



Report of the Director of Children's Services

Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 18th December 2008

Subject: Revised Children's Services arrangements for more effective locality working with families

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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Executive Summary

Being more responsive to specific local needs was one of the key ambitions behind the evolution of our city's children's trust arrangements. This approach demands a reshaping of our existing wedge children services arrangements and the strengthening of wider linkages, e.g. into Area Committees, to support extended service clusters¹ in their development. We have made considerable progress in reshaping the arrangements, however, this is very much a work in progress and elected members are requested to engage, support, and influence the developments at ward and extended service cluster level.

1.0 Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

- Note the report

¹ There are some 38 extended service clusters consisting of schools, children's centres, and other providers in the city. They offer a range of services already, for example, child care and referrals to more specialised support, and are increasingly becoming key to the delivery of integrated services. These clusters are formalising their governance arrangements to become fit for purpose for service delivery and the local commissioning of services, for example, through forming collaborative committees or schools trusts.

- Nominate an Elected Member (where committees have not already done so) to:
 - (1) work with the Locality Enabler and the Area Manager (on behalf of the Area Committee) - to take these developments forward and
 - (2) to represent the Area Committee on the North West Children Leeds Partnership, subject to Member Management Committee approval.

It would be helpful if the elected member were the same member for developing the local priorities.

2.0

Appendix 1: A diagram to show how the developing local picture links to Area Committees and ensures engagement beyond Children's Services

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report provides an overview of the evolution of locality children's trust arrangements. It seeks to inform the committee of developments in recent months, confirm the direction of travel for revised arrangements, and seeks member involvement in ensuring that priorities and actions are relevant and delivered by the Leadership Teams.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Children's Act 2004 heralded a period of a significant change and development for Children's Services through to 2014. Nationally, developments in shared systems and arrangements, integrated planning and commissioning, integrated systems, and integrated front line delivery are underway.

2.2 It has always been the intention that locality arrangements would be an integral part of the overall Children's Trust Arrangements. The 'West Leeds Project'² the work of the Brigshaw cluster in East Leeds, the 'Leadership Challenge' in the NEtWORKS cluster in North East Leeds, and the School Partnership Trust in Garforth have helped us to understand better the things we need to do to deliver better services to families.

2.3 Most recently, we held a well attended and successful Governance Seminar (July 2008) with a wide range of stakeholders including elected members, school governors, and the voluntary, community, and faith sector. We received overwhelming endorsement of this approach to locality working.

2.4 Guiding principles have been developed through these discussions and these are:

- All partners will remain responsible and accountable for decisions on their individual services and resources³
- There will be no change to the accountabilities of council officers or to the council's constitution.
- Partners should work together locally with a common purpose to secure high quality integrated services for children, young people, and their families
- We must reduce duplication of effort and the number of meetings that take place around the same family issues in different agencies
- Revised locality arrangements should ensure leadership by and democratic accountability to elected members for the integration of children's services through Area Committees and their Area Delivery Plans
- The responsibilities and accountabilities of existing groups such as the Education Area Management Board and their frameworks will be secured in the new arrangements and these existing groups dissolved.

² The West Leeds Project was established in 2005 in order to develop early knowledge and learning arising from the changes implemented by the Children Act, 2004, and the related Every Child Matters agenda.

³ The Director of Children's Services (DCS) holds on behalf of the local authority those statutory accountabilities and responsibilities relating to the provision of all the authority's children's services. The DCS is accountable for the achievement of national and local outcomes and in turn can hold partners to account for delivering the outcomes in the City's Children and Young People's Plan. The Children's Act 2004 also requires a Lead or Executive Member for Children's Services. Cllr Golton fulfils this role in its broadest sense. However, given the size of the portfolio in Leeds, Cllr Harker fulfils the responsibilities in relation to education functions of the Council. Cllr Golton and Cllr Harker are supported by two lead members.

2.5 All of this collaborative work has determined the following core elements in the locality children's trust arrangements -

2.6.1 A Wedge Children's Services Partnership with the breadth and depth of children, young people, and family services to develop priorities for improved targeting of resources. Rather than a formal and separate partnership with a plethora of meetings, this could consist of a series of community engagement events where local people could help to shape these priorities more effectively. We wish to seek help and support on how we could best achieve this engagement.

2.6.2 Wedge Children Leeds Leadership Team with officer representation from extended service clusters (or other appropriate partnerships) and wedge leaders from children, young people, and family services to drive and manage service integration in response to the priorities and plans for the wedge.

We believe that this development of our locality working gives us more opportunities to discuss problems together, work better together, and improve professional practice, whilst retaining the lines of accountability that exist currently.

2.7 **Appendix 1** shows the revised arrangement. These core elements would be time limited from April 2009 and exist to deliver integrated children's services teams at cluster level.

2.8 Decision-making at local level often takes place along agency or service lines or in small groups working in isolation. It is envisaged that these emerging children's trust arrangements will help to:

- Reduce duplication of effort and the number of meetings that take place around the same family issues in different agencies
- Monitor and evaluate the local impact of services
- Consider and promote redirection of resources, where appropriate, to better meet the needs of children, young people and their families
- Promote a more flexible and creative use of resources.
- Recognise that children, young people, parents, and carers move across wedge and cluster boundaries to attend learning, work opportunities and access services. It is an imperative that service integration at all levels recognizes and addresses the associated challenges.

We need the Area Committees support and help to broaden the engagement of this arrangement with other key aspects of its work.

4.0 Legal and Resource Implications

4.1 Implications relate to the provision of advice, guidance and support for the further development of the arrangements outlined in this paper. This support will come from within existing resources.

4.2 The locality arrangements will fully meet the requirements of the code of corporate governance. Report will be taken to the corporate Audit and Governance Committee as appropriate.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 Good progress has been made on the development of our concept for locality children's trust arrangements. The concept is very much a refinement of our existing governance and accountability but with greater reach and penetration into the localities in the city. The arrangements emphasize the need to provide local leadership to unblock barriers to improving outcomes for children and young people and the need for democratic accountability for the deployment of publicly funded resources at extended service cluster level.

6.0 Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

- Note the report
- Nominate an Elected Member (where committees have not already done so) to:
 - (1) work with the Locality Enabler and the Area Manager (on behalf of the Area Committee) - to take these developments forward and
 - (2) to represent the Area Committee on the North West Children Leeds Partnership, subject to Member Management Committee approval.

It would be helpful if the elected member were the same member for developing the local priorities.

Background Papers

- Children and Young People's Plan 2006-09
- Exec Board Report 16 July 2008: Area Committee Roles for 2008/09
- Executive Board Report 20 September 2006: Proposed children's trust arrangements for Leeds
- Executive Board Report 2 September 2008: Children's Services Update and Framework for the City's Next Children and Young People's Plan.

Appendix 1 – What the revised arrangements will look like



