

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board: Children's Services

Date: 19 May 2011

Subject: Scrutiny Working Group – Review of Children's Social Care System

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Introduction

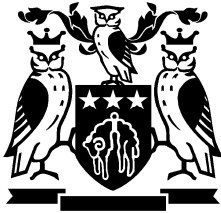
- 1.1 The Scrutiny Board agreed in November 2010 to accept a request for scrutiny from Councillor Alan Lamb in relation to the Social Care System Review. The Board was notified at the time that it was proposed that children's services should proceed separately to Adult Social Care in progressing the review.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Board set up a working group with the remit to track implementation of the new system in Children's Services. The working group has met on three occasions, in January, February and April. Notes of the working group meetings are attached by way of reporting back on the group's activity to the full Scrutiny Board.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Board is requested to note and endorse the activity undertaken by the working group in relation to the review of the children's social care system.

Background papers

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) – November 2010



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) – Review of Children's Social Care System Working Group

Notes of meeting on 13 January 2011

**Councillor Judith Chapman (Chair), Councillors Gettings and Lamb
John Malone and Sal Tariq**

Introduction

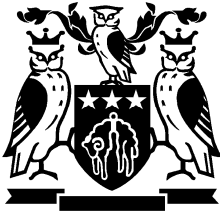
- 1 The Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) agreed in November 2010 to accept a request for scrutiny from Councillor Alan Lamb in relation to the Social Care System Review. The Board were notified at the time that it was to be proposed that children's services should proceed separately to Adult Social Care in progressing the review.
- 2 The Scrutiny Board set up a working group with the remit to track implementation of the new system. The working group took as its starting point a report to the Executive Board on 5 January 2011 which had approved the proposal for children's services to procure a replacement system separately from adult social care.
- 3 Officers stressed that there was an urgent need to progress within Children's Services to procure a system that was fit for purpose. The new computer system would provide integrated information about children, which was not the case at present.
- 4 Officers also confirmed that operational staff were involved in the development of the project in a way that had not happened with the existing system.
- 5 The reason for the split was that Adult Social Care was no longer sure that this was the right direction for them, due to recent and anticipated changes in legislation. These changes may mean that a joint system with the health service was a more appropriate approach, although the option to purchase the same system as children's services had not been ruled out. Adult Social Care felt they needed more time to decide on the right option, but Children's Services could not wait to proceed as they found the inadequacies of the current system to be a bigger risk than for adult social care. In particular, the shift to personalisation in health and adult social care was different to the safeguarding driver in children's services.
- 6 Members expressed some concern about the prospect of adult and children's services developing different solutions and the impact on children moving into adult social care, as well as the emphasis on a family focus to tackling issues.
- 7 Officers responded by reiterating that it was still possible that Adult Social Care would opt for the same system as Children's Services, although if they did so the procurement timetable would mean they would implement the system later. Even if this were not the case, members were assured that developments in technology

meant that it is now much easier to share information between systems than in the past.

- 8 The working group was also told that in the current system it was always clear during transition whether Children's Services or Adult Social Care is the lead agency. At some point the formal record needs to move, but it will be a requirement of the new integrated solution to be able to manage this. Some staff will also have access to both systems. Furthermore, in future it was planned for the integrated solution to provide broader access, for example to health and education records.
- 9 The working group was very concerned that separating the procurement for Children's Services and Adult Social Care was adding to the cost of the project at a time when the council's budget was already under severe pressure.
- 10 It was explained that some of the additional cost identified in the January 2011 Executive Board report was due to changes in the specification. For example, the revised specification included aligning the new system with the corporate electronic document management system, and would also ensure the requirements for an integrated single view of records were met.
- 11 Officers indicated that the estimated system costs in the report should be at the high end. It was hoped that the current economic climate and the attractiveness of working with an authority the size of Leeds would help the council's bargaining position in the procurement process.
- 12 Members also suggested that existing providers of systems that cover both adult and children's services would be adapting and developing those systems in response to the changes in the health and adult social care agenda nationally. It was therefore questioned why the joint procurement could not proceed as planned bearing in mind that providers will be continually improving their offer in parallel to the procurement process.
- 13 Members also expressed disappointment that it had taken until now to conclude that a separate solution would be required and to seek approval for this approach in order to progress the procurement.
- 14 Members acknowledged the work that had already taken place to improve the existing record system in the interim period. They also backed the urgency to procure a replacement system for children's social care, in order to better protect children at risk.
- 15 It was clarified that the 3 year projected timescale was the time required to complete the integration, and that the core system would be available prior to this.
- 16 In addition officers confirmed that time and staffing resources for the migration of data from the existing system had been built into the process. Members stressed the importance of this being done well.

Next Steps

- 1 The working group agreed that it would initially meet monthly in order to closely monitor the implementation of the review. This frequency would be reviewed as the project progressed.
- 2 Members asked the Principal Scrutiny Adviser to obtain written confirmation from the Director of Adult Social Care that, should it be decided that the children's case management system is also the appropriate solution for Adult Social Care, then Adult Social Care would be able to join in with the same procurement process, albeit with a later implementation date.
- 3 Members asked for additional information about the research undertaken into potential providers and costings to be provided to their next meeting.
- 4 The working group confirmed that it was fairly reassured about the children's services aspect of the project. However, members remained concerned about the corporate perspective, in particular the additional costs of pursuing a separate solution for adult social care and the need for adult social care to delay a decision. They agreed that these concerns went beyond the working group's original remit and agreed to seek further advice about how to appropriately pursue them through the scrutiny process.



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Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) – Review of Children's Social Care System Working Group

Notes of meeting on 24 February 2011

**Councillor Judith Chapman (Chair), Councillor James Lewis
John Malone and Sal Tariq**

Introduction

- 1 The working group received copies of additional information relating to the research carried out with suppliers and other local authorities. They also received an explanation of the progressive changes in costs of the project. Members noted that this was a confidential document.
- 2 Members began by discussing the response received from the Director of Adult Social Care to the query raised at the previous meeting regarding the procurement route for Adult Social care. They also clarified that the wide range of potential costs in Adult Social Care reflected that a number of different solutions were possible. Officers indicated that a further report from Adult Social Care was expected to go to Executive Board at the end of March. The Chair confirmed that this Working Group's remit was to focus on monitoring the progress of the Children's Services project.

(Post meeting note – The Chair has written to the Chair of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board regarding following this matter up further.)

- 3 Members then moved on to discuss the estimated costings for the Children's Services case management system. Officers confirmed that contingencies were included, in particular in relation to data migration.
- 4 The costings also include an element for an electronic document management system (EDRMS). It is hoped that this will not be required, but this will depend on progress of the corporate EDRMS project. If a business case for a corporate roll out of the programme is agreed in time, and the corporate system can work with the chosen Children's Services supplier, then children's services will not need to fund this aspect.
- 5 Officers confirmed the tendering timescale. It is intended to issue a notice by mid-March which invites interested parties to go on to a shortlist. The minimum period for this is 30 days. The tender documents will then be issued to the shortlist in late April, with a minimum of 35 days to respond.
- 6 Officers also confirmed that front-line staff from all areas of the business were being involved in the development in order to ensure staff ownership of the system, learning lessons from the previous experience with the ESCR system.

- 7 Work is also taking place on a monthly basis with admin teams to clean up data so that it is in a suitable state for migration to the new system, as well as improving the quality of the data on the existing system. The exact data requirements will depend on the system that is procured.
- 8 Time has been allocated in the project plan for the migration of data. Some of the costs are for the supplier or a partner to perform the migration as this is felt to be a more effective method than trying to do it in-house, based on past experience.
- 9 Members asked for reassurance about children transferring to Adult Social Care. Officers confirmed that the new system would be required to link with other systems, including the ESCR system for adult social care and its replacement. Staff in the Transition and Pathway Planning teams may need access to both systems.
- 10 Members indicated that they supported the procurement of an off the shelf system reflecting national recording standards, which would need only minor tweaks to work for Leeds. They were also pleased that this reflected that practice in Leeds was in line with national good practice guidance.
- 11 Officers explained that, once a supplier was chosen, it was intended to visit other local authorities using the supplier in order to explore how to get the best out of the system, including any potential adaptation of processes in Leeds.
- 12 Officers also indicated that there were a number of regional and national groups working with the small number of suppliers to support future developments and changes in the systems in response to changing legislation and improvements in practice.

Next Steps

- 5 The working group agreed that it would probably not be necessary to meet on 24 March as originally planned. The Principal Scrutiny Adviser will confirm with officers that work is progressing to timetable about a week beforehand and, if so, the meeting will be cancelled.
- 6 The next scheduled meeting of the working group after that will take place on Monday 18 April at 1.00pm. The working group will consider a progress report from officers.



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Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) – Review of Children's Social Care System Working Group

DRAFT Notes of meeting on 18 April 2011

**Councillor Judith Chapman (Chair), Councillor Alan Lamb
John Malone and Sal Tariq**

Introduction

- 1 The working group received a progress report from officers which outlined the timetable for staff workshops to help shape the final tender specification for the new computer system.
- 2 Members were concerned that the timetable has slipped a further month since they started their work on this issue. It was explained that this was partly due to a desire to ensure that the specification incorporates any key findings from the Munro report, which has not yet been published. It has also been a result of difficulties in scheduling the staff workshops due to end of year leave arrangements combined with the number of bank holidays in late April and early May. The arrangements for the workshops sought to minimize the impact on service delivery.
- 3 Officers reported that the first two workshops had taken place and had been useful and well received by staff.
- 4 Members asked whether Ofsted were aware of the further delays, given the reference in their recent inspection to the urgent need for the system to be replaced. They were informed that Ofsted would not specifically track progress on this matter, although they would consider progress at any future inspection.
- 5 However, the Improvement Board - which includes a government department observer - would receive progress reports. The Project Board, chaired by the Deputy Director of Children's Services, would also be reporting progress to the Executive Board, possibly in June.
- 6 Members of the working group recommended that the Executive Member was made aware of the further delay as soon as possible.
- 7 Members also sought clarification of the implications of this slippage for the implementation date for the system. Members understood that it was originally planned for the system to go live at the start of April, rather than part way through a year. If the timetable had slipped would this potentially delay implementation for a further year.
- 8 Officers indicated that they did not expect this to be the case. They hoped to regain some of the slippage later in the programme, and the timescales would also depend

on final negotiations with the chosen supplier over such issues as data migration from the old system. They also explained that the April start date was particularly relevant to the start of the financial year, and this aspect of the system was more important for adult social care (who were no longer part of this procurement) than children's services. The financial aspect of the system was not part of the first phase of implementation.

- 9 Officers indicated that the expected first stage implementation date would now be November/December 2012 instead of October 2012.
- 10 Members reiterated their concern that any further slippage lengthened the period of risk associated with the existing system.
- 11 They also asked again for confirmation that Adult Social Care could opt for the same system. Officers confirmed that this needs to be two separate procurement processes, but that it was possible for the same system to be used if appropriate.

Next Steps

- 7 Members agreed that, if possible, they would like to hold a meeting of the working group on Thursday 19 May, to follow on from the Board meeting scheduled for that morning. They would like to see a demonstration of the existing system and hear about the proposals for the new system, based on the staff workshops currently taking place.
- 8 Officers were concerned about the resource implications of running the session and agreed to advise whether it was feasible as soon as possible. If it is not feasible, then the working group will recommend that the newly appointed Scrutiny Board after the AGM picks this up as a priority piece of work in June.

(Post meeting note – it was confirmed that a meeting on 19 May was not feasible.)
- 9 Members of the working group recommended that officers ensured that the Executive Member was made aware of the further delay as soon as possible.