

Strategic Review of Leeds City Council's Children's Services Arrangements

Author: Chief Executive's Unit

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Executive Summary

The Children Act 2004 significantly changed the legislative framework through which children's services are provided. The Act created the new statutory role of Director of Children's Services, consuming the statutory responsibilities previously assigned to the Director of Social Services (as regards services for children) as well as those responsibilities previously allocated to the statutory role of Chief Education Officer. For the first time, we were required to have a single officer statutorily responsible for both children's social care and education provision. The Act also provided for the Director of Children's Services to have responsibilities which extended beyond the council and across other partner services, where services for children and young people are provided. There was a further requirement for the establishment of a Children's Trust to provide overall leadership to the improvement of outcomes for children and young people in the area.

In 2006, the City Council appointed its first Director of Children's Services. The early work led by the Director saw the establishment of a strategic children's services team, known as the Director of Children's Services Unit (DCSU). The DCSU was developed following the receipt of professional advice and support from the Office of Public Management (OPM). The DCSU was given strategic leadership responsibility for children's services, covering both Leeds City Council provided services and relevant partner agency services. This approach was considered appropriate in 2007 as a consequence of the early developmental nature of national guidance and policy on children's services matters as well as the need to lead the development of the change agenda locally across all relevant partners. Indeed, our approach was endorsed in both the Children's Services Annual Performance Assessment in December 2007 as well as the Joint Area Review in 2008, both of which acknowledged that our arrangements provided for good prospects for improvement.

Leeds City Council's children's services delivery arrangements were operationally split into four key areas - Children and Young People's Social Care, Early Years Services, the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) and Education Support Services, the latter being provided through Education Leeds, a separate company wholly owned by the council. The senior officers from the DCSU, the key providers and, where appropriate, external partners, come together under the leadership of the Director to form the Children's Services Leadership Team (CSLT).

In the summer of 2009, the Director of Children's Services gave notice of her intention to retire from the Authority's service at a mutually agreeable time. The Director retired from the authority's service on 31 December 2009. Three years on from the development of our current Children's Services arrangements, with the further development of national policy and guidance, and with the pending recruitment of a new Director of Children's Services, it was considered appropriate and timely to undertake an organisational review of our arrangements.

Recent inspections have highlighted the need to ensure that our improvement actions deliver improved outcomes for children and young people at a faster pace, particularly in the area of Children and Young People's Social Care. In so doing, we also need to ensure that those involved in children's services activities are able to develop their ability to work better together ensuring well targeted and responsive services alongside the universal services provided by children's services and schools.

Children's services in Leeds are made up of a large and complex set of services across a wide range of partner organisations serving and supporting approximately 180,000 children and young people age 0-19, which equates to approximately 25% of Leeds' overall population. It is important, therefore, to understand the context of this review. Whilst the review was extensive in terms of the range of stakeholders involved, it does not seek to consider every aspect of children's services. Rather, its focus is on the effectiveness or otherwise of the city council's organisational and leadership arrangements (including its partnership arrangements), in order to ascertain whether any changes are

required, prior to commencing the recruitment of a new Director of Children's Services. Therefore, whilst the review did not assess the detail of operational services, or the detail of current performance against stated outcomes, the whole purpose of the review is to assess whether our current organisational arrangements are as effective as they need to be to provide a truly integrated children's services approach and deliver improved outcomes for children in Leeds.

Key Findings of the Review

The Children Act 2004 heralded a change in leadership approach for children's services, supported by a major new national policy initiative and outcomes framework known under the banner of 'Every Child Matters'. All local authorities, including Leeds, were required to publish a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) where the focus was to put children and young people's needs at the heart of intervention, working closely with their parents and carers. Agencies and services providing support being required to drive an integrated approach to the delivery of service, delivering new integrated processes and governance with particular emphasis on prevention and early intervention for those children and young people with particular needs. Additional to this was an extensive programme of work with schools to drive up standards and develop new approaches to a broad based 'offer' to all young people.

Since 2004, the Children and Young People's agenda for local authorities and their partners has been heavily prescribed by national policy, supported in part by legislative change within a strong regulatory framework, involving both Ofsted and DCSF. High standards have been set for Local Authorities in relation to improving outcomes and driving system change.

The governance framework established in Leeds in 2006/7 has made a significant contribution to the establishment of partnerships, commissioning and locality working arrangements. There is also good engagement with young people and good performance across a range of our stated priorities. There have been many positives with significant improvement and investment across universal services, particularly education and early years. The children's services annual performance assessment, published in December 2009, concluded that "the majority of the Local Authority's inspected and regulated services and provision in children's services are good or better". However, the recent inspections of "Contact Assessment and Referral Services" and "Safeguarding and Looked After Children" have highlighted serious shortcomings in respect of children's social care services. These weaknesses are significantly focussed on front line practice but are also reflective of wider system issues in the leadership and resourcing of children's services; governance of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board; performance management; quality assurance, and; in the effectiveness of early intervention and preventative approaches across the wider provision of children's services. These weaknesses were further profiled through the identification of a Red Flag for safeguarding within the December 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) reporting arrangements.

The DCSF has recently published information identifying early indicators and risk factors associated with declining performance in children's services authorities. Contributory elements include:

- The population context
- The wider local authority context
- Workforce capacity
- Leadership
- Structure and delivery
- Partnership commitment

The findings of the DCSF review are significant in highlighting areas of action which are required to address efficiency, effectiveness and the organisation of local authority services. Whilst an extensive improvement plan is in hand to respond to the recent inspection findings, the full speed of recovery is likely to be impacted by the response to the recommendations. To date, whilst much progress has been made, it is evident that further action is necessary if we are to achieve the full benefit of effective integration across children's services.

The review has highlighted four key drivers that underpin the proposals within this report and all have a strong relationship to the outcomes of the recent DCSF review as detailed above. The four drivers are:

- The need to ensure clarity in terms of leadership, governance and accountability arrangements;
- The need to develop an approach which fully embraces the move towards integrated delivery of children's services;
- The need to accelerate the pace of change in order to deliver improvements in underperforming services as well as the general improvement of outcomes for children and young people, and;
- The need for any change to be economically efficient in order to redirect resources to front-line services.

In assessing our current organisational arrangements and considering the case for change, this report has a particular focus on four key areas which are considered in turn and include: the role, functioning and effectiveness of the Director of Children's Services Unit; the effectiveness of our Children Leeds partnership arrangements; the strategic fit of Education Leeds in an integrated children's services model; and, the need for revised structural and organisational arrangements.

Director of Children's Services Unit

In establishing new children's services arrangements in 2006/7, a Director of Children's Services Unit (DCSU) was created to provide the strategic lead and develop commissioning arrangements for children's services in Leeds with council operational provider services being led by chief officers who were not directly line-managed by the Director. Rather, a commissioning based approach was preferred to provide the oversight and management of social care, early years, youth and education services, the latter through the council's wholly owned company Education Leeds. Within the DCSU, a number of new posts were created including three deputy director roles (one jointly appointed with the PCT), four strategic leader posts and five locality enablers. Other supporting roles were established to support the strategic team, although the team is still relatively small in overall capacity terms and relies significantly on capacity and resources within operational services to undertake significant aspects of business and commissioning support activities.

Whilst there have been numerous positives with the arrangements adopted in 2006/7, it is fair to say that the world of children's services has moved on during this time. An increased focus on safeguarding and the more recent guidance issued by Government on the development of integrated approaches to children's services requires that further consideration be now given to our organisational arrangements. Therefore, the next phase of development for our children's services leadership arrangements needs to fully embrace the integration agenda.

In so doing, it will be important to review the structure of the DCSU to ensure that roles, responsibilities and priorities are clear and that our arrangements more effectively support the development of integrated planning and delivery approaches. In accordance with the most recent DCSF review and associated government guidance, there is a need to further improve the clarity of our leadership, structure and reporting arrangements across the whole of the council's children's services system. As part of these developments, it is proposed that the senior officers responsible for the operational provider services should be more closely aligned under the leadership and management of the Director. As the Director is also vested with the statutory accountabilities with regard to education and learning, it is further recommended that the Director should also have a more direct line management role, than has hitherto been the case, for education related services.

In moving to an integrated children's services approach led by the Director, it will be important to ensure that he/she is supported with the necessary resource and capacity to fulfil essential business and commissioning support services across the whole of children's services. Such support is essential in underpinning a move to a truly integrated approach to the delivery of children's services and the absence of such support in critical areas has been a contributory factor to some of the performance deficiencies identified during the course of the last 12 months.

Whilst, to date, the use of business and commissioning support capacity within provider services has been partly effective, the current fragmented approach to the provision of such essential support services is not considered the best way of making use of such capacity in seeking to achieve a more integrated way of working. Moreover, budgetary pressures require that consideration ought sensibly to be given to the integration of services where this would provide economies of scale and, potentially, budget efficiencies.

Therefore, the review proposes the establishment of integrated business and commissioning support arrangements across children's services, reporting to the Director. This will require the bringing together of relevant resources from across early years, children and young people's social care, the integrated youth service and Education Leeds. In agreeing this approach, it is recognised that detailed work is necessary to understand the level and quantity of resource that needs to be provided at the broad children's services level and that which needs to remain close to services.

With an integrated support team, the Director and wider leadership team will be better supported; such a team will assist in delivering a more integrated approach across children's services; it will enable change to be progressed at a faster pace, and; it will build upon the success of such functions in certain areas of the council's business e.g. Education Leeds. A more integrated and holistic approach will also enable the Director to target support resources more effectively to build upon success and tackle under-performance.

The development of integrated commissioning and business support arrangements are considered essential to deliver a truly integrated approach to the delivery of children's services and the creation of such a team should be seen as a priority.

Partnership Arrangements

In considering our Partnership Arrangements, this review, as well as other separate reviews undertaken on specific aspects of the partnership arrangements, have found several strengths and aspects of good practice within Leeds' Children's Trust Arrangements. However, there are also significant areas for development which need to be addressed in order to develop partnership arrangements that are effective and fit-for-purpose.

Moreover, the government has recently issued updated statutory guidance on Children's Trust arrangements which require a fundamental re-think of our own arrangements, with the requirement to put in place a new Children's Trust Board by 1 April 2010. The key requirements/issues within this new guidance are that:

- The Children's Trust is the sum total of co-operation and partnership arrangements between organisations with a role of improving outcomes for children and young people. It is not a legal entity in itself as each partner retains responsibility for their respective functions. It covers every organisational level from governance to front-line delivery.
- The Children's Trust Board is a new statutory body that every local authority is required to have in place by 1 April 2010. The Board will have responsibility for developing, publishing, reviewing, revising and monitoring the Children and Young People's Plan. The Children's Trust Board is required to have a clear and separate identity within the wider co-operation arrangements. Whilst the Children's Trust Board will be a statutory body in its own right, it does fit within the wider Local Strategic Partnership as a thematic partnership. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to appoint the chair of the Board. There are no restrictions on who the chair is, simply that it is the most appropriate person who can speak with authority on behalf of the Children's Trust Board. The Local Authority is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the Chair's work. The Board must include a representative of the local authority and each of its statutory 'relevant partners'. It should also include non-statutory partners to reflect local circumstances.
- The Duty to Cooperate continues to be a key aspect of children's trust arrangements. The list of statutory 'relevant partners' has though been extended to include maintained schools, Academies, non-maintained special schools, FE and sixth-form colleges, Short Stay School / Pupil Referrals Units and Job Centre Plus.
- The Children and Young People's Plan will be the agreed joint strategy of the partners in the Children's Trust and responsibility for its preparation moves from the Local Authority into the new Children's Trust Board. The new style plan needs to be published by April 2011.

In addition to the above, a separate review of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has recently been undertaken and the recommendations flowing from that review need to be properly considered and implemented as soon as practicably possible so that the LSCB can provide the necessary challenge and support to safeguarding practice across the city.

The review also acknowledges the positive developments at the locality level and the recent changes to locality governance arrangements, as agreed by Executive Board in December 2009.

Strategic Fit of Education Leeds

The review acknowledges that following the creation of Education Leeds in April 2001, significant progress has been made against the educational attainment and broader schools improvement agenda. In 2009, education provision is in a very different place to where it was ten years ago. However, with the advent of children's services, the current arrangements in their entirety are not considered sustainable if we are to effectively respond to developing an integrated and more holistic approach to the development and delivery of children's services.

This report proposes the establishment of an integrated business and commissioning support function reporting to the Director of Children's Services. Assuming this development is agreed, it would see relevant aspects of the company's operation transferring to the council as part of an integrated support

team operating across the whole of children's services. Furthermore, with the identified need to have a more integrated approach to children's services policy and strategy development, the role of the current Board of Education Leeds needs to be considered.

When the Board was first established in April 2001, it had a wide range of responsibilities covering both the operational management of the company as well as receiving and shaping advice on education related policy and strategy matters that would ultimately be put to the city council for consideration. Whilst with a company arrangement it will always be a requirement to have a Board to oversee the operational management of the company, with the need to develop an integrated approach to children's services, a requirement for the Board to oversee the development of education policy and strategy becomes less convincing, not least when it is being done in isolation of wider children's services policy and strategy development. Moreover, since the Board was first established we have been required to develop children's trust arrangements which themselves have a clearly stated responsibility for policy development across children's services.

Therefore, it is proposed that the Board of Education Leeds ceases to have a role in the development of education related policy and strategy matters, requiring instead that such responsibilities be vested as part of the revised children's trust arrangements in order to secure an integrated approach to policy and strategy development across children's services. Should such a change be agreed, then a review is likely to be required of the current Board membership recognising the changing role and function of such a Board.

The review also identifies the need for the Director of Children's services to have clear and unambiguous responsibility and accountability for all children's services, including education related services. In considering this issue, the review has identified a degree of confusion with some stakeholders on the role and accountabilities of a Director of Children's Services as compared with the Chief Executive of Education Leeds. The review concluded, therefore, that looking forward there needs to be clear accountability within the role of Director of Children's Services for education based matters. That is not to say that a senior officer with responsibility for leading and championing the schools agenda is not required, as this is most certainly an essential requirement of any future remodelling of children's services. Rather, what is needed is clarity of reporting arrangements which make clear the accountability a Director of Children's Services has for the senior officer responsible for education in the city. This would require a review of the role of Chief Executive of Education Leeds and their respective reporting and accountability arrangements. It is recognised that whilst this matter might be complicated by the fact that a separate company model currently exists, this need not necessarily be an insurmountable barrier.

In regard to the broader issue of the company model, five options have been considered in undertaking the review, summarised as follows:

Option 1 – "Status Quo" – This option would see the retention of the current arrangements.

Option 2 – "A Slimmed Down Company Model" – This option would see the retention of the company model with the exception of a) relevant business and commissioning support functions which would transfer to an integrated children's services team, b) the Board of Education Leeds ceasing to have a responsibility for overseeing education related policy and strategy matters and c) the Chief Executive of Education Leeds being more directly accountable to Director of Children's Services, in line with the wider recommendations of this review;

Option 3 – "An Enhanced Company Offer" - As option 2, but with the addition of a reverse transfer of a range of universal children's services (early years and youth services) from the council into the company to create an enhanced company model based around a set of universal provider services.

Option 4 – “Children Leeds Ltd” – The option would see Education Leeds Ltd evolve into Children Leeds Ltd with all children’s services functions and responsibilities being transferred into a revised company arrangement, excluding a client function that would need to be retained by the council.

Option 5 – “Children’s Services Directorate” – This option would conclude that in light of the development of children’s services, and the need to have a fully effective and integrated children’s service, the most appropriate action is to transfer all of Education Leeds’ services to the council in a managed way by 1 April 2011, under a new directorate based leadership arrangement..

Option 1 is not considered an appropriate course of action recognising the issues identified within this review, particularly the need to develop a more integrated children’s services approach. Option 4 would require significant change with a large transfer of resource from the Council to the company, including children’s and young people’s social care services and is considered too high risk to be a realistic option for consideration. Options 2, 3 and 5 offer the best opportunity of securing an effective approach to the delivery of integrated children’s services arrangements within the council. Option 2 would be appropriate if there is a desire to continue with a company arrangement, albeit on a smaller scale. Option 3 would offer the potential of enhancing the company model with other universal services, although this option does require more detailed work and consideration. Option 5 offers the best prospect of integration, but requires a decision to cease with the company arrangement and transfer all services to the council to be provided on the basis on the new directorate based model proposed in the next section.

Future Structure and Organisational Arrangements

If the proposals contained within this report are supported, detailed consideration will need to be given to the nature of the new directorate based leadership arrangements to be put into place. Whilst this will require more detailed work, it is expected that a new leadership arrangement would see the following as a starter for debate:

- Overall leadership provided by a Director of Children’s Services – the recruitment for this post has recently commenced and an appointment is expected by the autumn of 2010. In the meantime, Eleanor Brazil, interim Director of Children’s Services, will provide leadership as we commence the transition to new arrangements.
- A Deputy Director (or equivalent) of Children’s Services to provide the professional lead and champion the education and learning functions of Children’s Services.
- A Deputy Director (or equivalent) of Children’s Services to provide the professional leadership and champion targeted and specialist services for vulnerable children and young people (e.g. children and young people’s social care).
- And, appropriate leadership arrangements for the integrated business and commissioning support functions.

In agreeing the three principal leadership roles, it will be important to establish them at an appropriate level within the council’s structure and this may necessitate further consideration being given to the status and title of each of the posts. The holders of these posts will have responsibility for leading the delivery of a truly integrated children’s services approach; developing effective working arrangements with the council’s partners; improving outcomes for children and young people across the city, and delivering efficiencies so that essential resources can be targeted at front-line services.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. The Children Act 2004 significantly changed the legislative framework through which children's services are provided. The Act created the new statutory role of Director of Children's Services, consuming the statutory responsibilities previously assigned to the Director of Social Services (as regards services for children) as well as those responsibilities previously allocated to the statutory role of Chief Education Officer. For the first time, we were required to have a single officer statutorily responsible for both children's social care and education services.
- 1.2. The Act also provided for the Director of Children's Services to have responsibilities which extended beyond the council and across other partner services, where services for children and young people are provided. There was a further requirement for the establishment of a Children's Trust to provide overall leadership to the improvement of outcomes for children and young people in the area.
- 1.3. In 2006, the City Council appointed its first Director of Children's Services. The early work led by the Director saw the establishment of a strategic children's services team, known as the Director of Children's Services Unit (DCSU). The DCSU was developed following the receipt of professional advice and support from the Office of Public Management (OPM). The DCSU was given strategic leadership responsibility for children's services, covering both Leeds City Council provided services and relevant partner agency services. This approach was considered appropriate in 2007 as a consequence of the early developmental nature of national guidance and policy on children's services as well as the need to lead the development of the change agenda locally across all relevant partners. Indeed, our approach was endorsed in both the Children's Services Annual Performance Assessment in December 2007 as well as the Joint Area Review in 2008, both of which acknowledged that our arrangements provided for good prospects for improvement.
- 1.4. Leeds City Council's children's services delivery arrangements were operationally split into four key areas - Children's and Young Peoples Social Care, Early Years Services, the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) and Education Support Services, the latter being provided through Education Leeds, a separate company wholly owned by the council. The senior officers from the DCSU, the key providers and, where appropriate, external partners, come together under the leadership of the Director to form the Children's Services Leadership Team (CSLT).
- 1.5. From a partnership perspective, the Children's Leeds partnership provides a strategic overview of children's services arrangements in Leeds, supported by the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB), the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and a range of locality arrangements.
- 1.6. Collectively, these officer, partnership and locality arrangements form what is known as Leeds' Children's Trust Arrangements. This type of Children's Trust was adopted in Leeds, recognising the breadth and complexity of children's services arrangements in the city and the need to move to a commissioning approach across children's services.
- 1.7. Whilst Education Leeds is part of the children's services arrangements, it does have its own governance and leadership arrangements having been established as a company wholly owned by the City Council. Education Leeds was originally created under Direction from the Secretary of State, following the receipt of a critical OfSTED report in 1999 and has been operational since 1 April 2001. The Secretary of State Direction was removed in 2006.

Oversight of the Company is undertaken by a Board consisting of Council representatives, professional educational advisers, business representation and an independent Chair. Whilst it has been possible to implement changes to the company arrangement since the removal of the Direction in 2006, fundamental change has not to date been considered necessary bearing in mind the improvements made on the educational attainment agenda and being cognisant of the developing world of children's services following the enactment of the Children Act in 2004. There was some limited change in 2006 including a new contractual arrangement with the council and the removal of the partnership agreement with Capita Education Services, although Capita representatives were retained on the Board to provide continuing professional input and challenge.

- 1.8. In regard to Elected Member responsibilities, the Children Act 2004 required the appointment of a Lead member for Children's Services. An Executive Member is responsible for the political oversight of the Children's Services portfolio and he undertakes the Lead Member responsibilities as defined by the Act. As a consequence of the size of the portfolio, another Executive Member has been appointed with responsibility for political oversight of Education and Learning. The latter is the key political interface with Education Leeds. In regard to Scrutiny Board arrangements, Leeds has a single Scrutiny Board covering Children's Services.
- 1.9. Since 2007, the Director of Children's Services' focus has been on developing a clear and aspirational strategy through the development of the Children and Young People's Plan, to drive the development of strategic commissioning arrangements for children's services and deliver improved outcomes for children and young people.
- 1.10. Following the enactment of the Children Act in 2004, the Government has continued to develop policies aimed at improving services for Children and Young People (e.g. The Laming Report, Children's Trust developments, 21st Century schools etc.). Moreover, with the national outcry over the Baby Peter tragedy in Haringey, the issue of children's safeguarding arrangements are being critically reviewed and assessed as part of OfSTED's revised inspection arrangements.
- 1.11. In thinking about organisational arrangements and the changes adopted within the council over the course of the last three years, it's helpful to consider the broad range of options and understand where we have moved from and to. It can be noted from table 1 below that most council services have evolved from a departmental based approach to a directorate based model.
- 1.12. However, in 2007 the new approach to the development of the children's services agenda was still in its early developmental stages, both at the national and local levels. It was, nevertheless clear that the breadth of the statutory leadership role for children's services, both within and outside of the authority, was significant and careful consideration was, therefore, needed in considering any changes that the council might consider appropriate in regard to its own organisational arrangements.
- 1.13. As a consequence of this, as well as the need to work closely with partners to develop the most appropriate arrangements for Leeds, the considered view was that radical change in regard to the council's organisational arrangements as regards children's services was not considered appropriate or indeed justified at that time, with a recognition that further consideration would need to be given to this matter when national guidance was further developed and we had had time to consider the best arrangements moving forward for

Leeds. Therefore, in 2007, our efforts were focused on developing a model which would provide a commissioning lead for the oversight and development of children's services.

Table 1

Departmental Based	Children's Services	Directorate Based
<u>Pre-2007</u>	<u>Post-2007</u>	<u>Post-2007</u>
All council services managed/operated in this way.	Children's Services develops a commissioning based approach as national and local agenda develops	All other council services move to directorate based model
Traditional departmental based model constructed on a clear hierarchy which is run top-down with the Director having complete control and high degree of responsibility for, and thus regular involvement in, operational matters.	A commissioning based model where the Director is primarily concerned with driving the strategy and seeking to secure improvements in operational delivery through commissioning arrangements.	A more devolved model where through concurrent delegations senior officers are empowered to be the principal operational managers of services. Director retains line management responsibility of chief officers and provides leadership to directorate team.

- 1.14. In regard to performance issues, children's services was rated as Good in the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment, and received a positive Joint Area Review inspection, published in May 2008. Both of these assessments considered children's services' prospects for improvement and in both cases considered our prospects to be good recognising the appropriateness of the organisational arrangements that had been adopted at that time. However, there have been a number of performance challenges over the course of the last 18 months, arising mainly from the new approach to inspections and assessments of safeguarding arrangements. The weaknesses identified through such inspections have been fully acknowledged and responded to in a timely manner, and in light of this heightened focus, safeguarding has become a key improvement priority for the city council and wider Children Leeds partnership.
- 1.15. Recent inspections have highlighted the need to ensure that our improvement actions deliver improved outcomes for children and young people at a faster pace, particularly in the area of children and young people's social care. In so doing, we also need to ensure that those involved in children's services activities are able to develop their ability to work better together ensuring well targeted and responsive services alongside the universal services provided by children's services and schools.
- 1.16. In the summer of 2009, the Director of Children's Services gave notice of her intention to retire from the Authority's service at a mutually agreeable time. The Director retired from the authority's service on 31 December 2009. Three years on from the development of our current Children's Services arrangements, with the further development of national policy and guidance, and with the pending recruitment of a new Director of Children's Services, it was

considered appropriate and timely to undertake an organisational review of our arrangements.

- 1.17. The brief for this review identified the need to:
1. Review the progress made to date in responding to the requirements of the Children Act 2004 and associated guidance;
 2. Review the effectiveness of our current leadership, managerial and partnership arrangements, as they relate to children's services, and;
 3. Make proposals for any changes that may be considered necessary to the council's organisational arrangements prior to commencing the recruitment of a new Director of Children's Services.
- 1.18. Considering the corporate significance of the review and the need for a degree of urgency, the work was sponsored by the Chief Executive and led internally by the Deputy Chief Executive and the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement). A Senior Project Manager was also allocated to support the review.
- 1.19. Phase one of the review consisted of an extensive set of individual meetings with key stakeholders and facilitated sessions with relevant groups. A full list of stakeholders who have contributed to the review is attached as appendix 2. Stakeholder involvement has been significant with over 120 separate individuals contributing their views into the review process. Whilst a wide range of issues have been identified, it is fair to say that there has been a high degree of consistency between views on a range of key issues. As you might expect with such a wide range a stakeholder involvement, a range of issues have been identified and whilst this review does not seek to address all issues identified, it does identify a number of issues that, in the view of the review team, are critical to the future development of children's services in Leeds.
- 1.20. Children's services in Leeds are made up of a large and complex set of services across a wide range of partner organisations serving and supporting approximately 180,000 children and young people age 0-19, which equates to approximately 25% of Leeds' overall population. It is important, therefore, to understand the context of this review. Whilst the review was extensive in terms of the range of stakeholders involved, it does not seek to consider every aspect of children's services. Rather, its focus is on the effectiveness or otherwise of the city council's organisational arrangements, in order to ascertain whether any changes are required, prior to commencing the recruitment of a new Director of Children's Services. Therefore, whilst the review did not assess the detail of operational services, or the detail of current performance against stated outcomes, the whole purpose of the review is to assess whether our current organisational arrangements are as effective as they need to be to provide a truly integrated children's services approach and deliver improved outcomes for children in Leeds.
- 1.21. In regard to the appointment of a new Director of Children's Services, the review team have been mindful of the need not to resolve every matter of detail and, therefore, limit the flexibility to be afforded to the new Director when appointed. Rather, the review has focussed on a range of key strategic matters that are considered critical to the future operation of children's services in Leeds. They primarily relate to issues that will provide for greater clarity in leadership, governance and partnership arrangements across children's services in Leeds. This focus should provide greater confidence to an incoming Director that leadership and

governance arrangements in Leeds are effective and clear and that its Children's Trust arrangements are fit for purpose.

- 1.22. The review report does not itself consider the issue of best practice in other authorities. The reason for this is that the review is intended to be a strategic assessment of Leeds' current organisational arrangements and their respective strengths and weaknesses. It then focuses on the weaknesses and identifies strategic led solutions to address the concerns or issues identified. In developing the detail of the recommendations during the next phase (e.g. the future senior management structure to be adopted) it will be appropriate to consider best practice from elsewhere in determining the most appropriate model to be adopted. Specific pieces of improvement activity do consider the best practice question, however, the detail of such consideration is not repeated in any detail within this report. Examples include improvement work in children and young people's care and consideration of best practice around Local Safeguarding Children's Board arrangements in other authorities.
- 1.23. The remainder of this report is broken down into sections addressing key themes, each containing an analysis of the issues identified and recommendations for moving forward.

2.0 The Drivers for Change

- 2.1. The Children Act 2004 heralded a change in leadership approach for children's services, supported by a major new national policy initiative and outcomes framework known under the banner of 'Every Child Matters'. All local authorities, including Leeds, were required to publish a Children and Young People's Plan where the focus was to put children and young people's needs at the heart of intervention, working closely with their parents and carers. Agencies and services providing support being required to drive an integrated approach to the delivery of service, delivering new integrated processes and governance with particular emphasis on prevention and early intervention for those children and young people with particular needs. Additional to this was an extensive programme of work with schools to drive up standards and develop new approaches to a broad based 'offer' to all young people.
- 2.2. Since 2004, the Children and Young People's agenda for local authorities and their partners has been heavily prescribed by national policy, supported in part by legislative change within a strong regulatory framework, involving both OfSTED and DCSF. High standards have been set for Local Authorities in relation to improving outcomes and driving system change.
- 2.3. The governance framework established in Leeds in 2006 has made a significant contribution to the establishment of partnerships, commissioning and locality working arrangements. There is also good engagement with young people and good performance across a range of our stated priorities. There have been many positives with significant improvement and investment across universal services, particularly education and early years. The children's services annual performance assessment, published in December 2009, concluded that "the majority of the Local Authority's inspected and regulated services and provision in children's services are good or better". However, the recent inspections of "Contact Assessment and Referral Services" and "Safeguarding and Looked After Children" have highlighted serious shortcomings in respect of children's social care services. These weaknesses are significantly focussed on front line practice but are also reflective of wider system issues in the leadership and resourcing of children's services; governance of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board; performance management; quality assurance, and; in the effectiveness of early intervention and preventative approaches across the wider provision of children's services. These weaknesses were further profiled through the identification of a Red Flag for safeguarding within the December 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) reporting arrangements.
- 2.4. The DCSF has recently published information identifying early indicators and risk factors associated with declining performance in children's services authorities. Contributory elements include:
1. The population context
 2. The wider local authority context
 3. Workforce capacity
 4. Leadership
 5. Structure and delivery
 6. Partnership commitment
- 2.5. The findings of the DCSF review are significant in highlighting areas of action which are required to address efficiency, effectiveness and the organisation of local authority services. Whilst an extensive improvement plan is in hand to respond to the recent inspection findings, the full speed of recovery is likely to be impacted by the response to the recommendations. To date, whilst much progress has been made, it is evident that further action is necessary if

we are to achieve the full benefit of effective integration across children's services. The review has highlighted four drivers that underpin the proposals within this report and all have a strong relationship to the outcomes of the recent DCSF review as detailed above. The four drivers are:

1. The need to ensure clarity in terms of leadership, governance and accountability arrangements;
 2. The need to develop an approach which fully embraces the move towards integrated delivery of children's services;
 3. The need to accelerate the pace of change in order to deliver improvements in underperforming services as well as the general improvement of outcomes for children and young people, and;
 4. The need for any change to be economically efficient in order to redirect resources to front-line services.
- 2.6. In assessing our current organisational arrangements and considering the case for change, this report has a particular focus on four key areas which are considered in turn and include: the role, functioning and effectiveness of the Director of Children's Services Unit; the effectiveness of our Children Leeds partnership arrangements; the strategic fit of Education Leeds in an integrated children's services model; and, the need for revised structural and organisational arrangements.

3.0 The Role and Functioning of the Director of Children's Services Unit

3.1. The Director of Children's Services Unit

- 3.1.1 In establishing new children's services arrangements in 2007, a Director of Children's Services Unit (DCSU) was created to provide the strategic lead and develop commissioning arrangements for children's services in Leeds with council operational provider services being led by chief officers who were not directly line-managed by the Director.
- 3.1.2 The establishment of the DCSU was proposed in 2007 following the receipt of professional advice and support from the Office of Public Management (OPM). This approach recognised that the development of the children's services agenda was still in its early developmental stages, both at the national and local levels. It was, nevertheless clear that the breadth of the statutory leadership role for children's services, both within and outside of the authority, was significant and careful consideration was, therefore, needed in considering any changes that the council might consider appropriate in regard to its own organisational arrangements.
- 3.1.3 As a consequence of this, as well as the need to work closely with partners to develop the most appropriate arrangements for Leeds, the considered view was that radical change in regard to the council's organisational arrangements as regards children's services was not considered appropriate or indeed justified at that time, with a recognition that further consideration would need to be given to this matter when national guidance was further developed and we had had time to consider the best arrangements moving forward for Leeds.
- 3.1.4 Therefore, in 2007, our efforts were focused on developing a model which would provide a commissioning lead for the oversight and development of children's services. The role, therefore, of the Director and supporting team was constructed on the basis of it being a strategic team to lead the development of children's services arrangements in Leeds. Another expectation from the DCSU approach was the idea that a strategic team, sitting separate from the operational delivery teams, would reinforce its strategic role far beyond the council and into the partnership.
- 3.1.5 The team established to support the Director followed this strategic approach, with all roles designed to have an outward facing perspective covering the wide range of services provided by both the council and related partners.
- 3.1.6 Three Deputy Directors were appointed, one covering commissioning and partnership related activity, another focused on change and innovation, with the third being a joint-appointment with the PCT. These senior posts were supported by four Strategic Leader posts (three actually in post) covering change and performance, partnerships and participation, resources and assets and intelligence and innovation. Five Locality Enablers (four actually in post) also cover the five wedges of the city.
- 3.1.7 Whilst there have been numerous positives with the arrangements adopted in 2007, it is fair to say that the world of children's services has moved on during this time. An increased focus on safeguarding and the more recent guidance issued by Government on the development of integrated approaches to children's services requires that further consideration be now given to our organisational arrangements. Therefore, the next phase of development for our children's services leadership arrangements needs to fully embrace the integration agenda.

- 3.1.8 Furthermore, when the Director of Children's Services is absent it is not clear which of the two deputies, or indeed any other post for that matter, is the natural deputy accountable for fulfilling the statutory responsibilities of the Director. Whilst this may be clear within the council's delegation arrangements, it is not clear to the layperson where respective responsibilities lie. Moreover, the senior officers within the DCSU are essentially 'strategic' in nature whilst the chief officers have a focus on operational delivery.
- 3.1.9 A further issue raised was in regard to a lack of clarity about accountabilities between the post of Director of Children's Services and Chief Executive of Education Leeds. Whilst the Director of Children's Services has ultimate responsibility and accountability for children's services in Leeds, as the Chief Executive of Education Leeds is on a similar level of the hierarchy, this does provide a degree of confusion regarding roles and accountability.
- 3.1.10 Therefore, in moving to the next phase of development, it will be important to review the structure of the DCSU to ensure that roles, responsibilities and priorities are clear and that our arrangements more effectively support the development of integrated planning and delivery approaches. In accordance with the most recent DCSF review and associated government guidance, there is a need to further improve the clarity of our leadership, structure and reporting arrangements across the whole of the council's children's services system. As part of these developments, it is proposed that the senior officers responsible for the operational provider services should be more closely aligned under the leadership and management of the Director. As the Director is also vested with the statutory accountabilities with regard to education and learning, it is further recommended that the Director should also have a more direct line management role, than has hitherto been the case, for education related services. This issue is considered in more detail on section 6.

3.2. **Business and Commissioning Support Functions**

- 3.2.1 Whilst many stakeholders commented that they were of the view that the DCSU was well resourced, they appeared to be mainly of this view because of the prevalence of senior roles within the team with which they have some form of engagement. What was not as clearly understood by stakeholders, was the fact that below the senior officer structures, support teams are not as well resourced as might generally be expected due to the key support roles existing within individual service areas rather than at the DCSU level. For example, whilst stakeholders were often positive about the quality of strategic thinking and documents produced by the DCSU, such as the Children's and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP), they often struggled to understand how and where this strategic thinking was being translated into improvements on the ground and what the role of the DCSU was in this regard.
- 3.2.2 In moving to an integrated children's services approach led by the Director, it will be important to ensure that he/she is supported with the necessary resource and capacity to fulfil essential business and commissioning support services across the whole of children's services. Such support is essential in underpinning a move to a truly integrated approach to the delivery of children's services and the absence of such support in critical areas has been a contributory factor to some of the performance deficiencies identified during the course of the last 12 months.
- 3.2.3 In considering this issue, it is important to understand the key components of effective commissioning and business support arrangements which can be summarised as follows:
1. Strategic Needs Analysis – to understand the needs of children and young people across the city;

2. Strategic Planning – the preparation and development of the Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP);
 3. Commissioning – to commission services to deliver the outcomes and priorities identified with the CYPP;
 4. Business Planning and Improvement – to ensure children’s services arrangements are fit-for-purpose and new integrated approaches are implemented;
 5. Performance Management – to oversee and manage performance against stated priorities;
 6. Quality Assurance – to ensure that services are effectively quality assured as part of the performance management process;
 7. Partnership Governance – to ensure the partnership structures are effective, fit-for-purpose and appropriately supported;
 8. Resource Management – to ensure resources are prioritised across children’s services in the most appropriate way to deliver stated outcomes;
 9. Knowledge and Information Management – to ensure that we have sound and robust information governance arrangements in place for children within the city and a more holistic view of the child, and;
 10. Workforce Reform – to ensure the children’s workforce as a whole is supported and developed to deliver against the expectations of a new integrated approach.
- 3.2.4 Whilst progress has been made in all of the above areas, the level of business and commissioning support capacity at the DCSU level has been insufficient to effectively support the development of an integrated approach to children’s services at the required pace.
- 3.2.5 A ‘hosting’ approach has been adopted which sees existing business support teams in operational service areas taking responsibility for broader children’s services issues. Whilst the use of business and commissioning support capacity within provider services has been partly effective, the current fragmented approach to the provision of such essential support services is not considered the best way of making use of such capacity in seeking to achieve a more integrated way of working. Moreover, budgetary pressures require that consideration ought sensibly to be given to the integration of services where this would provide economies of scale and, potentially, budget efficiencies.
- 3.2.6 Therefore, the review proposes the establishment of integrated business and commissioning support arrangements across children’s services, reporting to the Director. This will require the bringing together of relevant resources from across early years, children and young people’s social care, the integrated youth service and Education Leeds. In proposing this approach, it is recognised that detailed work is necessary to understand the level and quantity of resource that needs to be provided at the broad children’s services level and that which needs to remain close to services.
- 3.2.7 With an integrated support team, the Director and wider leadership team will be better supported; such a team will assist in delivering a more integrated approach across children’s

services; it will enable change to be progressed at a faster pace, and; it will build upon the success of such functions in certain areas of the council's business such as Education Leeds. A more integrated and holistic approach will also enable the Director to target support resources more effectively to build upon success and tackle under-performance.

- 3.2.8 The development of integrated commissioning and business support arrangements are considered essential to deliver a truly integrated approach to the delivery of children's services and the creation of such a team should be seen as a priority development.
- 3.2.9 A further challenge for children's services related to business support arrangements is the need to construct a coherent transformation programme to deliver the improvements required across children's services. Whilst there are plainly improvement programmes and projects in existence and being progressed, there is no overarching transformation programme, and as a consequence of this it is sometimes difficult to see the linkages between various aspects of improvement activity, or indeed be satisfied that we understand the full extent of improvement required, or the resources needed to secure such improvement.

3.3. **Children's Services Leadership Team**

- 3.3.1 In order to provide strategic leadership across children's services, a Children's Services Strategic Leadership Team (CSLT) was created. This body is chaired by the Director and its core membership consists of the three Deputy Directors, the Chief Officers from Early Years/IYSS and Children and Young Peoples Social Care, the Head of the Integrated Youth Support Service and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds. Over time, CSLT has also developed to include key partner representatives, particularly from the PCT.
- 3.3.2 CSLT was conceived as a key leadership body where the key executives from the relevant parts of children's services would come together to drive change, innovation and improvement and, in essence, deliver the ambitions of the CYPP.
- 3.3.3 The leadership team is a key component of our leadership arrangements and there is a need to reinvigorate this leadership arrangement further in order to improve its overall effectiveness. Terms of reference need to be revisited; roles and responsibilities need to be clear; membership needs to be reviewed to ensure the right people are attending; and, all attendees need to work as a team, with clear direction and leadership from the Director, taking collective responsibility for the effective leadership of children's services arrangements in Leeds.

3.4. **The Role of Elected Members**

- 3.4.1 Whilst the review has not considered the detail of Elected Member arrangements, within this section of the review, it is appropriate to identify the issues that Members do need to consider further.
- 3.4.2 From the work undertaken, the general view of stakeholders is that elected member arrangements have worked generally well. However, with the increasing focus on children's services matters and the significant challenges we face, Members may wish to consider whether any changes are necessary.
- 3.4.3 Members are recommended to consider whether any changes to Executive Member portfolios are required or indeed Deputy Executive Member arrangements. Similarly,

Members may wish to consider whether Scrutiny Board arrangements are working sufficiently effectively.

3.4.4 Some stakeholders did raise the issue of Elected Member involvement on the Board of Education Leeds. This issue is addressed in the Education Leeds section of this report.

3.4.5 In interviewing Elected Members, there continues to be a strongly held view that Elected Members are not sufficiently engaged with developments across children's services. This appears to stem from two principal concerns. The first is that some Members do not feel adequately engaged in the children's services locality arrangements. This issue has been acknowledged and a paper was presented to Members of Executive Board in December 2009 which sought to address this issue. The second issue relates to some Elected Members feeling that they are not adequately involved and consulted on children's services issues and developments in their local area. This appears to have been a longstanding issue and whether true or not, some Members certainly feel they are 'kept at arm's length' and further efforts are required to ensure that Elected Members are appropriately, and sufficiently, involved and consulted on key children's services related developments.

3.5. **Conclusion**

3.5.1 As a consequence of issues and developments identified within this report, it will be important to review the structure of the DCSU to ensure that roles, responsibilities and priorities are clear and that our arrangements more effectively support the development of integrated planning and delivery approaches. In accordance with the most recent DCSF review and associated government guidance, there is a need to further improve the clarity of our leadership, structure and reporting arrangements across the whole of the council's children's services system. As part of these developments, it is proposed that the senior officers responsible for the operational provider services should be more closely aligned under the leadership and management of the Director. As the Director is also vested with the statutory accountabilities with regard to education and learning, it is further recommended that the Director should also have a more direct line management role, than has hitherto been the case, for education related services. The level of business and commissioning support capacity is insufficient at the DCSU level to effectively support the development of children's services and the role and function of the Children's Services Leadership Team is not as effective as it needs to be. Members need to consider the sufficiency of Executive Member and Scrutiny Board arrangements and ascertain whether any changes might be required. Moreover, consultation and engagement of local ward members needs to be strengthened.

3.6. **Recommendations regarding the DCSU:**

1. Review the senior management arrangements for children's services responding to the issues identified above.
2. Provide clarity on which post/person acts as the natural deputy for fulfilling the statutory responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services when they are absent.
3. Create an integrated business support function, reporting to the Director, made up of all relevant business support functions from across council provided children's services, including Education Leeds.

4. Create an integrated commissioning support function, reporting to the Director, made up of all relevant commissioning support functions from across council provided children's services, including Education Leeds.
5. Develop a coherent children's services transformation programme (using programme and project management approaches) detailing the range of improvement projects requiring to be progressed and the resourcing issues arising.
6. Make arrangements for the senior officers responsible for the operational provider services to be line managed by the Director or one of his/her deputies.
7. Review the Children's Services Leadership Team arrangements with consideration being given to reinforce its role as a key leadership body. There is a need to review terms of reference, membership, individual roles and responsibilities and leadership arrangements.
8. Progress the recruitment for a new permanent Director of Children's Services as soon as practicably possible in 2010.
9. That Members give consideration to Executive member portfolio arrangements.
10. That Members give consideration to the sufficiency of existing scrutiny board arrangements for children's services.
11. That further work is progressed to ensure that there are effective consultation and engagement mechanisms in place for ward member involvement in children's services issues.

4.0 Children Leeds Partnership Arrangements

4.1. Children's Trust Arrangements

- 4.1.1 From a partnership perspective, the Children's Leeds partnership provides a strategic overview of children's services arrangements in Leeds, supported by the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB), the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and a range of sub groups and locality arrangements.
- 4.1.2 Collectively, these partnership and locality arrangements, as well as the officer based arrangements, form what are known as Leeds' Children's Trust Arrangements. This type of Children's Trust was adopted recognising the breadth and complexity of children's services arrangements in Leeds and the need to move to a commissioning approach for all children's services.
- 4.1.3 As a separate piece of work, a very thorough review has been undertaken of Leeds' Children's Trust Arrangements and this report does not, therefore, seek to duplicate that work. Rather, in this paper a summary will be provided of stakeholder feedback on the partnership arrangements and proposals for moving forward.
- 4.1.4 The Leeds trust arrangement is unusual in that it does not have a single Children's Trust Board. The initial thinking behind this approach was a recognition that Leeds is a large and complex city and there needs to be a wide range of partners involved in driving the agenda forward.
- 4.1.5 Leadership for the partnership arrangements is shared between the Director of Children's Services, who chairs the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB) and the Lead Executive Member who chairs the Children Leeds Partnership (CLP).

4.2. The Children Leeds Partnership (CLP)

- 4.2.1 The Children Leeds Partnership (CLP) is the 'softer' side of partnership and has a broad set of core functions within its terms of reference, although, as identified in the fuller review, the terms of reference do not describe sufficiently how the partnership will carry out its responsibilities or indeed how its success might be measured.
- 4.2.2 A key strength of the CLP is its inclusiveness and accessibility, as well as its engagement with young people. It is seen as presenting opportunities for networking, finding new ways of working together and raising awareness.
- 4.2.3 However, it has grown significantly since its inception with 41 specified members as part of its original terms of reference, extending now to 69 in the membership list updated in 2009. As the principal partnership body for children's services in the city, it is difficult to understand how such a large body, with such a diverse range of stakeholder involvement, can effectively lead the children's services agenda in Leeds. Indeed, stakeholders who do, or had in the past, participated in the CLP commented that it was an unwieldy body which struggled to find its focus. Stakeholders agree that the time is now right to revisit the CLP arrangements.

4.3. The Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB)

- 4.3.1 The Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB) is the 'harder' side of partnership and is principally where partners work together to performance manage the delivery of children's

services across the city and where the commissioning strategy for children's services is developed. It is the body where, under the 'duty to cooperate' requirements, provider services and partners can be held to account.

- 4.3.2 However, the ISCB does not commission services itself. Rather, it relies on six commissioning groups which are themed around key areas of commissioning activity. Whilst these groups exist, it is not clear why these particular commissioning groups have been established or indeed the reporting relationship to the wider ISCB.
- 4.3.3 Attendance at ISCB meetings is generally poor with less than 60% attending regularly. This appears to be getting worse with less than 29% in June 2009. Many key partners (e.g. Strategic Health Authority, Surestart, Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust) have not attended for nearly two years. The education sector is also not represented and there have been some tensions as regards the appropriateness of attendance by the Chair of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board and a representative of the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber.
- 4.3.4 Overall, stakeholders felt that the ISCB was not fulfilling its role well enough. There was also concern that some members struggled to see it as a priority, despite the intention of it being the hard-edge of partnership activity.
- 4.3.5 As regards commissioning, one of its core functions, the ISCB has only received one report considering the outcomes of commissioning and it is not clear where commissioning happens and, importantly, how such commissioning activity is overseen by the Board, partly as a result of the invisibility of its commissioning groups.
- 4.3.6 Representatives of the voluntary sector were particularly critical of the role of commissioning, feeling significantly disengaged from the commissioning process and feeling over dominated by a focus on city-wide delivery arrangements. Whether true or not, further engagement with the voluntary sector is clearly required in order to improve the working relationship between children's services and the voluntary sector.
- 4.3.7 Performance management is also a key role for the Board, however, children's services do not yet have sufficient performance management arrangements in place to support such a role. The establishment of an integrated business support team should provide sufficient opportunity to improve the performance management arrangements.

4.4. **The Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)**

- 4.4.1 The Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) also forms part of our Children's Trust Arrangements. Its responsibilities and focus are clear, not least because its role is very clearly set out in Government guidance, and the LSCB had an independent chair well before this was usual or required.
- 4.4.2 Again, a separate detailed review of the LSCB is currently in the process of being undertaken and the detail, therefore, of any issues arising can be considered as part of that review. For the benefit of this review, a number of key issues are identified, all of which are picked up in the fuller review.
- 4.4.3 Accountabilities between the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and Chair of the LSCB appear to be unclear. As the DCS is statutorily accountable for the provision of children's services across the city, it is clear in the mind of the review team that that is where ultimate

accountability lies. Therefore, there needs to be a strong line of communication and reporting arrangement between the DCS and independent Chair of the LSCB.

- 4.4.4 In addition to this, it is important for the chair of the LSCB to maintain and recognise his/her independence. In this respect, it is suggested that the chair prepare an annual report to be issued to key partners, including the Council's Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team. Moreover, the chair also needs to be able to raise issues of significant concern with the council's Chief Executive directly, should this be considered necessary.
- 4.4.5 The Chair of the LSCB should also be a formal attendee (not member) on the ISCB in order to provide challenge and support on safeguarding matters.
- 4.4.6 The membership of the LSCB is too large and it does not have sufficient people of the right level of seniority to operate effectively.
- 4.4.7 The work of the Board has also been largely associated with the consideration of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) which has been time consuming. The Board has generally handled SCRs well with reviews being assessed as being adequate or better. However, such focus on SCRs has left insufficient time and scope for ensuring the effectiveness of safeguarding practice across the city.
- 4.4.8 The functioning of the LSCB also relies on effective performance management and, as stated previously, there are gaps in children's services performance management arrangements, therefore, the LSCB is not currently being adequately served in regard to performance issues.
- 4.4.9 Rather, the focus should be on getting the membership right on the LSCB and creating the capacity (both in terms of time available from the chair and support capacity to the Board) to effectively support the functioning of the Board.

4.5. **Locality Arrangements**

- 4.5.1 When the Director of Children's Services Unit was created, five Locality Enablers were appointed to take the leadership role in locality working. This saw the creation of five Locality Leadership Teams
- 4.5.2 Our locality arrangements are focused around local extended service networks involving clusters of schools, children centres and a range of partners.
- 4.5.3 In 2009, the government published its 21st Century Schools white paper which has a particular emphasis on building "team around the child" capacity and early intervention at the levels of local school partnerships and individual school settings. In Leeds, the natural base for this type of work is the current collaborative networks that schools have formed around:
 - 1. the delivery of extended services;
 - 2. behaviour, attendance and exclusion work;
 - 3. 14 to 19 planning, and;
 - 4. the inclusion agenda.
- 4.5.4 In a report to Executive Board in December 2009, the creation of five Area Children Leeds Partnerships were proposed, based on the current inner/outer area committee wedge model. The existing Locality Leadership Teams would effectively evolve into these new

arrangements. A key benefit of the new arrangements is strengthened democratic engagement through greater involvement of local councillors and more formal linkages to the Area Committee structure.

- 4.5.5 Members agreed that the role of an Area Children Leeds Partnership should be to:
1. Develop, oversee and monitor the delivery of the children and young people themed actions in Area Delivery Plans (including 14-19 planning);
 2. Support and drive local priorities (locality level action plans);
 3. Oversee and monitor locality level planning work in support of that overall delivery;
 4. Ensure links to the partnership groups operating at locality levels (e.g. extended services management groups, area inclusion partnerships, and 14-19 planning), and;
 5. ensure the required coordination of effort.
- 4.5.6 To ensure the required level of partnership, democratic involvement and governance at the locality level, it was agreed that such partnerships be established based upon extended services clusters involving schools, children's centres and a range of partners. A number of extended services clusters are already moving towards this new model.
- 4.5.7 As some of the emerging cluster arrangements in Leeds are developments around the new powers of school governing bodies to establish school trusts, the report to Executive Board made proposals for how an existing cluster arrangement can be brought within a strategic partnership and specific proposals for how such is handled when a school trust is in place or being established.
- 4.5.8 These are positive developments and significantly enhance democratic engagement in children's services developments. One issue raised as part of the stakeholder sessions was the need to be mindful of how these arrangements are presented in order that they can be seen to be providing clarity to our locality based arrangements rather than adding further confusion to what is already in place. One group of professionals had particularly strong views that the locality partnership arrangements need to be streamlined as, at present, there were too many disparate groups e.g. neighbourhood networks, area committees, children Leeds area partnerships, safeguarding panels, cluster arrangements, school families etc.

4.6. **The New Children's Trust and Children's Trust Board**

- 4.6.1 On 13 November 2009, the Government issued new statutory guidance, for consultation, on requirements regarding Children's Trust arrangements. The key requirements/issues within this new guidance are that:
1. The **Children's Trust** is the sum total of co-operation and partnership arrangements between organisations with a role of improving outcomes for children and young people. It is not a legal entity in itself as each partner retains responsibility for their respective functions. It covers every organisational level from governance to front-line delivery.
 2. The **Children's Trust Board** is a new statutory body that every local authority is required to have in place by 1 April 2010. The Board will have responsibility for developing, publishing, reviewing, revising and monitoring the Children and Young People's Plan. The Children's Trust Board is required to have a clear and separate identity within the wider co-operation arrangements. Whilst the Children's Trust Board will be a statutory body in its own right, it does fit within the wider Local Strategic

Partnership as a thematic partnership. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to appoint the chair of the Board. There are no restrictions on who the chair is, simply that it is the most appropriate person who can speak with authority on behalf of the Children's Trust Board. The Local Authority is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the Chair's work. The Board must include a representative of the local authority and each of its statutory 'relevant partners'. It should also include non-statutory partners to reflect local circumstances.

3. The **Duty to Cooperate** continues to be a key aspect of children's trust arrangements. The list of statutory 'relevant partners' has though been extended to include maintained schools, Academies, non-maintained special schools, FE and sixth-form colleges, Short Stay School / Pupil Referrals Units and Job Centre Plus.
4. The **Children and Young People's Plan** will be the agreed joint strategy of the partners in the Children's Trust and responsibility for its preparation moves from the Local Authority into the new Children's Trust Board. The new style plan needs to be published by April 2011.

4.7. **Conclusion**

- 4.7.1 In considering our Partnership Arrangements, this review, as well as other separate reviews undertaken on specific aspects of the partnership arrangements, have found several strengths and aspects of good practice within Leeds' Children's Trust Arrangements. However, there are also significant areas for development which need to be addressed in order to develop partnership arrangements that are effective and fit-for-purpose.
- 4.7.2 Moreover, the recently issued statutory guidance on Children's Trust arrangements requires a fundamental re-think of our own arrangements with the requirement to put in place a new Children's Trust Board by 1 April 2010.
- 4.7.3 With revised statutory guidance having recently been issued, and with the benefit of the three separate reviews having been undertaken on Leeds' partnership arrangements, it is recommended that new partnership arrangements are implemented, commencing with the requirement to implement a new Children's Trust Board by 1 April 2010.
- 4.7.4 The recommendations flowing from the review of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board need to be properly considered and implemented as do the recent changes to governance arrangements at the locality level, as agreed by Executive Board in December 2009.
- 4.7.5 These changes, at both the strategic level and locality level, require that a full review of our arrangements be now undertaken to ensure our arrangements are fit-for-purpose and provide clarity in leadership and governance across the full partnership structure.

4.8. **Recommendations regarding Leeds' partnership arrangements:**

1. Implement new Children's Trust arrangements in light of the new guidance that has recently been issued.
2. Establish a new Children's Trust Board to fulfill the new statutory responsibilities to be assigned to such body from 1 April 2010.

3. Implement revised arrangements for the engagement of Area Committees and Children's Champions in the children's services locality arrangements as agreed by Executive Board in December 2009.
4. Review all children's services locality based arrangements (e.g. family of schools, clusters, neighbourhood groups etc.) to ensure they are appropriate and fit-for-purpose and to remove any potential for duplication.
5. Review the commissioning approach being adopted through the ISCB sub-commissioning board arrangements to ensure they are aligned strategically to the new arrangements.
6. Strengthen the dialogue and working arrangements with representatives of the voluntary sector as regards children's services matters.
7. Implement the recommendations from the review of the LSCB including the need to get the board membership at the right level of seniority; the need to have effective performance management arrangements in place; the need to have the appropriate level of capacity and support to enable it to function effectively; and, to clarify the accountability and reporting arrangements of the chair.

5.0 Education Leeds – The Strategic Fit

5.1. The Case For Change

- 5.1.1 Whilst Education Leeds is part of Leeds' children's services arrangements, it does have its own governance and leadership arrangements with it being established as a company wholly owned by the city council. Education Leeds was originally created under Direction from the Secretary of State, following the receipt of a critical OfSTED report in 1999 and has been operational since 1 April 2001. The Company established its own brand, policies and procedures as it considered appropriate, but maintained close links with the city council continuing to use the council's accommodation for its staff and continuing, in most areas, to use the council's support infrastructure.
- 5.1.2 Over the last eight years, significant progress has been made in regard to the attainment and broader schools improvement agenda. The Direction was removed in 2006, and certain changes were made to the operating model, but the overarching company arrangement was retained by the city council. Oversight of the Company is undertaken by a Board consisting of council representatives, professional educational advisers, business representation and an independent Chair.
- 5.1.3 Whilst it has been possible to implement changes to the company arrangement since the removal of the Direction in 2006, fundamental change has not to date been considered necessary bearing in mind the improvements made on the educational attainment agenda and being cognisant of the developing world of children's services following the enactment of the Children Act in 2004. There was some change in 2006 which followed the falling away of the Direction. This change included a new contractual arrangement with the council and the removal of the partnership agreement with Capita Education Services, although Capita representatives were retained on the Board to provide continuing professional input and challenge.
- 5.1.4 That said, it is fair to say that the continuing operation of a company arrangement during the development of the children's agenda has posed some challenges in regard to clarity of leadership and accountability across children's services. Many stakeholders commented that they were not clear on the role, responsibilities and reporting arrangements of the Chief Executive of Education Leeds to, and compared with, the Director of Children's Services. A number of stakeholders also questioned the role and purpose of the Board of Education Leeds, particularly in considering issues relating to education policy and strategy. In regard to the retention of a company arrangement, it is fair to say that there was a wide variety of views on whether the company model should be retained.
- 5.1.5 Moreover, earlier on in this report, the issue of creating an integrated business and commissioning support arrangement for children's services is considered. Assuming this development is agreed, it would see relevant aspects of the company's operation transferring to the council as part of an integrated support team operating across the whole of children's services.
- 5.1.6 In addition to the above, the government have over recent years progressed an agenda which sees schools having greater autonomy over their budgets and the services they receive. This has changed the overall relationship between Education Leeds and Schools with schools commissioning more of their own services. This direction of travel is likely to continue with even more powers and budgets being delegated to schools and governing

bodies. This will require greater flexibility in the way in which education support services are provided and will likely see a continuing reduction in the level of support provided by a central education support service.

5.1.7 Therefore, with all of these issues, it is now an appropriate time to reflect on our current arrangements.

5.2. Leadership Arrangements

5.2.1 There is a degree of confusion between the roles and accountabilities of the Chief Executive of Education Leeds and the Director of Children's Services. The fact that both senior officers appear by most stakeholders to be 'peers' in the hierarchy of children's services arrangements, provides a general lack of clarity and understanding as to where ultimate accountability lies and who is responsible for whom and for what set of priorities. Whilst the relationship between the two officers concerned was considered to be effective and professional, it is clear that such ambiguity between respective roles cannot, overall, be beneficial to the efficient delivery and leadership of children's services in Leeds.

5.2.2 This becomes more important at a time when clarity of leadership is required in order to refocus resource and capacity at the most important issues that require to be addressed across children's services at this time.

5.2.3 The review team have, therefore, concluded that looking forward there needs to be clear accountability within the role of Director of Children's Services for education based matters. That is not to say that a senior officer with responsibility for leading and championing the schools agenda is not required, as this is most certainly an essential requirement of any future remodelling of children's services. Rather, what is needed is clarity of reporting arrangements which make clear the line management responsibility a Director of Children's Services has for the senior officer responsible for education in the city.

5.2.4 This would require a review of the role of Chief Executive of Education Leeds and the respective reporting and accountability arrangements.

5.2.5 This requires a significant change in leadership arrangements and needs to be handled appropriately in full discussion with the affected parties in order to secure a positive transition to the new arrangements during the course of the next 12 months. Not least because the current Chief Executive of Education Leeds has, over the past eight years, provided strong and highly effective leadership for the schools agenda; is highly regarded; and has overseen the transformation of schools estate and educational outcomes.

5.3. The Board of Education Leeds

5.3.1 The Board of Education Leeds was established in 2001 when the company became operational. It consists of council representatives, professional educational advisers, business representation and has an independent Chair.

5.3.2 When the Board was first established in April 2001, it had a wide range of responsibilities covering both the operational management of the company as well as receiving and shaping advice on education related policy and strategy matters that would ultimately be put to the city council for consideration. Whilst with a company arrangement it will always be a requirement to have a Board to oversee the operational management of the company, with the need to develop an integrated approach to children's services, a requirement for the

Board to oversee the development of education policy and strategy becomes less convincing, not least when it is being done in isolation of wider children's services policy and strategy development.

- 5.3.3 Whilst it would be unfair to suggest that Education Leeds do not have a broader outlook on the holistic needs of the child or family, it is apparent that with the development of children's services, all related policy and strategy development needs to be developed through an integrated children's services approach.
- 5.3.4 The review team have therefore concluded that there is little added value in retaining an arrangement where education based policy and strategy development is constrained to the responsibility of the Education Leeds board, prior to recommendations coming to the Council's Executive Board.
- 5.3.5 Whilst it is fair to say that the Education Leeds Board could continue to oversee schools based policy and strategy development before being considered by the Director of Children's Services (as opposed to being reported straight to Executive Board) the added value provided by the Board in fulfilling this role becomes less evident as our children's services arrangements develop.
- 5.3.6 That is not to say that the Board don't add value because clearly they do. Rather, it is an acknowledgment that with the advent of children's services, a more holistic and integrated means of policy development is required.
- 5.3.7 Therefore, it is proposed that the Board of Education Leeds ceases to have a role in the development of education related policy and strategy matters, requiring instead that such responsibilities be vested as part of the revised children's trust arrangements in order to secure an integrated approach to policy and strategy development across children's services.
- 5.3.8 With such a shift in responsibility, and assuming the company model is maintained the Board would become responsible for the statutory company based responsibilities which would be focussed on ensuring that the company delivers its contractual obligations to the council and schools and that its finances and operating effectiveness are in good order.
- 5.3.9 This being the case then the representation on the Board would need to be reconsidered. There would be an argument to suggest that there was no longer a need for professional educational input from Capita Education Services as well as no longer requiring an independent chair. It could, however, be argued that external representation from the business sector would continue to be beneficial, in order to help provide a business focussed approach and link education to the future employment agenda.
- 5.3.10 In light of this suggested shift, the Board ought sensibly to be slimmed down to a smaller number, with a senior officer of the Council, probably the officer charged with leading and championing the schools/education agenda, chairing the Board in a similar manner to a Director/Chief Officer chairing his/her own management team.
- 5.3.11 Recognising the change in focus, further value could be added to the Board arrangement through the possible addition of head teachers and/or governor representatives recognising that they are the key recipients of the services provided.
- 5.3.12 There is also a question regarding whether the retention of professionally qualified advisers/consultants would be beneficial to the broader development of children's services in

Leeds. It has been suggested by some, that a Board with such professional input could be created at the children's services level in order to retain such professional challenge and support. However, whilst there is some merit in the suggestion of retaining some element of professional support and challenge, the governance arrangements for children's services are already crowded and the review team do not consider it appropriate to add another layer of governance to achieve this objective.

- 5.3.13 Rather, consideration should be given as to whether external professional children's services advisers should form some part of the children's services governance arrangements (e.g. by being part of the Children's Trust Board) in order to fulfil any external professional challenge and support role that may be required.
- 5.3.14 One further issue raised by a number of stakeholders was the appropriateness of Elected Members being on the Board of Education Leeds. Whilst the reasons for Board representation are well documented, there continues to be some stakeholders who question why Members are not on the Board.
- 5.3.15 When Education Leeds was created, the city council argued a strong case for Elected Members retaining democratic control of education policy and strategy matters. The city council was successful in this quest requiring all significant matters of education policy and strategy to be referred to the council for determination. The role played by the Education Leeds Board has only ever been to make recommendations to the council on such matters, not too dissimilar to any management team or Director of a department/directorate.
- 5.3.16 For this reason, Board representation was appropriately restricted to officers. Indeed, it would be quite a challenge to understand the respective roles and responsibilities if Elected Members were on the Board of Education Leeds approving recommendations related to education policy and strategy which were then to be recommended to other, or indeed the same, Members on the Council's Executive Board. Moreover, as the previous recommendation proposes the removal of such responsibilities from the Board of Education Leeds, thus leaving a set of standard operational responsibilities, it does not seem appropriate for the council's agreed position on this matter to change i.e. it continues to be appropriate for officers, as opposed to Elected Members, to serve on the Board of Education Leeds.

5.4. **A Separate Company Entity**

- 5.4.1 The third issue that requires to be considered as part of the Education Leeds arrangement is whether there continues to be a need to retain a separate company entity. It is clear that a more integrated approach is required if we are to respond effectively to the challenge of improving outcomes for children and young people in the city. That's why much of this paper has already identified the need for greater integration across a range of issues.
- 5.4.2 Therefore, in order to assist consideration of the future of the company model, five options have been identified as follows:
 1. Option 1 – "**Status Quo**" – This option would see the retention of the current arrangements;
 2. Option 2 – "**A Slimmed Down Company Model**" – This option would see the retention of the company model with the exception of a) relevant business and commissioning support functions which would transfer to an integrated children's services team, b) the

Board of Education Leeds ceasing to have a responsibility for overseeing education related policy and strategy matters and c) the Chief Executive of Education Leeds being more directly accountable to the Director of Children's Services, in line with the wider recommendations of this review;

3. Option 3 – “**An Enhanced Company Offer**” - As option 2, but with the addition of a reverse transfer of a range of universal children's services (early years and youth services) from the council into the company to create an enhanced company model based around a set of universal provider services.
4. Option 4 – “**Children Leeds Ltd**” – The option would see Education Leeds Ltd evolve into Children Leeds Ltd with all children's services functions and responsibilities being transferred into a revised company arrangement, excluding a client function that would need to be retained by the council.
5. Option 5 – “**Children's Services Directorate**” – This option would conclude that in light of the development of children's services, and the need to have a fully effective and integrated children's service, the most appropriate action is to transfer all Education Leeds services to the council in a managed way by 1 April 2011 under a new directorate based leadership arrangement.

5.4.3 Option 1 (**Status Quo**) is not considered an appropriate course of action recognising the issues identified within this report. Particularly the need to develop a more integrated children's services approach, both in terms of service delivery and policy development; the need to have integrated business and commissioning support arrangements across children's services; the requirement to provide clarity of role and responsibility of a Director of Children's Services regarding the provision of education related services; and the need to consider the provision of services which are cost efficient and ensure the maximum focus of resources on front-line service delivery. For these reasons, and the high risks associated with not responding to the issues identified within the review, the status quo (option 1) is not recommended for further consideration.

5.4.4 Option 2 (**A Slimmed Down Company Model**) would retain most of what is currently provided by Education Leeds, although it would still involve fairly significant change affecting business and commissioning support arrangements; a change in the role of the Board and thus a review of its membership, and; a change in the reporting requirements of the Chief Executive of Education Leeds. Whilst it does involve change, it is the option which involves the least level of change. It could, however, restrict flexibility in delivering a truly integrated approach across children's services, with education support services continuing to be provided under a different governance arrangement to other related children's services. This option is considered appropriate if Members wish to retain a company model, principally for the provision of support services to schools.

5.4.5 Option 3 (**An Enhanced Company Offer**) would involve moderate to significant change with a range of functions and resources (e.g. business and commissioning support resources) being transferred to the council, with a corresponding resource transfer into the company bringing together a range of universal services (e.g. education, learning, youth and early years services). The number of staff transferring into the company would likely be higher than those transferring out under this option. There is the potential for industrial relations issues, transferring further staff into a company arrangement with different policies, procedures and employment practices in place. Even with this model, there would need to be significant change affecting business and commissioning support arrangements; a change

in the role of the Board and thus a review of its membership, and; a change in the reporting requirements of the Chief Executive of Education Leeds. Therefore, this option would involve moderate to significant change and whilst it might assist in the improved integration of universal services, it would not achieve a fully integrated model as other key services would be retained by the council. It is moderate to high risk in terms of the scale of change, but would see improved integration as compared to the status quo. This option is considered appropriate if Members wish to build upon the success of Education Leeds through adding other universal services to its range of functions.

- 5.4.6 Option 4 (**Children Leeds Ltd**) is based around a principle of creating a truly integrated model and building upon the success of Education Leeds. It would see the transfer of all children's services resources, excluding a client function which would need to be maintained within the council, into the company arrangement which would evolve into Children Leeds limited. This would be a significant change with a large resource transfer of staff from the council to the new company. It would require significant support to reengineer the company and contractual arrangements as well as dealing with the obvious industrial relations issues that would arise from the TUPE transfer of such a large number of staff. It would have a high implementation cost and there is a real danger that such significant change could also create a diversion from the important improvement agenda, particularly in the area of children's social care. Therefore, this option is considered to be too high risk and is not recommended for further consideration.
- 5.4.7 Option 5 (**Children's Services Directorate**) builds upon the principle of option 4, but through the creation of a truly integrated model within the council's own structural arrangement. It has significant merit in building an integrated approach to delivery and support across children's services. It offers the best opportunity to fundamentally review current provision; provides maximum flexibility for the redesign of services; allows for the re-arrangement of services in a truly integrated way, and; will deliver efficiencies which can be redirected to essential front-line services. This option is not though without risk. It would still see the transfer of a sizeable workforce from Education Leeds to the council and the consequential employee and industrial relations matters that would arise. It will also be important for stakeholders to understand the benefits of such change and to ensure such transfer is progressed in a way that builds upon the success of Education Leeds and maintains and further enhances the provision of education support services to schools. The council's own arrangements have changed significantly since the LEA OfSTED report in 2000 with enhanced governance arrangements in place following modernisation. Notwithstanding this, there may be some fears in some quarters of a move to the council and such change will need to be managed in an inclusive and managed way. It is for this reason that this report proposes that if such a change was to be progressed, it should be implemented in a managed way with full transition being complete by 1 April 2011 in order to provide sufficient time to develop revised leadership, managerial and organisational arrangements, whilst allowing for effective engagement of staff, partners and schools.
- 5.4.8 Options 2, 3 and 5 offer the best opportunity of securing an effective approach to the delivery of integrated children's services arrangements within the council. Option 2 would be appropriate if there is a desire to continue with a company arrangement, albeit on a smaller scale. Option 3 would offer the potential of enhancing the company model with other universal services, although this option does require more detailed work and consideration. Option 5 offers the best prospect of integration, but requires a decision to cease with the company arrangement and transfer all services to the council under a new directorate based leadership arrangement.

5.5. Conclusion

5.5.1 The review acknowledges that following the creation of Education Leeds, significant progress has been made against the educational attainment and broader schools improvement agenda. In 2009, education provision is in a very different place to where it was ten years ago. Both the council and Education Leeds need to be applauded for the positive progress made. However, with the advent of children's services, the current arrangements in their entirety are not sustainable if we are to effectively respond to the new agenda we have been set. The review concludes that it is not appropriate for the Board of Education Leeds to continue to have any role in regard to education related policy and strategy. Rather, such responsibilities should be firmly a part of our wider children's services arrangements. It similarly concludes that the officer with principal responsibility for education provision in the city should be more clearly accountable to the Director of Children's Services. The review further recommends the creation of an integrated business and commissioning support function under the leadership of the Director of Children's Services which would see such resources currently within Education Leeds being transferred to the new integrated team. As regards the retention of the company model, five options are presented for consideration by Members.

5.6. Recommendations regarding Education Leeds:

1. Ensure that the senior officer responsible for education services in the city is clearly accountable to the Director of Children's Services.
2. That relevant business support functions be transferred to a new integrated business support team under the direction of the Director of Children's Services.
3. That relevant commissioning support functions be transferred to a new integrated commissioning team under the direction of the Director of Children's Services.
4. That consideration be given to the five options presented for the future of the company model.
5. If a company arrangement is maintained, it is recommended that the Education Leeds Board ceases to have a role in developing education policy and related strategy.
6. If a company arrangement is maintained, it is recommended that there ceases to be a need for the appointment of professional education advisers on the Board as well as the need for an independent chair. However, consideration should be given to the possible inclusion of head teachers and/or governors on the Board to have a clearer service provision focus.
7. That further consideration is given to the potential value of professional children's services advisers being part of the new children's services trust governance arrangements.

6.0 Future Structure and Organisational Arrangements

6.1. Issues to be Addressed

6.1.1 This review has identified a range of issues that need to be considered in developing new organisational arrangements. They can be summarised as follows:

1. The need to move forward with arrangements that support and enhance an integrated approach to the planning and delivery of children's services;
2. The need for the Director of Children's Services to have clear and unambiguous accountability and responsibility for all areas of children's services;
3. The need to ensure that education services, however they might be provided, are seen as being accountable to the Director of Children's Services;
4. The need to ensure that there are appropriate line management arrangements in place between the Director of Children's Services and the senior officers responsible for individual operational service areas;
5. The need to empower senior operational managers (i.e. chief officers) to deliver efficient and effective children's services;
6. The need to have a cohesive and effective Children's Services Leadership Team;
7. The need to have an integrated business support function across children's services;
8. The need to have an integrated and clear approach to commissioning across children's services;
9. The need to accelerate the pace of change in order to deliver improvements in underperforming services as well as the general improvement of outcomes for children and young people, and;
10. The need for any change to be economically efficient in order to redirect resources to front-line services.

6.2. Moving Forward

6.2.1 In thinking about future organisational arrangements for children's services, it's useful to first consider the changes adopted within the council over the course of the last three years. It can be noted from table 1 below that most council services have evolved from a departmental based approach to a directorate based model.

6.2.2 However, in 2007 the new approach to the development of the children's services agenda was still in its early developmental stages, both at the national and local levels. It was, nevertheless clear that the breadth of the statutory leadership role for children's services, both within and outside of the authority, was significant and careful consideration was, therefore, needed in considering any changes that the council might consider appropriate in regard to its own organisational arrangements.

- 6.2.3 Indeed the Annual Performance Assessment in December 2007 and the Joint Area Review, published in May 2008, both acknowledged that children's services' prospects for improvement were good recognising the appropriateness of the organisational arrangements that had been adopted at that time.

Table 1

Departmental Based	Children's Services	Directorate Based
<u>Pre-2007</u> All council services managed/operated in this way.	<u>Post-2007</u> Children's Services develops a commissioning based approach as national and local agenda develops	<u>Post-2007</u> All other council services move to directorate based model
Traditional departmental based model constructed on a clear hierarchy which is run top-down with the Director having complete control and high degree of responsibility for, and thus regular involvement in, operational matters.	A commissioning based model where the Director is primarily concerned with driving the strategy and seeking to secure improvements in operational delivery through commissioning arrangements.	A more devolved model where through concurrent delegations senior officers are empowered to be the principal operational managers of services. Director retains line management responsibility of chief officers and provides leadership to directorate team.

- 6.2.4 As a consequence of this, as well as the need to work closely with partners to develop the most appropriate arrangements for Leeds, the considered view was that radical change in regard to the council's organisational arrangements as regards children's services was not considered appropriate or indeed justified at that time, with a recognition that further consideration would need to be given to this matter when national guidance was further developed and we had had time to consider the best arrangements moving forward for Leeds. Therefore, in 2007, our efforts were focused on developing a model which would provide a commissioning lead for the oversight and development of children's services.

- 6.2.5 In responding to these issues in 2010, it is important to construct an organisational arrangement that will build upon the principles agreed as part of the 2007 smarter working, better results restructure, namely:

1. to create an organisation that is flexible and responsive and is clearly focused on delivering improved outcomes for the city and its people;
2. to increase organisational capacity to provide more effective strategic leadership and direction for both the organisation and the city. A corporate leadership team whose roles and behaviours change to the extent that they are consistently providing effective strategic leadership for the organisation and the city;
3. to maximise the contribution of senior and middle managers and create an environment where senior officers are empowered and able to effectively manage service delivery;

4. develop an organisation where services are organised in such a way as to maximise their contribution to delivering improved outcomes; and
5. create a strong culture and ethos of a one-council approach within the organisation.

6.2.6 With the passage of time and the further development of thinking and guidance on children's services developments, at both the national and local level, it is now considered appropriate to move forward and develop a directorate based arrangement for the provision of children's services. The development of a directorate based arrangement is proposed as it provides the best opportunity to integrate children's services at the planning, support and service delivery levels and ultimately support the delivery of improved outcomes for children and young people.

6.3. **A Proposal to Consider**

6.3.1 Therefore, in considering the range of issues identified in this report, a move to a directorate based approach is now recommended as being appropriate for the provision of the council's children's services arrangements. This would see the development of a devolved model which, through concurrent delegations, would see senior officers empowered to be the principal managers/leaders of services, with the Director retaining line management responsibility of such senior officers, and thus accountability for all services. The Director would still need to have a focus on leadership and strategy, but with the necessary focus on key operational pressures and priorities as they may arise.

6.3.2 The revised organisational arrangement will need to construct the managerial tiers in an appropriate manner in order to provide the appropriate leadership and accountability arrangements for all services, plus the necessary business and commissioning support arrangements that will be required to make the model work effectively.

6.3.3 Considering the size, scale and complexity of the agenda, incorporating both children's social care at one end of the spectrum and education and learning provision at the other, it will also be important to secure the appropriate professional leadership arrangements. For example, with the introduction of the role of Director of Children's Services, this created a situation where candidates would ordinarily have an education or social care background, but not both. This has been a particular issue for many authorities in seeking to ensure both professions have the appropriate level of professional leadership. In a city like Leeds, this is particularly relevant where both professions are significant in size and require the appropriate level of professional leadership.

6.3.4 Whilst more work is required in considering the appropriate directorate leadership arrangement to be adopted, the following is suggested as a starter for debate:

1. Overall leadership provided by a Director of Children's Services – the recruitment for this post has recently commenced and an appointment is expected by the autumn of 2010. In the meantime, Eleanor Brazil, interim Director of Children's Services, will provide leadership as we commence the transition to new arrangements.
2. A Deputy Director (or equivalent) of Children's Services to provide the professional lead and champion the education and learning functions of Children's Services.

3. A Deputy Director (or equivalent) of Children's Services to provide the professional leadership and champion targeted and specialist services for vulnerable children and young people (e.g. children and young people's social care).
4. And, leadership arrangements will be required for the integrated business and commissioning support functions.

6.3.5 In agreeing the three principal leadership roles, it will be important to establish them at an appropriate level within the council's structure and this may necessitate further consideration being given to the status and title of each of the posts. The holders of these posts will have responsibility for leading the delivery of a truly integrated children's services approach; developing effective working arrangements with the council's partners; improving outcomes for children and young people across the city, and delivering efficiencies so that essential resources can be targeted at front-line services.

6.3.6 As the above represents a significant change in approach, there will need to be a detailed review of the senior management structure in children's services over the next few months.

6.4. **Conclusion**

6.4.1 In regard to future organisational arrangements, and in recognition of the range of issues identified in this report, the review team recommend an approach which sees the next phase of change being the development of a children's services directorate based approach. Whilst this would not have been considered appropriate in 2007, as a consequence of the developing nature of children's services arrangements at that time, there is now a need to accelerate the pace of change and respond effectively to the integration agenda, therefore, the time is now right to move to a directorate based solution for the delivery of the council's children's services.

6.5. **Recommendations regarding future organisational arrangements:**

1. The development of a directorate based solution for the provision of children's services as provided for by Leeds City Council.
2. That consideration be given to the outline structure suggested at 6.3.4 as a starter for debate.

Appendix 1

Operational Issues

Whilst this review has not considered the detail of the operational arrangements in place within children's services, the review has identified a number of issues that need to be addressed. It is, therefore, appropriate to reference these wider issues here so that due consideration can be given to such matters as part of any further work taken forward.

Children and Young People's Social Care

The challenges being faced by children and young people's social care services was an issue identified by most stakeholders interviewed. There was broad understanding of the pressures facing children's social care services and recognition that the safeguarding of children and young people was a job for all agencies, not just social care. Stakeholders were supportive of the priority now being given to making improvements in children's social care issues and had a desire to assist wherever possible in those improvement plans. Although it is fair to say that some stakeholders were also concerned of the pressure being put on their own organisation/agency as a consequence of the significant increase in initial referrals and the roll-out of the Common Assessment Framework. Stakeholders did identify that from their perspective, thresholds for social care support and intervention did appear to be high and there were a number of frustrations that it was often difficult to secure the appropriate level of support, advice or intervention from children's social care colleagues due to their significant workload. These issues are actively being responded to as part of the council's improvement plans and are not, therefore, considered in any detail within this report.

Youth Provision

First, most stakeholders commented on the city's role in regard to youth service provision. All comments were similar in nature and related to a perception that youth service provision does not effectively meet the needs of young people in the city. Those contributing to the review commented that sufficient youth service resources are not available at the times of most need (evenings and weekends); that insufficient support is provided to the voluntary sector; that young people do not know what is on offer; and, that the services offered do not meet the needs of today's young people. The review team have not looked into this issue in any detail and it would, therefore, be inappropriate to offering any concluding remarks on this matter, other than to indicate that as there were such strong views expressed, further work will be necessary to fully understand the issues and concerns and decide what further action may be required.

Early Years

Whilst there were fewer stakeholders who made comment on Early Years services, a number did provide comment that they didn't feel that early year's services were sufficiently integrated into the broader children's services arrangements. So whilst the review team have not looked into this issue in any detail it would appear to be appropriate to undertake some further work and analysis of early years services and their integration into the wider children's agenda. Further work will be necessary to fully understand the issues and concerns and decide what further action, if any, may be necessary.

Resourcing

A number of stakeholders commented on the resourcing challenges of children's services arrangements. The council's budget strategy was noted as providing for limited growth in children's services over the life of the 5 year strategy which, with the current focus on pressures in children's services, was questioned by some as still being the appropriate strategy. However, whilst it is

appropriate to review the overall financial strategy in light of recent challenges, it is also important to look at the allocation of resources across children's services. Stakeholders commented that there appears to have been limited re-allocation of resource across the operational areas of children's services in order to respond to priority issues or take forward new developments. Indeed, a number of improvement actions appear to have been hindered by an inability to reallocate appropriate resource and funding to key issues. That's not to say there hasn't been some reallocation just that more needs to be done if Leeds' aspirations for children's services are to be fully realised. As part of the current budget setting process a full assessment of resource availability and current priorities across children's services needs to be undertaken with proposals for the necessary reallocation of resources to meet current pressures.

The Thoughts and Contributions of Young People

A number of young people contributed to the review and whilst they feel engaged in the strategic developments around children's services, such as contributing to the development and dissemination of the Children and Young People's Plan, they offered a number of views which have been captured here. Although again, the review has not sought to consider the detail of these issues as they are out of scope, but merely records the key points made. The young people contributing to the review were all enthusiastic about the city and had a positive outlook on the future. Reflecting on life as a young person in Leeds, they observed:

- That they do not generally find out from within the school environment what other things they can get involved in outside of school. They are generally unaware of activities available in their local communities for children and young people and feel schools should be playing a bigger part in making young people aware of issues and opportunities;
- That they do not generally engage with youth service provision;
- That they do not feel they are adequately supported and advised in regard to future careers options;
- They do not feel the education environment generally takes sufficiently seriously the important, but sensitive, issues such as sex, relationships and drugs.
- They are all optimistic about the future (although worried about money) and have clear ambitions which most are actively taking forward.

This is a bit of a 'taster' of the issues identified by the young people contributing to the review.

The review team recognises that this was not a comprehensive sample, or indeed that these views were wholly shared by all, but the voice on these issues was sufficiently strong enough to warrant recording as part of this review as, after all, outcomes for young people are ultimately the key focus of our wider children's services activities.

Think Family Approaches

The review also highlighted strong support for the think family agenda. For many though, this mantra of 'think family' is considered a challenge with a strong view that too many services still operate in silos. This is often evidenced well in Serious Case Reviews (i.e. when something has gone wrong) where in-effective inter-agency working, poor communication, limited information sharing all contribute to a child or young person suffering harm or neglect.

Too often, we still continue to be bound by organisational, or sub-organisational, boundaries and cultures, which too often get in the way of thinking 'family' or 'integrated support'. Looking forward, this is a major long term challenge for the public sector if we are to improve outcomes, particularly for the most vulnerable people in society.

In regard to vulnerability, it is not always clear that we all fully understand the context of universal services as compared to those services which might be considered preventative in nature, those which are targeted at specific individuals or families or those specialist services at the far right end of the support spectrum that require specialist intervention.

Recent work undertaken on safeguarding has provided some clarity on this issue identifying four key areas of support and intervention:

- Universal support for all children
- Children with additional needs
- Children with multiple needs
- Children at risk of or experiencing significant harm

Over the course of the last two years, national focus has rightly shifted to those children with multiple needs and those children at risk of harm. Safeguarding is a priority for all local authorities and particularly authorities like Leeds which has a large population to support, with significant numbers of families living in deprived circumstances.

When we refer to the need for better integration of services, improved communication and information sharing, a lead professional approach and the need for a common assessment framework, whilst this generally refers to meeting the needs of all children, the reality is that if such arrangements work effectively, it is those children and young people at the more vulnerable end of the spectrum who will secure greater benefit.

In recognising this challenge, and being mindful of the need for greater integration of services provided by the council, there is the potential to consider a more integrated leadership model for services provided to vulnerable children and young people in order to deliver more focused support.

Indeed, in time, such integration could develop into a more rounded family support and intervention approach targeted at vulnerable families. This issue needs to be considered as part of any new model developed if Leeds really is to respond to the broader challenges faced by the city in its desire to make long term sustainable improvement to the outcomes for children and young people.

The table below provides a 'starter for ten' on the possible split of services between 'universal and preventative' and 'vulnerable children and families'.

Universal and Preventative	Vulnerable Children and Families
Education Related Services: Schools Provision School Improvement School Admissions and Transport School Places Planning Business Support to Schools Supporting School Failure National Standards Active Citizenship + Children's Centre Provision + Youth Provision	Safeguarding Children and Young People Social Care Outreach to Vulnerable Groups Development of Strategy for the Vulnerable Disability Teenage Pregnancy Sexual health Looked After Children Substance use Youth Justice Obesity Emotional and mental Health Child Poverty Children Missing School NEET Education Welfare Special Education Needs

A further issue to consider as part of the 'think family' agenda is the issue of transition from young person to adulthood and the way services and agencies work together effectively to support such transition, particularly for vulnerable children and young people. Again, this issue is not considered in any detail within this review, but is a consideration that needs to be taken forward under the 'think family' agenda.

Recommendations regarding operational arrangements:

1. Consider the significance of comments received regarding youth service provision across Leeds and give thought to undertaking a specific review into youth services.
2. That further work be undertaken to consider the issues raised in regard to early years services.
3. Re-consider the council's five year budget strategy in light of the challenges faced in children's services in order to ensure that the strategy remains relevant and appropriate to meet the challenges ahead.
4. Undertake an urgent review of the allocation of resources across children's services and make recommendations for the reallocation of resources towards current priorities as may be required.
5. Consider the feedback from children and young people in order to inform future operational arrangements and priorities and to meet more closely the needs and desires of children and young people across the city.
6. Consider the extent to which 'think-family' approaches ought appropriately to be considered in remodeling children's services arrangements.

Appendix 2

List of Acronyms Used in the Report:

CSLT	-	Children's Services Leadership Team
CYPP	-	Children's and Young Peoples Plan
CLP	-	Children Leeds Partnership
CLT	-	Council's Corporate Leadership Team
DCS	-	Director of Children's Services
DCSF	-	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DCSU	-	Director of Children's Services Unit
ISCB	-	Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board
IYSS	-	Integrated Youth Support Service
LEA	-	Local Education Authority
LSC	-	Learning and Skills Council
LSP	-	Local Strategic Partnership
LSCB	-	Local Safeguarding Children Board
OfSTED	-	Office for Standards in Education
PCT	-	Primary Care Trust
SCR	-	Serious Case Review
TUPE	-	The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations

Appendix 3

List of Stakeholders Contributing to the Review

Stakeholder Group	Name(s) and Job Title
Leeds City Council Chief Executive	Paul Rogerson Chief Executive
Conservative Group	Cllr Carter Leader - Conservative
Lib Democrat Group	Cllr Brett Leader – Lib Democrat
Labour Group	Cllr Wakefield Leader – Labour Cllr Blake Deputy Leader - Labour
Executive Member Children’s Services	Cllr Golton
Executive Member - Learning	Cllr Harker
Leader of the Greens	Cllr Ann Blackburn
Executive Board Member	Cllr Finnegan
Chair – Children’s Services Scrutiny	Cllr William Hyde
Shadow Spokesperson for Children’s Services - Labour	Cllr Lisa Mulherin
Adult Social Care	Sandie Keene Director of Adult Social Services
Children’s Services	Judith Dodd Independent Chair of the Children’s Safeguarding Board
Children’s Services Leadership Team	Rosemary Archer Director of Children’s Services
	Keith Burton Deputy Director of Children’s Services – Commissioning and Partnerships
	Mariana Pexton Deputy Director of Children’s Services – Change and Innovation
	Sarah Sinclair Deputy Director of Children’s Services –

Stakeholder Group	Name(s) and Job Title
Children's Services Leadership Team contd.....	Commissioning
	Chris Edwards Chief Executive of Education Leeds
	Ros Vahey Deputy Chief Executive of Education Leeds
	Jackie Wilson Chief Officer of Children's Services
	John Paxton Head of Youth Service
	Sally Threlfall Chief Officer – Early Years and Youth Services
	NHS Leeds Community Healthcare
Director of Children's Services Unit Management Team	David McDermott Strategic Manager Education Leeds
	Dennis Holmes Chief Officer – Commissioning Adult Social Care
Education Leeds Board	Stephen Parkinson Professor Emeritus
	Gary Lumby Head of Retail Banking England
	Parin Bahl Deputy Managing Director - Strategic Children's Services and National Strategies Capita Business Services Ian Harrison Managing Director - Strategic Children's Services and National Strategies Capita Business Services
	Neil Evans Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Stakeholder Group	Name(s) and Job Title
Head Teachers Forum	Facilitated Group discussion.
School Governors	<p>Facilitated Group discussion held with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geoff Roberts, Chair of Governors – West SILC, • Ian Garforth, Community Governor, Garforth Community College • Rod Ash, Chair of School’s Forum and Foundation Governor, St Matthews CE (A) Primary School • Susan Knights, Governor for North West Primary and member of Children’s Scrutiny Board
Youth Council Executive Board	Facilitated Group discussion.
Reach Out and Reconnect (ROAR)	Facilitated Group discussion.
Government Office Yorkshire and Humber	<p>Helen McMullen Deputy Regional Director Children and Learners</p> <p>Nick Powley Children’s Services Advisor</p>
Comprehensive Area Assessment Lead - West Yorkshire	<p>Stephen Gregg CAA Lead - West Yorkshire Audit Commission</p>
PCT	<p>Linda Pollard Chair of PCT</p> <p>Kevin Howells Acting Chief Exec of PCT</p> <p>Sarah Sinclair Director of Commissioning and Planning: Children’s and Maternity – NHS Leeds</p> <p>John Lawlor New Chief Executive of NHS Leeds</p>

Stakeholder Group	Name(s) and Job Title
Jobcentre Plus	Diana Towler Partnership Director (Leeds)

Police (Member of Children Leeds Partnership)	Chief Superintendent Mark Milsom
Police (Member of Children's Safeguarding Board)	Chief Superintendent Gerry Broadbent
Police (Responsible for Child and Public Protection Unit)	Detective Inspector Lawrence Bone
Locality Leadership Team - East	Facilitated Group discussion.
Locality Leadership Team – North East	Facilitated Group discussion.
Voluntary Sector	Richard Norton Re'new Chair of Integrated Youth Support Services
Voluntary Sector	Ann Pemberton Homestart Chair of the Leeds Voice Children and Young People's Forum and Member of Children Leeds Partnership
Children's Leeds Partners – Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB)	Marcus Beecham Commissioning Manager for Safer Leeds West Yorkshire Police
	Andrew Chandler Assistant Chief Officer West Yorkshire Probation
	Lynne McLaughlin Voluntary Youth Sector Development Manager Leeds Voice
	Jill Asbury Divisional Nurse – Women's, Children's, Head, Neck and Dental Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust