



Report of the Director of Children's Services

Executive Board

Date: 20 September 2006

Subject: Proposed children's trust arrangements for Leeds

<p>Electoral Wards Affected:</p> <p>All</p>
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<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community and Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

This report outlines the next developments to enable the council and its partners to fully deliver the requirements of the Children Act 2004. It proposes children's trust arrangements that provide a framework to deliver significantly improved outcomes for children and young people in Leeds.

Background

This report builds on the significant progress already made in Leeds to implement the Children Act by working in partnership. The foundations we have will enable successful implementation of the proposed children's trust arrangements. For example: Leeds already has some good services being delivered to children and young people; a genuine commitment from everyone involved to put children and young people and their parents and carers at the heart of services and improve outcomes; some excellent examples of innovative practice and local integrated working; many strong partnerships built on trust and shared vision; an understanding of what has been done and what remains to be done; and crucially, the first Children and Young People's plan for the city that all relevant partners are committed to deliver.

Proposal for children's trust arrangements

The proposals are a result of six months of review by the new Director of Children's Services to provide the leadership and direction necessary for improving outcomes further. This review has been done with the existing partnership, and also includes some work done by the Director of the Leeds Initiative. It sets a framework, to build on the good work already being done, for clearer roles to be established for commissioning, for ensuring that children and young people are at the heart of services, that integrated change is delivered locally, and that everything is done in partnership.

The elements proposed for the totality of the children's trust arrangements are embraced by the Children Leeds brand (part of the Leeds Initiative). These elements are: an Open Forum, Safeguarding Children Board, Children Leeds Partnership, Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board, Wedge Partnerships for Children Leeds, and arrangements for the new Director of Children's Services Unit. These arrangements need to be seen as a whole, because they can be most effective by the parts working together coherently, to deliver the changes required to improve outcomes. The leadership role of the Director of Children's Services Unit make the most of the proposed children's trust arrangements and this will be the subject of further work and then a delegated decision by the Chief Executive.

The approach taken for the children's trust arrangements, including the Director of Children's Services Unit, fits with the earlier decision made about the context for the appointment of the Director of Children's Services and how this role would be fulfilled in Leeds, that is, a strategic role rather than an operational management role. These arrangements will enable clearer roles to be established and therefore accountability to be better defined. A 'thin' Director of Children's Services Unit is proposed, rather than a large, new, operational department. The focus can then be on influencing the things that will make the most difference to outcomes for children and young people, such as better understanding needs, commissioning services accordingly and wrapping services around the child. There are resource implications of the proposals for the Director of Children's Services Unit, although not significant implications within the context of the overall spend in this area (within 1% of total children's services expenditure). However this will require resources to be realigned over time and cross the partnership. There will be a review of the effectiveness of these arrangements during 2007 to ensure that they will deliver improved outcomes.

Recommendations

- 1 Members of the Executive Board are asked to note and approve:
 - the proposed "children's trust arrangements" and associated governance structures, including the relationships between the elements and the Director of Children's Services Unit;
 - the overall role and approach to meeting accountabilities proposed for the Director of Children's Services Unit;
 - the approach to dealing with resourcing issues across the partnership; and
 - the intention to review the children's trust arrangements in 2007.
- 2 Members of the Executive Board are asked to note that the Chief Executive will use his delegated powers to establish the Director of Children's Services Unit once the final detail has been worked up.
- 3 Members of the Executive Board are asked to note and request further update reports in due course about the implementation of the arrangements and about specific significant issues.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 This report sets out the next set of decisions necessary to build on the good foundations in Leeds, to make further and faster progress in implementing the Children Act 2004. It contains the Director of Children's Services' proposals for children's trust arrangements for Leeds, including an outline of the proposed Director of Children's Services Unit to be established within the council.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Executive Board has received and approved reports in respect of 'Change for Children' - the outcome of the review by the Office of Public Management (6 July 2005); implementing the Children Act 2004 (6 July and 21 September 2005); the appointment of a Director of Children's Services (21 September 2005), organisational arrangements leading from the appointment (17 February 2006) and regular reports on progress with implementation of Every Child Matters in Leeds. The Director of Children's Services took up her responsibilities on 1 March 2006, supported by a small seconded team of managers and staff.

Appointment of the Lead Member for Children's Services and Director of Children's Services

- 3 The Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on local authorities to appoint a Director of Children's Services – responsible directly to an authority's chief executive. The details of the roles and accountabilities assigned to the Director of Children's Services were set out in some detail in the report of September 2005. The Children Act also requires the appointment of a Lead (Executive) Member. Leeds has assured strong political ownership by appointing a Lead Executive Councillor, a Support Executive Councillor and four 'lead' councillors.
- 4 The approach taken to the appointment of the Director of Children's Services in Leeds, as set out in September 2005, was to make the role strategically accountable, therefore avoiding the distractions of micro operational management which often overwhelm strategic directors both in the council and elsewhere. It also frees the Director of Children's Services (and sends a powerful signal to partners) that she is responsible across the partnership and not simply within the council.
- 5 The nature of this appointment set the context for the recent review work and in turn for the proposals for the children's trust arrangements. The accountabilities of the post mean that it is essential for it to be a part of the overall children's trust arrangements. Setting up the post in this way strengthens the right of the Director of Children's Services to be consulted on, and oversee, the allocation of all resources and budgets that support the provision of services to children and young people and their families. The approach will ensure that children and young people are at the centre of the work of the Director of Children's Services (and her support staff) and that she is able to be held to account by them. The key challenge will be to achieve real and lasting change by ensuring that providers play a full part in the partnership and through securing the integration of services locally.
- 6 With the focus on strategic leadership of integrated services and commissioning, it was not anticipated that the Director of Children's Services would require a large central unit, but it was seen to require significant skills. The approach to the Director of Children's Services role is to enable transformational change through distributed leadership – sharing the role with locality partners and providers. The Director of Children's Services will concentrate on having the capacity and clarity to be able to identify and set the overall direction, intervene to break log jams or ensure that poor performance is addressed.

Local partnership work and the Children and Young People's Plan

- 7 In response to the Children Act 2004 and in conjunction with city-wide partners, the council formed a strategic body, known as Children Leeds, to secure improvement in services to children and young people in the city. As an integral part of the successful Leeds Initiative partnership, this body has already helped to set the vision for children and young people within the city and is working to secure the best possible services to meet their needs. This partnership work has operated at a city-wide and a local level and has been very inclusive, for example through the Open Forum and around the Change for Children programme.

- 8 Following a major consultation involving over 8000 people, the majority of whom were children, young people and families, the first Children and Young People's Plan for the city was agreed and formally launched on 17 July 2006. The plan sets out agreed outcomes and priorities, within a national framework, for the involvement of children and young people and for the improvement of services for them. This plan is owned across the partnership and the Director of Children's Services is accountable for the delivery of the required outcomes through partners and service providers. The Children and Young People's Plan is also part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework and approved by Full Council.

National guidance for children's trust arrangements

- 9 The Children Act and associated guidance requires relevant partners (all those principally involved in providing support to children and young people in Leeds) to co-operate in improving services for children and young people. It requires the local authority (through the Director of Children's Services) to make appropriate arrangements so that relevant partners and others can co-operate to the best effect for children and young people.
- 10 The guidance issued to help councils implement the Children Act has, over time, been modified in respect of how the improvement of services should be organised. These modifications, resulting from implementation in the pilot authorities and broader learning from other areas, have significantly changed the approach to be taken.
- 11 The initial guidance envisaged the formation of a formal (legal) trust and many authorities created new Children's Services Departments. This was modified in the light of experience to a requirement for children's trust "arrangements", in which a formal trust is a possible model, but where the significant emphasis is on "integrated, strategic commissioning" of services on a needs-led basis.
- 12 A report prepared for DfES by Price Waterhouse Coopers on developing the children's services market has just been published. One of its main recommendations is to separate strategic commissioning from provider services. This is exactly in line with the intended approach in Leeds. Adopting this approach will be very different from that taken by other authorities who have already created a single Children's Services Department (or, indeed, a provider trust).

Recent review work

- 13 Since her appointment, the Director of Children's Services and her support team have considered in some detail the matters covered by this report and looked at the options for improving services to children and young people within the context of Leeds, including reflecting on the way that the Director of Children's Services post was set out in Leeds in September 2005. There has also been advice from a wider leadership group drawn from the council, from relevant partners from all sectors across the city, and from specialist consultants provided by SOLACE Enterprises.
- 14 The Director of the Leeds Initiative has also undertaken some extensive review activity, both of the city wide partnership and of the more local arrangements around services for children and young people. This has been a detailed and inclusive review, which has informed these proposals from the widest and most objective basis possible. It has also helped to ensure greater ownership of the proposals across a broad range of individuals and organisations.
- 15 This combined review activity has also helped to identify and gain commitment to further work required in order to contribute to the transformation which will improve outcomes. A particularly significant aspect of this review was to suggest a separation between the 'harder' and 'softer' roles within partnership working (where the 'harder' is about commissioning and budgets and the 'softer' is about advocacy and influencing). Although an over simplification, this has been a very useful insight to help clarify roles and develop the various elements of the children's trust arrangements.
- 16 The review work to develop the proposals in this paper has been considered corporately in the context of the Leeds Initiative, the Local Area Agreement, the White Paper on providing services to adults and as part of the broader changes within the council. The work of the Director of Children's Services has fully informed these considerations and the proposals contained within this report are entirely consistent with wider proposals. Separate papers on this work are

included on the agenda for this meeting (an overview paper about proposed changes to the council, Role of Director of Adults' Social Services and current developments with the Leeds Initiative and the Local Area Agreement).

DEVELOPING THE CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS FOR LEEDS

- 17 After much consideration, council officers and partners have concluded that the best approach in Leeds would be for children's trust arrangements to embrace the planning and delivery of services to improve outcomes, but without the creation of a legal trust. The proposed children's trust arrangements fully meet the requirements of the Children Act, are in line with national guidance, and importantly, build on the work already done in Leeds and the context of partnership working in the city. The primary driver for this review work and for these proposals is a judgement that this is what will make the biggest difference to outcomes. It is planned that there will be a further review of these arrangements in 2007 to check that they are working as planned.
- 18 The extent of the services that the Director of Children's Services has to 'wrap services around' the child is huge (as set out in the Children Act and documentation on contributions to the five Every Child Matters outcomes). In Leeds, it represents approximately £1.5 billion of revenue spending per year. All of this business could never be brought within a single provider trust, so a commissioning approach is likely to be most effective to influence the spending and activity of relevant partners. The integrated strategic commissioning model provides a common approach for all partners with whom the Director of Children's Services works.
- 19 The size of organisational change needed to create a new department as a Children's Trust would disrupt all services resulting in a concentration on organisational structures rather than focusing on improved outcomes at the front line from the outset.
- 20 These arrangements ensure that the Director of Children's Services can exercise her leadership role effectively and that she and the local authority can meet their accountabilities. The implementation of these arrangements will require ongoing development of the partnership arrangements and organisational structures. It will also impact on the role and cultures of all individuals and their organisations involved.
- 21 These proposals for children's trust arrangements should be considered alongside the Children and Young People's Plan which sets out the priorities and outcomes, the approach and principles and the transformation to be delivered in Leeds. This paper therefore is not intended to be a repeat of all that remains to be done to deliver the improvements, but rather to spell out how these new arrangements will provide the framework for the plan to be delivered. The following sections describe some of the most important considerations and conclusions from the review activity, set out the proposals and show how they can work effectively.

Clarity of roles

- 22 The proposed children's trust arrangements recognise that integrated strategic commissioning is a separate activity from the provision of services. It sees separate roles for the strategic commissioners and providers, whilst recognising that many activities are, and will continue to be, "commissioned" by providers.
- 23 The Director of Children's Services is accountable for the achievement of the national and local outcomes and will, in turn, hold partners to account for delivering the outcomes in the Children and Young People's Plan. Individual partners (including council provided services) will remain accountable (through their duty of co-operation) for ensuring that budget plans and spending within their organisations align with these priorities.
- 24 There will not be a "hard split" between the two roles. Providers within the council and across the partnership have formed part of the current leadership group for the Director of Children's Services and will continue to do so. The information they derive and their expertise and knowledge will be harnessed as plans and priorities are reviewed and revised. Indeed, it is envisaged that they will take such decisions, within the strategic framework set out in the Children and Young People's Plan, on a daily basis and across most of the services actually delivered, responding to identified need.

Involving children and young people and their parents and carers

- 25 One of the key areas for development is to increase the participation of children and young people and their parents and carers throughout the processes surrounding them, both at strategic commissioner and provider levels. This would be difficult to achieve fully within a traditional 'trust'. The proposed arrangements require that participation will be a major and direct part of identifying needs, prioritising outcomes and of designing and transforming services. Ultimately, the Director of Children's Services is accountable to children and young people in the city for ensuring these arrangements improve outcomes.

Locality and partnership

- 26 The council and the Leeds Initiative partners across the city have a real commitment to improve outcomes and services, improve equality and enable better standards of life for all. This is reflected in the Vision for Leeds, the Local Area Agreement, the Corporate Plan and in the more recent development of the Children and Young People's Plan with the identification of specific vulnerable groups. The essential focus for the impact being felt in neighbourhoods and communities has been a key consideration in developing these proposals. Furthermore, the government has made it increasingly clear that local choice and locality decisions are vital to public service improvement.
- 27 This requirement for local impact has been reflected through the creation of Area Committees by the council and District Partnerships within the Leeds Initiative, and is the focus of work in the National Health Service to move services from acute to community provision. The locality focus is increasingly seen through extended services clusters around schools and children's centres.
- 28 Whilst there is no doubting the emphasis on locality in all plans and strategies, many of these arrangements have been created as the specific need has arisen. There is a need for further work to simplify the partnership arrangements at locality level, recommended by consultants reporting on area management arrangements in Social Services and also in the more recent review work by the Leeds Initiative.

ELEMENTS OF THE CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS

- 29 There are a number of elements proposed as part of the overall children's trust arrangements, brought together under the banner of Children Leeds. They are set out in the diagram at appendix 1 to this report and are the means for providing a better framework and clearer governance for improving outcomes across the city. These proposals have been agreed with the partners from all sectors across the city, build on some foundations already in place and take account of some of the main issues from the review activity – such as a separation of roles and working to integrate services locally. The elements of Children Leeds are:
- Open Forum
 - Safeguarding Board
 - Partnership
 - Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board
 - Children Leeds District Partnerships
 - Director of Children's Services Unit
- 30 Some of these elements are familiar and already in place or developing, others will be implemented in the coming months. In particular, further work is required to migrate from the current sets of subgroups at a city-wide and local level, to ensure that these are the right ones to meet the challenges set out in the Children and Young People's Plan. These children's trust arrangements need to be seen as a whole, because they will be most effective when the parts work together coherently. For example, leadership will be provided by each of the elements in different ways and on different areas. A key role of the Director of Children's Services Unit is to make the children's trust arrangements work smoothly and to provide the coherence.
- 31 The **Open Forum** is a continuation of an approach that has been running effectively for about two years. It takes the form of a series of events – either city-wide or local – open to those involved in, or interested in the way that services are delivered for children and young people. It helps to ensure that interaction with children and young people and their parents and carers is

comprehensive and effective. It helps with communications, sharing best practice and learning across the city. Getting professionals working alongside each other can help to break down barriers and enable the 'wrap around the child' that is required for the local transformation. One of these events took place in March this year and there two further 'events' currently being planned – the first is about local delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan and will be led by the Director of Children's Services. The second is being organised by children and young people themselves, as a way of raising awareness of their needs and preferred ways of working.

- 32 The **Safeguarding Board** has been the subject of an earlier Executive Board paper. This will be chaired by an independent person, appointed by the Director of Children's Services. The Board will have direct access, through its chair, to the Director of Children's Services. The day-to-day work of the Board will be managed by a safeguarding manager who will be line managed by the Chief Officer (Children and Families). The main roles of the Board are to set standards, identify best practice and investigate poor practice and complaints, for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Leeds.
- 33 The Leeds Initiative review described in paragraph 14 considered the work of partnerships centred around children's and young people's issues and looked at this against best practice guidance. The review recommended a better definition of roles between a 'softer' advocacy and challenge role, and the 'harder' role of commissioning. This would mean that those involved are able to deliver better outcomes. In these proposals, the **Partnership** has responsibility for the 'softer' side (of strategy and development) and the **Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board** will address the 'harder' issues of commissioning and budgets.
- 34 The **Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board** will be chaired by the Director of Children's Services and will comprise 'relevant partners', as laid down in the Children Act, and other key partners. Its role will be to commission services to meet the needs of young people, setting standards for service and monitoring performance. It will oversee and monitor the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan through the Director of Children's Services Unit.
- 35 The **Partnership** will be responsible, as a subgroup of the Leeds Initiative, for providing advocacy and challenge to secure improved outcomes. In the short term, it will have a series of subgroups, many of which already exist, to drive specific aspects. These will be reviewed over the coming months to see if this can be done more effectively now that the Children and Young People's Plan is clear about outcomes and priorities. It is proposed that the Partnership be chaired by the Lead Executive Councillor for Children's Services with two additional places for councillors (one from the council's administrating alliance and one from the main opposition party).
- 36 Given the importance of making a difference at a local level and impacting on those services which affect outcomes for children and young people – such as housing or regeneration for example – the local aspects of the children's trust arrangements are crucial (see paragraphs 26-28). At a district level, the **five Children Leeds Wedge Partnership Groups** already established will develop further and operate within the context of the broader Leeds Initiative District Partnerships, linking into the council's area committee structure so that there is good member engagement in children and young people's issues.
- 37 The **Children Leeds Wedge Partnerships** need to be firmly linked to more localised arrangements developing around clusters of schools and children's centres, which are key to improving outcomes and integrating services at the front line. There is more work to do to better understand the 'hard' and 'soft' roles to be performed by these groups, but there is a commitment to this direction. The current range of sub groups and working groups will be reviewed within each district area in autumn 2006 to ensure effective arrangements at this level.
- 38 The proposed **Director of Children's Services Unit** structure (see appendix 2 for a broad outline of the main roles) has been designed to be an integral part of the children's trust arrangements and to provide capacity for clarity of thought and action. The detail of this will be taken through the normal processes to enable the Chief Executive to determine this as a delegated decision to be made. It has been developed within the context set out at the time of the Executive Board report in September 2005. The Director of Children's Services Unit will need to demonstrate effective decision-making, risk analysis and a capacity to manage performance at output and strategic levels. It must have the ability to identify and correct poor

performance and the foresight and organisational flexibility to know when and how to adjust its objectives or intervene in the provider market to secure the right services.

- 39 The **Director of Children's Services Unit** will need to model changed ways of working and lead by example in every way. It is designed to operate as a number of interlocking layers, each consisting of teams with inter-dependent roles, each with a clear accountability and remit but also capable of proactive work beyond that. This will require new skills, balanced with appropriate experience and knowledge. Individual team members will be constantly challenged to work differently and to provide solutions in a flexible way by working across traditional boundaries to facilitate change.
- 40 It is proposed that the **Director of Children's Services Unit** will not need to be large but it must be purposeful – able to focus on its key tasks as indicated above. The main structure will be created in two or possibly three phases, commencing immediately following the decision of the Executive Board. In the first phase, essential elements will be brought together to manage current priorities, further develop the thinking and identify resources required for the longer term. These resources will then be added as necessary in phase two. There may then be a final phase to adjust these arrangements on the basis of experience and review.
- 41 It is already envisaged that the **Director of Children's Services Unit** will require and benefit significantly from additional support beyond its basic establishment within the context of the children's trust arrangements. For example in looking at needs, in managing projects and in leading change to integrate front line services. Much of this will be done by working with various sets of arrangements with partners and providers, meaning that the strategic role of the Director of Children's Services Unit is informed by a range of organisations more closely linked to operations. This support and contribution is seen as a vital element, providing a flexible and dynamic unit that will reinforce the close inter-dependence of the whole set of children's trust arrangements. This approach builds on many good examples already in place of joint or multi-agency teams brought together for specific pieces of work – for example, children's centres, extended schools, developing the Children and Young People's Plan or the West Leeds Area Project.

MAKING THE CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS EFFECTIVE

- 42 Clearly the most important – effectively the only – consideration, in designing the proposed children's trust arrangements is the improvement of services to children and young people. The proposals are built around a focus on the outcomes, both the current set and those to be developed in the future. The key roles of the Director of Children's Services Unit to support the effectiveness of the children's trust arrangements are:
- identify the outcomes required and agree these with partners;
 - commission the services required from providers to achieve the outcomes;
 - provide the leadership and the environment for service change and improvement;
 - monitor progress and manage performance; and
 - intervene when outcomes do not meet needs, or when service performance is poor.
- 43 In addressing each of these areas, the Director of Children's Services Unit will be structured to be the "driver" not the "doer" – setting the **outcomes** and the **standards** but not the **how** - except where the provider market proves unable to do this. The scale of the task to be undertaken is considerable. It can only be met by a focus on making the children's trust arrangements effective and better. This is dependent ultimately on the authority (and accountability) of the Director of Children's Services, which in turn will rest on the commitment of all those in the trust arrangements to achieving the outcomes.
- 44 This focus on achieving improvement through others is a key part of the approach and offers a significant opportunity for the Director of Children's Services Unit to be effective. First, the use of existing and successful service deliverers is cost effective. It makes full use of considerable expertise encouraging and supports a better and increasing focus on local integrated provision and the needs of the individual. Finally, it provides stability of provision - stability but not sterility.
- 45 It follows that there are a number of key areas for making these arrangements effective in practice. Crucial to the whole concept are the relationships to be formed, which will influence the ability of the Director of Children's Services Unit and all those in the trust arrangements, to

improve the lives of children and young people. The yardstick is the Children and Young People's Plan – the desired outcomes of which must be met. A major part of the work of the Unit is built around this and the capacity to drive the requirement of the Plan forward. Key to this will be the availability and interpretation of accurate and timely information. Finally, there needs to be understanding, and so guidance, of the approach taken.

Key relationships

- 46 There are **four key relationships** that must be built and continuously maintained through the work of the Director of Children's Services Unit, which are strongly reflected in the leadership roles. The **first** of these is the relationship with the **elected councillors**. Through the Children Act, the council is responsible for securing effective services for children and young people. Therefore, it is vital that all elected members are well informed (for example, through member briefings and area committees) and are used as a sounding board for issues (for example through scrutiny and area committees). The relationship with the Lead Executive Member is equally vital to ensure that the Executive Board members have the understanding and support to enable them to be effective in supporting their role in improving outcomes.
- 47 The **second** vital area is the relationship with **partners**. This is already strong in Leeds, but will need to be further enhanced in the future. There will be a need to grow and change relationships as we seek better integrated services and clearer structures. At a strategic level, the formation of the Partnership with its clear and simple links to the Leeds Initiative, and the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board and the commitment of relevant partners, along with the Open Forum are significant in this respect.
- 48 It was outlined earlier that partnership is very important in localities, where partners, particularly those from a non-public sector background, make such a telling contribution. There is much to build on here and a tremendous commitment and energy. The work to be done here is to simplify and rationalise structures so that there is effective working on priorities. The key issue of integration of service provision must be led from the centre – but delivered by providers and locality partnerships. The role of locality enabler within the Director of Children's Services Unit will be crucial to this and we are learning much from the West Area Project and other initiatives in relation to this.
- 49 The **third** area is the relationship with **providers and potential providers**. This is crucial both inside the council and elsewhere. The need to maintain a coherent approach will be addressed by the continuation of the strategic management team concept with major providers meeting as part of the Director of Children's Services team and also with a broader set of partners meeting through the Partnership.
- 50 The **fourth**, but most important, is participation and engagement work which centres on **relationships with children and young people and their parents and carers**. As outlined earlier in the report, this is ongoing and will be built upon further. One of the key areas for development is to secure more participation of children young people and their parents and carers in the services that affect them. Participation will play a major and direct role in identifying needs, setting service priorities and designing services which meet their needs. Providers and localities as much as the Unit will be required to put children and young people at the heart of all they do and to demonstrate accountability to them for improving outcomes.

Securing improvement of services

- 51 There are a number of ways of securing improved services within the context of the children's trust arrangements. They are: managing through the Children and Young People's Plan; creating a context to achieve change; holding to account; and intervention. Because of the importance of these to improving outcomes, they are set out in more detail below.

Managing through the Children and Young People's Plan

- 52 The chief reference point for all concerned with support to children and young people in Leeds is the Children and Young People's Plan. This sets out what needs to be achieved, the priorities, the approach and the transformation to be achieved. As already indicated a major role for the Director of Children's Services Unit is to monitor performance and the realisation of these objectives and report on this to the appropriate part of the children's trust arrangements, such as

Children Leeds Partnership, the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board and the Safeguarding Board.

- 53 Work has already begun to identify the detailed performance management structure for this and to provide for “early warning” for the Director of Children’s Services of any significant shortfall in performance or a failure to support children and young people. This will not require large numbers of staff within the Director of Children’s Services Unit – the key is the effective utilisation (and where necessary enhancement) of existing systems of management and reporting.
- 54 All those covered by the children’s trust arrangements will need information to ensure that the focus of the defined priorities remains appropriate and make any necessary adjustments within the term of the plan. Alongside this, work will be undertaken to analyse future needs and learn from existing experience.
- 55 Reporting mechanisms and systems (particularly integrated systems) for this are not yet well developed and significant work will be required before they can be fully effective. However, there is already a considerable body of excellent data, supported by good working relationships, from many sources and work is ongoing on information sharing and data flows. The sorting, wider use and broad analysis of raw data will be the key to future effective planning.
- 56 The added value of the Director of Children’s Services Unit is in ensuring these are in place, effectively used by providers and localities and in the use made by the outputs from the systems. The process has begun both in the compilation of the Children and Young People’s Plan and in the work now being undertaken through the West Area Project.
- 57 Although “hard” data analysis and performance data monitoring will be very important to managing the plan, the “soft side” will be equally important. The work undertaken within provider teams and in locality based partnerships, both as part of formal monitoring arrangements and through other learning, will be a source of vital input to understanding the relevance of the plan and the effectiveness of its implementation. Their learning will contribute significantly to future needs analysis and prioritisation

Creating a context to achieve change

- 58 The Children and Young People’s Plan sets out the aspirations and objectives of the partnership for children and young people. Partner organisations’ plans are recognised as the vehicles for achieving and managing outcomes influenced by strategic commissioning and the Director of Children’s Services Unit’s approach to securing effective provision. The emphasis will be to lead transformation by facilitating providers to work together as teams, so that there is integration and delivery that is wrapped around the child..
- 59 It is the intention to produce a “Commissioning Plan” which will set out the approach to commissioning at all levels. The plan will include :
 - how statutory, voluntary and community sector agencies can be provider/ commissioners and providers;
 - how service users will be involved in creating commissioning models eg the Budget Holding Lead Professional model;
 - a gradual and systematic approach to building integrated strategic commissioning plans related to service pathway planning. The Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board will be responsible for developing the specific proposals for joint commissioning by the partners;
 - a recognition that we have a city-wide need to build up preventive and early intervention services through a joint commissioning model;
 - high quality, common commissioning documentation; and
 - tool kits for good commissioning and for diagnostic checking of existing commissioning arrangements (eg decommissioning).
- 60 Work has already begun on the production of a “Provider Strategy”. Partners and colleagues have been consulted and a draft strategy has been developed. The Provider Strategy will set out:
 - the nature of the relationship between commissioners and providers;

- how children and young people and their parents and carers will be involved at all levels and in particular provision of services;
- an indication of performance and governance arrangements;
- the type of provider market which may be required;
- how partners' own provider roles will be used to support market development;
- how commissioners will support the development of new or changed services.

61 These documents are intended to be indicative views and approaches and it is expected that they will be modified in the light of experience, and certainly over time, to reflect changing plans and requirements. They also set out for providers, and potential providers, the current expectations of the Director of Children's Services and provide some degree of understanding about its approach.

62 The council has begun work to create a "Workforce Strategy" to set out the approach to managing the many changes which are required to support the change programme. A strategy of this nature is required by the statutory guidance relating to the Children Act and is supported by a national workforce change programme. The council strategy will cover not only the employees involved in support to children and young people, but will have wider application in other parts of the council and city. The intention is that the strategy will support wider change and reinforce those introduced as part of the Closer Working Better Services programme. The Corporate HR team is also leading work with partners, to ensure that wider workforce integration issues are addressed strategically across all partners.

Holding to account

63 One of the key roles of the Director of Children's Services and her staff will be to hold partners and providers to account for achieving outcomes. This is within the context of ultimately being held to account by children and young people themselves. The mechanisms for doing so are enshrined in the proposals for straightforward and clear governance and performance structures. At the Director of Children's Services Unit level these will be used to model a focus on the outcomes through meeting with and holding to account, not by endless reports or statistical analysis meetings.

64 Meetings with partners and providers will allow the Director of Children's Services to ask "simple" questions – focused on whether outcomes are improving. Where the improvement is not happening the Director of Children's Services will challenge providers and partners to say why – they will be held straightforwardly to account for delivering the service for which they exist and the outcomes to which they are committed.

65 This needs to be informed by accurate data and information and the Director of Children's Services Unit will have the capacity to obtain and use these. This will be all the more powerful because the data will be that of the provider or locality; asking questions will go to the root of the existing responsibility of the provider to deliver high quality, effective and most importantly, safe services to children and young people.

Intervention

66 It may not always be possible to meet the needs of children and young people and families simply by agreeing outcomes and monitoring the achievement of them. There are three likely ways in which this may arise. First, the performance of the provider may not meet required standards. Second, there may not be the capacity to provide the needed services and finally, the outcomes may not meet the needs of the subject. In each of these cases the Director of Children's Services Unit will have the capacity to respond.

67 Where poor performance is the issue this will be a matter for the providers themselves, managed by their own performance management systems and overseen by the Director of Children's Services Unit. The providers will have performance accountabilities within their own area – for example Children and Families Social Services are responsible to the Council, GP practices will account to the Primary Care Trust; the role of the Unit is simply to hold them to using these effectively. Where this fails to achieve the desired results there are tried and tested interventions which can be commissioned by the Director of Children's Services Unit – possibly using the experience and capacity of other providers.

- 68 If there is a requirement for market intervention – perhaps to deal with the geographical location of a service or to develop new services, it is envisaged that this will largely be achieved through provider services. The added value of the Director of Children’s Services Unit is identifying the need and stimulating the response. Growing a new service may involve the Director of Children’s Services Unit in direct leadership and management of a project but this will be passed to a provider at the earliest opportunity and in the mean time will almost certainly be achieved through temporary arrangements and direct involvement of existing resources.
- 69 Finally, if the outcomes set out do not meet the needs in the planned period – possibly because there are different needs or priorities in a particular area – the Director of Children’s Services Unit will have the capacity to understand this and respond. If this were the case, it is likely that the problems would be identified by local partners or providers. The clear pathways for such messages will enable this to be heard by the Director of Children’s Services and she will have the authority and channels to ensure a prompt response.
- 70 In each of these cases, the added value of the Director of Children’s Services Unit is its expertise, ability to create effective channels of communication and authority to match resources. Above all, the clarity and focus it can achieve through its leadership role in transformation and its commissioning role within the wider partnership make it a powerful driver for change.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

- 71 These proposals have a potentially significant impact on all that the council is trying to achieve through the Corporate Plan and the Vision for Leeds. There is a specific impact on Narrowing the Gap agenda, given the priorities in the Children and Young People’s Plan around some of the key vulnerable groups. These proposals are intended to secure delivery against the outcomes in that plan. There is a potentially positive impact on equality issues if these proposals are implemented effectively because they require that those receiving services be treated as individuals and in a way that they would want to be treated. This means that irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, a person should receive the right services in the right way.
- 72 These proposals link into wider governance issues, both of the council and of the wider Leeds Initiative. The proposals are in line with the current constitution and delegation scheme. In terms of the establishment of the Director of Children’s Services Unit within the structure of the council, this falls within the delegated decision power of the Chief Executive and will be made in the normal way following specific legal, human resources and financial consultation on the detail.
- 73 In coming to these proposals, there has been extensive consultation and review work as already described. This includes council officers, member briefings, work with partners (across a range of sectors) at a city-wide and district level and children and young people and their parents and carers through the development of the Children and Young People’s Plan.

LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 74 The main element of the proposal with any specific cost attached to it is the Director of Children’s Services Unit. The estimated cost of the structure, to be set out in detail in the report to support the delegated decision, is approximately £2 million. This is compared to the approved budget for the current interim arrangements for the Director of Children’s Services Unit of £900,000. It is anticipated that the additional costs will be met from a realignment of existing resources as part of the budget strategy for 2007/08. It is worth noting that the full resource requirement equates to 1% of the total council expenditure on children’s services (excluding schools). The level of resourcing required to provide a sustainable effective Director of Children’s Services structure from 2008/09 will need to be reviewed as part of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan in the context of a wider Service Prioritisation review that ensures investment in key front line or preventive services.
- 75 In terms of the human resource issues and implications, the scale of the operations and partnerships require exceptional skills and managerial capacity. As with the Director of Children’s Services’s appointment, it will be important to secure the best available and the nature of these proposals require skills which will be at a premium. It is clear that other authorities operating on a smaller scale and from a different approach still have significant staff

numbers supporting this new role. The varied approaches mask the actual costs but it is clear these are significant.

- 76 The full costs will only become clear once those appointed in phase 1 have examined the support available through partners and providers and reached conclusions on internal support to their roles. However, it is clear that phase 1 will require approximately 25 staff (including the Director) and it is possible that the overall total will be up to 40. The current and more detailed implications, including the implementation, of these proposals will be dealt with through a report to the Chief Personnel Officer for consideration within her delegated decision-making powers. Staff potentially affected by the changes are being kept informed and trade union dialogue is ongoing.
- 77 These proposals embrace the leadership of strategic commissioning across the partnership, including major statutory public sector organisations such as the NHS in Leeds, Probation Service and the Police Authority. Key partners have indicated their commitment to Children Leeds (also recognising their statutory obligations under the Children Act) and willingness to address resourcing issues. The Primary Care Trust in particular has indicated an in principle commitment to fund a senior manager, a Locality Enabler post and to contribute to the cost of the support team. The current changes to Primary Care Trusts mean, however, that it is not yet possible to achieve formal agreement at this stage. Contributions by partners financially or through dedicated staff will be used to offset the costs outlined.
- 78 A current review of arrangements for Connexions in West Yorkshire is being undertaken as a result of Government changes to funding and will also provide opportunities to align resources locally within Leeds.
- 79 The proposals for the wider change programme within the council will be supported by the development of clearer cost structures. As the move to strategic commissioning is embedded across the council and new ways of working become effective there will undoubtedly be scope for cost reduction from the targeting of resources and removal of duplication.
- 80 The Director of Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services Unit will expect to be held to account by the council and through the children's trust arrangements to demonstrate that its own costs have resulted in significant improvement to service effectiveness and the capacity for cost reduction. It will be for the council to agree with its partners where such cost reduction falls but the achievement of the objectives of the Children and Young People's Plan will be a clear measure of this resource utilisation.

CONCLUSIONS

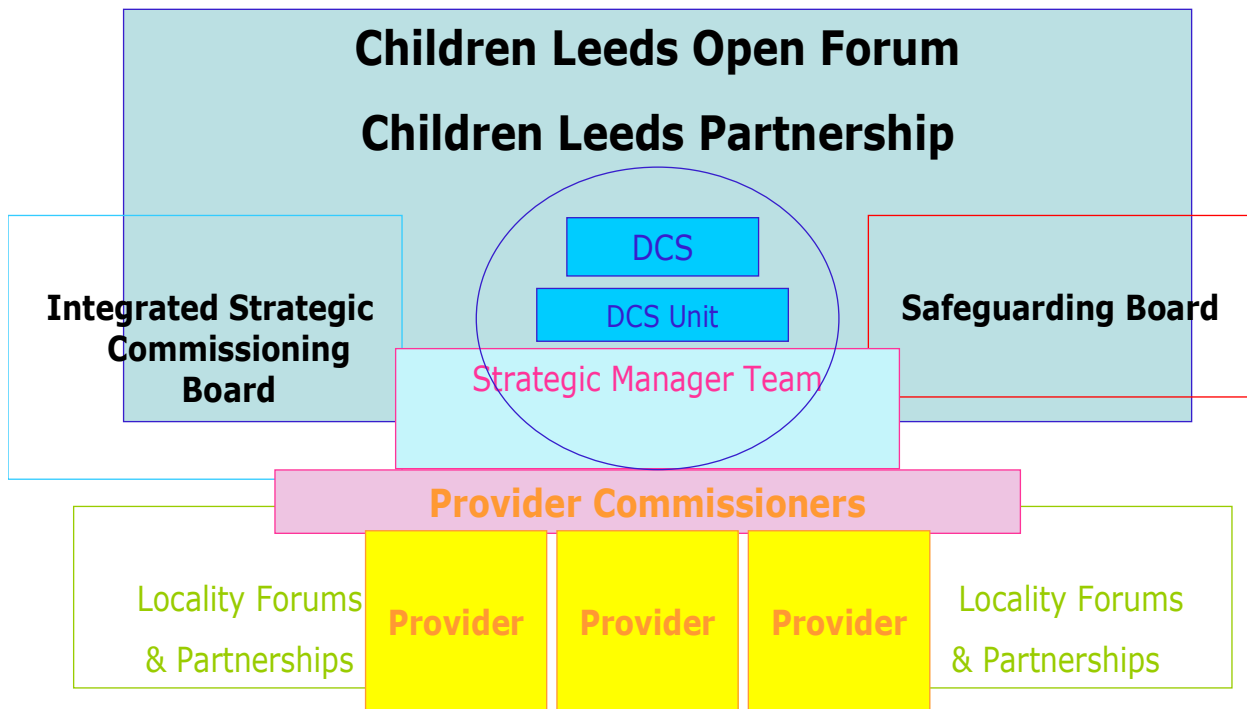
- 81 The proposals outlined in this report mark a significant milestone in the council's approach to meeting its obligations under the Children Act 2004. They follow a period of significant review and policy development activity and as such they represent an important step. However, it is likely that there will also be further steps. The governance arrangements are designed to comply with the broad approach of the Council and its partners under the Leeds Initiative. There will be further development activity, as outlined earlier, to implement these proposals in full. The experiences gained from operating the children's trust arrangements will be reviewed in 2007 to ensure their effectiveness.
- 82 The creation of a strategic commissioning unit reinforces the stability of successful providers, already delivering some of the best services in the country, sets the benchmark for new ways of working and ensures that the new Director of Children's Services Unit can and will focus on "strategic leadership". The demanding new roles will require a different approach both to resourcing and to the way that employees work.
- 83 Finally, there are two crucial ingredients which will make the difference between success and failure of these proposals. The first is the involvement of, and commitment to ownership of the Children and Young People's Plan and its implications, by Elected Members. The second is ensuring that the children and young people of Leeds and their parents and carers are involved at every level and are integral to the design and delivery of services to support their needs and that we allow them to judge our effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 84 Members of the Executive Board are asked to note and approve:

- the proposed “children’s trust arrangements” and associated governance structures, including the relationships between the elements and the Director of Children’s Services Unit;
 - the overall role and approach to meeting accountabilities proposed for the Director of Children’s Services Unit;
 - the approach to dealing with resourcing issues across the partnership; and
 - the intention to review the children’s trust arrangements in 2007.
- 85 Members of the Executive Board are asked to note that the Chief Executive will use his delegated powers to establish the Director of Children’s Services Unit once the final detail has been worked up.
- 86 Members of the Executive Board are asked to note and request further update reports in due course about the implementation of the arrangements and about specific significant issues.

Children Leeds



Appendix 2 – Proposed Director of Children’s Services Unit structure and roles

1. It is proposed that the unit be made up of four main areas, leadership, unit support, strategic leaders and locality enablers. Each of these main areas will work as a team, supporting and informing other teams and individuals on a matrix basis to achieve the flexibility required for the task.
2. The senior management will comprise the Director of Children’s Services and three further posts:
 - Change and innovation
 - Commissioning and partnerships
 - A post to be filled and funded by the Primary Care Trust, to help lead the integration and commissioning with health for children’s services
3. There will be three elements of a support team within the Unit - Office support, Systems and QA, and support to achieve priorities. These teams will support both the leadership and the strategic leaders for specific areas, comprising:
 - 3.1. Lead for Resources and Assets, including Forward financial plan – revenue and capital; Financial monitoring; Value for money assessment; Asset planning.
 - 3.2. Lead for Needs Analysis and Research, including Macro data capture and analysis, Intelligence and horizon watching; Developing solutions; Future proofing.
 - 3.3. Lead for Performance and Change, including Children and Young People’s Plan implementation and monitoring; Performance, inspection and assessments; Leadership development; Workforce reform; Pilots and programmes; Market intervention - growing capacity; Contract management.
 - 3.4. Lead for Partnerships and Participation, including Communications strategy and PR; Support to Partnership Forum; Marketing.
4. There will be 5 locality enablers, one for each of the City’s wedges, including Communications and early messages; Rationalisation of locality arrangements; Facilitation of locality provision and integration; Focusing work on extended schools and children centres; Link to the Director’s strategic management.
5. All 3 leadership posts (the Director has already formally been appointed to this unit), the 4 lead officers and the 5 locality enablers need to be established in the first phase. The initial elements of the support roles are also first phase posts. The first tasks of both the locality enablers and lead officer team will be to consider and size their roles and decide what further resources will be required, either working directly to them or in the support teams. It is envisaged that these additional resources will be small in number.