



Review of:

**“Leeds Children’s Services’ Leadership,
Managerial and Partnership Arrangements”**

Scoping Paper

Version: Final v1.0

Author: James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)

Date: 1 October 2009

1 Purpose of the Review

- 1.1 In 2006, the City Council appointed its first Director of Children's Services, Rosemary Archer, tasked with taking the strategic lead on the children's services agenda. The early work led by Rosemary saw the establishment of a strategic children's services team, known as the Director of Children's Services Unit (DCS Unit), with strategic leadership responsibilities for Leeds City Council's children's services and relevant external partners and providers. Social service delivery arrangements were split with Children's Social Care services responsible to a Chief Officer; early years services and youth services were brought under the umbrella of children's services, again under the managerial control of a Chief Officer, and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds was also brought under the strategic leadership umbrella of Children's Services.
- 1.2 Education Leeds was 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. Over the last eight years, significant progress has been made in regard to the attainment and broader school's agenda. Indeed, in 2006, Leeds received its latest OfSTED report stating that Leeds was a 'highly satisfactory' LEA with good capacity for further improvement. The Direction was removed in 2006, but the company model has been retained by the City Council with oversight of the Company being undertaken by a Board consisting of Council representatives, professional educational input, business representation and an independent Chair. Whilst it has been possible to implement changes to the company model since the removal of the Direction in 2006, change has not yet been considered appropriate bearing in mind the improvements made and being cognisant of the developing world of Children's Services following the enactment of the Children's Act in 2004.
- 1.3 In regard to Elected Member responsibilities, the Children's Act 2004 required the appointment of a Lead member for Children's Services. An Executive Member (Cllr Golton) 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 (Cllr Harker) has been appointed with responsibility for political oversight of Learning. This Member is the key political interface with Education Leeds.
- 1.4 Since 2006, the Director of Children's Services' focus has been on developing a clear and aspirational strategy (i.e. 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. This work has been progressed through close working with the operational leads from the areas of children's social care, early years, youth services, Education Leeds, as well as with external partners and providers. We have seen the establishment of new partnership arrangements, Children Leeds, under the auspices of the Leeds Initiative which include the introduction of an Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board.
- 1.5 Following the enactment of the Children's 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.
- 1.6 Whilst we received a positive Joint Area Review inspection in late 2007 and was rated as Good in the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment, there have been a number of performance challenges over the course of the last 12 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 fashion and in light of this heightened profile this matter has become a key improvement priority for the City Council and Children Leeds partnership.

- 1.7 These recent inspections have highlighted the need to ensure that our improvement actions across Children's Services deliver improved outcomes at a faster pace and enable those involved in Children's Services activities to develop their ability to work better together ensuring well targeted and responsive services.
- 1.8 Earlier this year, the current Director of Children's Services gave notice of her intention to retire from the Authority's service at a mutually suitable time in the near future. A retirement date of 31 March 2010 has since been agreed.
- 1.9 Three years on from the development of our current Children's Services arrangements, and with the pending recruitment of a new Director of Children's Services, it is considered appropriate at this time to:
 - a) review the progress made to date;
 - b) assess the effectiveness of our current leadership, managerial and partnership arrangements, and;
 - c) make proposals for any changes that may be considered necessary.
- 1.10 This review will be led internally by Deputy Chief Executive and the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement). Both senior officers will work closely with Elected Members and senior managers across Children Services (including Education Leeds) to ensure the required considerations are given to the options and future accountabilities for leadership and management across children's services operations and partnership arrangements.

2 The Process of Review

2.1 The work will be progressed in two phases.

2.2 **Phase 1** – A diagnostic phase considering what has been achieved to date; what's currently working well; what's working less well and the reasons for this, what works well in other authorities, and; what would need to change for things to work better. It is expected that the review will consider:

- a) Our strategic approach to the Children's Services agenda;
- b) Our leadership and managerial arrangements relating to Children's Services.
- c) The model/arrangements for the provision of operational children's services covering social care, early years, youth services and education and;
- d) The Role of Executive Members in Children's Services matters.

2.3 Phase 1 will be pre-dominantly undertaken through desk based research and interviews with key stakeholders including:

- a) The Council's Chief Executive
- b) The Leaders of the main Political Parties
- c) Executive Member for Children's Services
- d) Executive Member for Learning
- e) Chair of the Council's Scrutiny Board for Children's Services
- f) The Children's Services Leadership Team (as a Board and Individuals)
- g) The Board of Education Leeds (as a Board and Individuals)
- h) A representative group of Children Leeds partners
- i) A representative group of Headteachers
- j) A representative group of Governors
- k) A representative group of young people
- l) Government Office
- m) OfSTED
- n) CAA Lead

2.4 **Phase 2** – The preparation and presentation of a report which:

- a) outlines the issues and challenges identified from the phase 1 research and interviews.
- b) identifies options to address the issues and challenges identified;
- c) undertakes an appraisal of the appropriateness of options identified against the context of where Leeds currently is and what Leeds is aspiring to achieve for Children's Services in the future;
- d) makes recommendations for the preferred leadership, managerial and partnership arrangements for Children's Services which are sustainable in the medium to longer term, and;
- e) identifies the issues that need to be progressed to implement the recommended way forward and an outline timetable for implementing such option.

- 2.5 In making a recommendation for an option to move forward, then it is expected that the following issues will be considered:
- a) To what degree the preferred option will improve quality and add value to children's services in Leeds;
 - b) To what degree can the Council speed up the pace of transformation across Children Services through the recommended option;
 - c) To what degree will the option provide for clear and effective leadership and accountability across Children's Services;
 - d) To what degree does the recommended option offer opportunities for ensuring value for money and delivering efficiencies, and;
 - e) The risks and benefits and corporate implications arising from each option.

3 Timescales and Reporting Arrangements

- 3.1 In light of the reasons for the review highlighted above, it is important to progress this piece of work as quickly as possible.
- 3.2 Phase one will commence week commencing 28 September 2009 with all interviews and stakeholder sessions being complete by 13 November 2009 – a total period of 7 weeks.
- 3.3 Phase two (the written report and recommendations) will be complete by 30 November 2009.
- 3.4 The report and recommendations will be presented to key decision makers and stakeholders during December 2009, with the intention that a way forward be agreed to be communicated in January 2010 at the same time as commencing the recruitment process for the post of Director of Children's Services.

4 Review Team – Key Roles

- 4.1 Project Sponsor – Paul Rogerson, Chief Executive
- 4.2 Project Executive – Dave Page (Deputy Chief Executive) and James Rogers (Assistant Chief Executive)
- 4.3 Project Manager/Support – Ursula McGouran
- 4.4 Principal Stakeholders – refer to list at 2.3