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## Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

### Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 13 July 2006

Subject: Members' questions

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**Specific Implications For:**

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the Gap

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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 Wherever possible, members were encouraged to give prior notice of questions, to ensure that officers attending the board were able to provide an informed response.
- 1.5 The scrutiny support unit has received prior notice of questions for this meeting, and the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds will be attending the meeting to respond.
- 1.6 Members of the board are asked to consider how they wish to deal with this issue for future meetings. Four options are proposed:
  - Members' questions to be an agenda item at every meeting
  - Members' questions to be an agenda item at every alternate meeting

- Members' questions to 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)
- No formal members' questions agenda items

## **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the board identifies any issues for further scrutiny arising from the members' questions session.
- 2.2 That the board decides how to deal with member's questions for the future.