for Harehills/Gipton Primary Planning Area To consult on a proposal to permanently expand Harehills Primary School from 2FE to 3FE	Executive Board (Portfolio:Children's Services)	14/3/07		The report to be considered with the agenda for the meeting	Chief Executive of Education Leeds
Castleton Children's Centre To authorise expenditure	Executive Board (Portfolio: Children's Services)	14/3/07	Full consultation – locality based school and childcare forum since September 2005 and Elected Members	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Learning and Leisure
Yeadon Queensway Children's Centre To authorise expenditure	Executive Board (Portfolio: Children's Services)	14/3/07	Full consultation – locality based school and childcare forum since September 2005 and Elected Members	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Learning and Leisure
Leeds Play Strategy To endorse the Leeds Play Strategy	Executive Board (Portfolio:Children's Services)	14/3/07	Extensive consultation with all key stakeholders has taken place in developing the strategy over recent years	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Children's Services

<b>Key Decisions</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>Expected Date of Decision</b>	<b>Proposed Consultation</b>	<b>Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b> (To whom representations should be made)
Swinnow Children's Centre , Pudsey To give authority to spend	Executive Board (Portfolio:Children's Services)	14/3/07	Full consultation – locality based schools and Childcare forum and Elected Members	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Learning and Leisure
Broadgate Children's Centre , Horsforth To give authority to spend	Executive Board (Portfolio:Children's Services)	14/3/07	Full consultation – locality based schools and Childcare forum and Elected Members	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Learning and Leisure
Review of Resourced Provision Outcome of Statutory notice of Resourced Provision for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Children at West End Primary School, Horsforth, Leeds	Executive Board (Portfolio:Children's services)	14/3/07		The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Chief Executive of Education Leeds
Harehills Primary School Approval to incur capital expenditure in respect of the scheme to provide additional accommodation over a two year period at Harehills Primary School.	Executive Board (Portfolio: Children's Services)	14/3/07		The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Chief Executive of Education Leeds

<b>Key Decisions</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>Expected Date of Decision</b>	<b>Proposed Consultation</b>	<b>Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b> (To whom representations should be made)
<p>East Garforth Primary School</p> <p>To seek approval to the ring fencing of a capital receipt generated from the sale of an area of surplus school land. Approval will also be sought to inject the capital receipt into the capital programme and to incur expenditure in respect of the construction of a new nursery, changing rooms, and an office link between the existing school buildings, and to carry out improvements to the school playing fields at East Garforth Primary School.</p>	<p>Executive Board (Portfolio: Children's Services)</p>	<p>14/3/07</p>	<p>Consultation ongoing with DfES</p>	<p>The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting</p>	<p>Chief Executive of Education Leeds</p>
<p>Major Refurbishment and General Building Works 2007/08</p> <p>To authorise the incurring of £2,000,000 expenditure in respect of the Major Refurbishment and General Building Works programme.</p>	<p>Director of Children's Services</p>	<p>2/4/07</p>		<p>Design and Cost report</p>	<p>Director of Children's Services</p>



<b>Key Decisions</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>Expected Date of Decision</b>	<b>Proposed Consultation</b>	<b>Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b> (To whom representations should be made)
<p>Schools Devolved Formula Capital Budgets To approve the carrying out of capital works and incur expenditure at Leeds schools, to be funded by Devolved Formula Capital grant</p>	<p>Director of Children's Services</p>	<p>2/4/07</p>		<p>Design and Cost Report</p>	<p>Director of Children's Services</p>

## **NOTES**

Key decisions are those executive decisions:

- which result in the authority incurring expenditure or making savings over £500,000 per annum, or
- are likely to have a significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards

### **Executive Board Portfolios**

### **Executive Member**

Central and Corporate

Councillor Mark Harris

Development

Councillor Andrew Carter

City Services

Councillor Steve Smith

Neighbourhoods and Housing

Councillor John Leslie Carter

Leisure

Councillor John Procter

Children's Services (Lead)

Councillor Richard Brett

Children's Services (Support)

Councillor Richard Harker

Adult Health and Social Care

Councillor Peter Harrand

Customer Services

Councillor David Blackburn

Leader of the Labour Group

Councillor Keith Wakefield

Advisory Member

Councillor Judith Blake

In cases where Key Decisions to be taken by the Executive Board are not included in the Plan, 5 days notice of the intention to take such decisions will be given by way of the agenda for the Executive Board meeting.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

FRIDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY, 2007

**PRESENT:** Councillor A Carter in the Chair

Councillors D Blackburn, R Brett,  
J L Carter, R Harker, P Harrand, M Harris,  
J Procter, S Smith, K Wakefield and  
J Blake

Councillor Blake – Non-Voting Advisory Member

### 169 Exclusion of Public

**RESOLVED** – That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as exempt on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of the exempt information so designated as follows:

- (a) Appendix 1 of the report referred to in minute 178 under the terms of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3) and on the grounds that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because disclosure to the public would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the Council.
- (b) Appendix 1 to the report referred to in minute 180 under the terms of the Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3) on the grounds that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because the appendix contains commercially sensitive information which if disclosed may prejudice the future negotiations of the contract for the project.
- (c) Appendix 1 to the report referred to in minute 185 under the terms of the Access to Information Procedure Rules 10.4(3) on the grounds that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because the information relates to the financial and business affairs of the tenderer and disclosure of the figures would be prejudicial to the competitive tendering exercise.

### 170 Declaration of Interests

Councillors D Blackburn, J L Carter, Harker, Harrand and Smith declared personal interests in the item relating to Leeds City Varieties Music Hall (minute 178) as Board members of Leeds Grand Theatre.

Councillor Blake declared personal interests in the items relating to Leeds City Varieties Music Hall (minute 178) as a Board Member of Leeds Grand

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Wednesday, 14th March, 2007

Theatre and Otley Prince Henry Grammar School (minute 185) as a governor and a parent of a pupil at the school.

**171 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2007 be approved.

**CENTRAL AND CORPORATE**

**172 Council Change Programme - Phase 1 Implementation**

Further to minute 54 of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2006 the Chief Executive submitted a report updating Members on the work progressed to date and on proposals that are intended for implementation on or around the 1 April 2007.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the remit, role and purpose of the proposed new director posts, as detailed in paragraph 3.2.3 of the report and as set out in appendix 1 of the report be endorsed.
- (b) That the proposals in respect of revised managerial arrangements for learning and leisure with effect from 1 April 2007 be endorsed and the proposed realignment of responsibilities as outlined in paragraph 3.4.2 of the report be noted.
- (c) That the proposals in respect of revised managerial arrangements for social services from 1 April 2007 as detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the report be endorsed.
- (d) That the intention to establish a new post of Chief Officer (Highways) with revised delegation arrangements as detailed in paragraph 3.7 of the report be noted.
- (e) That the proposal for revised leadership arrangements for central and corporate functions as proposed in paragraph 3.8 of the report be endorsed.
- (f) That the proposals for the Officer Employment Rules to be amended to provide for appointments to all posts defined as deputy director or above to be made by a committee or sub-committee of the Council, involving at least one member of the Executive be endorsed.

**173 Local Area Agreement - Mid Year Review and Refresh**

The Chief Officer (Executive Support) submitted a report informing members of the key findings and outcome of the review of the Local Area Agreement for the period 1 April 2006 to 30 September 2006 and seeking endorsement to the amendments to the Local Area Agreement from April 2007. The report also highlighted anticipated future changes to the role of Local Area Agreements in public sector delivery.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting to be held on Wednesday, 14th March, 2007

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the progress to date on delivering against Leeds' Local Area Agreement be noted.
- (b) That the revisions of the Local Area Agreement to be implemented from April 2007 onwards be endorsed.
- (c) That a further report be submitted in due course outlining plans for the development of a revised Local Area Agreement to be implemented from April 2008.

**174 Leeds Learning Network Capital Scheme**

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report seeking approval to inject £4.6m into the capital programme in respect of the new contract for the provision of the Leeds Learning Network.

**RESOLVED –** That the partially funded injection of £4.6m and the incurring of expenditure be approved.

**175 General Fund Financial Health Monitoring 2006/07 - Month 9 Update Report**

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report setting out the Council's financial health position for 2006/07 after nine months of the financial year, in respect of the revenue budget for general funds services including expenditure and income to date compared to the approved budget.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the projected financial position of the authority be noted.
- (b) To recommend to Council the budget adjustments detailed in paragraph 4.1 of the report.
- (c) That the transfer of the projected surplus to general reserves be approved.

(The matters referred to in part (b) of this minute, being matters referred to Council were not eligible for Call In).

**176 Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2007/2008**

(A) Revenue Budget 2007/2008

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report on the Council's budget for 2007/08 following detailed consideration of services requirements and taking account of the Local Government Finance Settlement. The report indicated that the budget would result in a Band D Council Tax of £1,016.16 for consideration by Council.

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) That Council be recommended to approve the Revenue Estimates for 2007/08 totalling £505.223m, as detailed and explained in the submitted report and accompanying papers, including a 4.5% increase in the Leeds' element of Council Tax.
- (ii) That the development of medium term realignment proposals as detailed in 10.7 of the report be approved.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting to be held on Wednesday, 14th March, 2007

- (B) Housing Revenue Account Budget 2007/2008  
The Directors of Corporate Services and Neighbourhoods and Housing submitted a joint report on the Housing Revenue Account budget and ALMO management fee distribution for 2007/08.

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) That the Council be recommended to approve the budget and that, in order to meet the requirement of the Department of Communities and Local Government average rent increases be kept to 5%, pro rata reductions be applied to the rent restructuring figure of 7.3% in respect of all tenants' rents.
- (ii) That the Council be recommended to approve that service charges be increased in line with average rent rises and that the charges for garage rents be increased to £5.25 per week.
- (iii) That the Council be recommended to approve that the reserve of £2m established to cover the risk of not meeting the subsidy trigger be released and a virement of £1.369m be actioned to reflect the increase in Major Repairs Allowance as detailed in paragraph 3.2.3 of the report.

- (C) Capital Programme 2006/07 to 2010/11  
The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report setting out the updated capital programme for 2006/2011.

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) That the Council be recommended to approve the capital programme as attached to the submitted report.
- (ii) That the Director of Corporate Services be authorised to manage, monitor and control scheme progress and commitments to ensure that the programme is affordable.

- (D) Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statements  
The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report on the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2007/08, and provided an update on the implementation of the 2006/07 strategy.

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) That the initial treasury strategy for 2007/08 as set out in Section 3.2 of the report be approved and that the review of the 2006/07 strategy and operations set out in Section 3.1 be noted.
- (ii) That the council be recommended to set borrowing limits for 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 as set out in Section 3.3 of the report.
- (iii) That the Council be recommended to set the treasury management indicators for 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/2010 as set out in Section 3.4 of the report.
- (iv) That the Council be recommended to set the investment limits for 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/2010 as set out in Section 3.5 of the report.

- (v) That the Council be recommended to reaffirm the Treasury Management Policy Statement and note the amendments to Section 7: "Approved instruments and Organisations for Investments" as attached at Appendix C of the report.
- (vi) That the officers who have worked on the preparation of the budget documents referred to in this minute be informed of the thanks of this Board.

(The matters referred to in parts A(i), B(i),(ii) and (iii), C(i) and D(ii),(iii), (iv) and (v) of this minute, being matters reserved to Council were not eligible for Call In).

(Under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.5 Councillor Wakefield required it to be recorded that he abstained from voting on the decisions contained in this minute).

## **DEVELOPMENT**

### **177 Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan**

The Directors of Development and Corporate Services submitted a joint report seeking Executive Board approval to the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan 2007/08 which was appended to the report.

**RESOLVED** – That the council's Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan be approved.

## **LEISURE**

### **178 Leeds City Varieties Music Hall**

The Directors of Development and Learning and Leisure submitted a joint report providing an update on the refurbishment project for the City Varieties.

Following consideration of appendix 1 to the report designated as exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3), which was considered in private at the conclusion of the meeting it was

**RESOLVED** –

- (a) That an injection of £8835.0k into the Capital Programme be authorised and the proposed inclusion of £9200.0k in the Capital Programme 2006/07 to 2010/2011 for the City Varieties Music Hall refurbishment project be noted.
- (b) That additional expenditure of £170.0k for the preparation of the Stage 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund be authorised.
- (c) That expenditure of £495.0k for the preparation of the Stage 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund provided the Stage 1 bid is successful be authorised.
- (d) That the submission of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a £3m grant towards the cost of the refurbishment project be authorised.

- (e) That the proposed funding contribution of £1m by the Leeds Grand Theatre and Opera House Ltd be noted.
- (f) That officers be instructed to seek acquisition of the third party property, the purchase price not to exceed the estimated upper limit valuation figure quoted in the report, with any purchase being funded in the first instance through prudential borrowing subject to the cost of this being containable within existing revenue budgets.

**179 Policy on the Safety Management of Open Water**

The Director of Learning and Leisure submitted a report informing Members of the outcome of the Coroner's Inquest into the tragic drowning of 2 teenagers at Roundhay Park, the subsequent actions regarding water health and safety issues and to seek approval of the Policy on the Safety Management of Open Water which was attached as Appendix 3.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the Policy on the Safety Management of Open Water be approved and adopted and that Directors be requested to implement the Policy as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of the report.
- (b) That the 'Wise up to Water' lifesaving Water Safety Project for young people be endorsed.
- (c) That provision within the Capital Programme to ensure that the result of the remaining risk assessments can be implemented be approved.

**180 Approval of New Leaf Leisure Centres Outline Business Case**

Further to minute 283 of the meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2005 the Director of Learning and Leisure submitted a report seeking Members' approval for the Outline Business Case and its submission to the Department for Culture Media and Sport.

Following consideration of Appendix 1 to the report designated as exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3) which was considered in private at the conclusion of the meeting it was

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) That the contents of this report be noted and the submission of the Outline Business Case for the new Leaf Leisure Centres Project, subject to the approval of the PPP/PFI Coordination Board be endorsed.
- (b) That the combining of the New Leaf Leisure Centres Project under the Education PFI Project Board for the project in accordance with paragraph 9 of the report be approved.
- (c) That the delivery of the New Leaf Leisure Centres PFI project through the Local Education Partnership as described in paragraph 8.2 of the report be approved.
- (d) That the creation of a new East Leeds leisure centre be pursued through the EASEL proposals.
- (e) That discussions with DCMS be instigated to seek the utilisation of additional PFI credits as identified in the report for the development of a new replacement leisure centre at Holt Park.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting to be held on Wednesday, 14th March, 2007



**181 Governance Arrangements for Leeds Sports Trust**

The Chief Legal Services Officer submitted a report drawing to the attention of Executive Board the present position with regard to the governance arrangements for the proposed Leeds Sports Trust (the Trust) and to consider suitable arrangements for the appointment of trustees, including the Chair.

- (a) That Mr John Davies be appointed to act as Chair of the Shadow Trust and thereafter as Chair of the Trust until its first Annual General Meeting.
- (b) That the intention not to offer payment to the trustees be noted.

(Under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.5 Councillor Wakefield required it to be recorded that he abstained from voting on the decisions contained in this minute).

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**182 Childrens Trust Arrangements - Update on progress**

Further to minute 54(b) of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2006 the Director of Children's Services submitted a report updating Members on the progress on these arrangements, including the creation of the Director of Children's Services Unit. The report also set out more detail about these new ways of working to improve services for children and families.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That progress on matters agreed at the meeting on 20 September 2006 in relation to children's trust arrangements, including the creation of the Director of Children's Services Unit be noted.
- (b) That the proposal for the accountability and intervention framework and hosting arrangements be endorsed.
- (c) That the nature of the work to be undertaken in coming months be noted and that further regular updates be provided.

**183 General Surestart Grant - Extended Schools Capital 2006/08**

The Director of Learning and Leisure submitted a report seeking authority to incur expenditure of £1,508.9k on other payments from the General Surestart Grant – Extended Schools 06/08 parent scheme 13178.

**RESOLVED –** That the incurring of expenditure of £1,508.9k on other payments from the General Surestart Grant – Extended Schools 06/08 parent scheme 13178 be authorised.

**184 General Surestart Grant - Sustainability Capital 2006/08**

The Director of Learning and Leisure submitted a report seeking authority to incur expenditure of £537.3k on other payments from the General Surestart Grant – Sustainability 06/08 parent scheme 13179.

**RESOLVED –** That the incurring of expenditure of £537.3k on other payments from the General Surestart Grant – Sustainability 06/08 parent scheme 13179 be authorised.

**185 Otley Prince Henrys Grammar School - Provision of Specialist Science Accommodation**

The Chief Executive of Education Leeds submitted a report updating Members on the proposed scheme to provide a new build specialist science block at Otley Prince Henry's Grammar School, and seeking approval to proceed with the scheme.

Following consideration of appendix 1 to the report designated as exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3) which was considered in private at the conclusion of the meeting it was

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the proposal to proceed with the scheme in respect of the scheme to provide additional specialist science accommodation at Otley Prince Henry's Grammar School be approved.
- (b) That the incurring of additional expenditure as detailed in the exempt appendix in respect of the above from Capital Scheme No 12051/SC1 be authorised.

**ADULT HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

**186 Commissioning Plan for Day Services for Older People**

The Director of Adult Social Services submitted a report recommending a programme of detailed work, local consultation and involvement with ward members to finalise the details of the new service model and to undertake its implementation.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That a programme to develop further and introduce the new service model which is outlined in this report be agreed. This will follow a full consultation process, more detailed work and the development of implementation plans.
- (b) That further reports, following consultation with ward members and the development of locality implementation plans, outlining the progress made be submitted to the Board.

(Under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.5 Councillor Wakefield required it to be recorded that he abstained from voting on the decisions contained in this minute).

**CITY SERVICES**

**187 Progress Update on Integrated Waste Strategy**

The Director of City Services submitted a report providing Members with an update on key areas of progress in implementing the Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005-2035.

**RESOLVED** – That the contents of this report and the progress to date on the implementation of the Integrated Waste Strategy be noted.

**188 Establishment of a Leaders Waste Strategy Review Party**

The Director of City Services submitted a report seeking approval for the establishment of a Group Leaders' forum to review the implementation of the approved Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005-2035 and to advise the Executive Board.

**RESOLVED** – That a Working Party comprised of the leaders for the time being of the political groups represented on the Council, or their nominees be established for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of the approved waste strategy and tendering advice to the Executive Board.

**NEIGHBOURHOODS AND HOUSING**

**189 East and South East Leeds Regeneration Area**

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing submitted a report seeking approval of the headline Regeneration Programme for the EASEL Joint Venture and advising members of whether Bellway had met the first key milestone of the Additional Negotiation Period and also an assessment of what progress Bellway had made regarding fulfilling the requirements of the longstop date of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007 when the EASEL regeneration project procurement process will be ended.

**RESOLVED** –

- (a) That the headline Regeneration Programme that the Council is seeking to achieve through the EASEL Regeneration Project and the key interventions set out in Sections 3 and 4 of the report which will form the basis of the Regeneration Plan for the first 5 years be agreed.
- (b) That the commitment of sufficient resources to fund the Regeneration Plan be agreed in principle.
- (c) That the progress that has been made in relation to completing the tasks that require to be completed as part of the Additional Negotiation Period be noted.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2007

LAST DATE FOR CALL IN: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2007 (5.00 pm)

(Scrutiny Support will notify relevant Directors of any items Called In by 12 noon on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2007).

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