



Leicester
City Council

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
TRIUMVIRATES OF SOCIAL SERVICES, EDUCATION AND LIFELONG
LEARNING AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Held: MONDAY 31 OCTOBER 2005 at 4.30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Education triumvirate

Councillor Johnson
Councillor Karim
Councillor Waddington

Social Services triumvirate

Councillor John Blackmore
Councillor Almey
Councillor Mrs Chambers

Health triumvirate

Councillor Westley
Councillor O'Brien

Officers present

Rodney Green	Chief Executive
David Oldershaw	Interim Director of Social Care and Health
Lesley Anne Freeman	Programme Manager, Integrated Services Programme
Louise Goll	Childrens Federation
Roy Roberts	Policy Team
Kamal Adatia	Legal Services
Frances Wake	Committee Services

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Blackmore declared that he was a non executive member of Leicester City West PCT.

2. INTEGRATED SERVICES PROGRAMME

The Chief Executive explained that the purpose of the meeting was to consult the 3 relevant Scrutiny triumvirates on the proposals for the Integrated Services Programme.

The Chief Executive briefly explained the background to the review which arose from the Children Act 2004 requiring that Local Authorities had a single Lead Member and officer for Children's Services. A copy of the report to Cabinet on 27 June had been circulated to Members which outlined the Corporate Directors Board initial proposals for the Council organisation

structure, in response to this requirement. A consultation document had also been sent to relevant staff and this too had been circulated to Members.

It was noted that given the scale of the exercise, a formal project management structure had been set up with included a Member Reference Group. A programme manager, Lesley Anne Freeman, had been appointed to manage the work and the Trade Union consultation.

The Chief Executive drew the meeting's attention to the potential benefits of the restructuring which were detailed in the report and also the rationale for the structure proposed to Cabinet in June. However, it was acknowledged that the scale of the upheaval for staff would be significant.

It was noted that a Children's Services Director had now been appointed, Ms Sheila Lock, and a single Cabinet Member for Children's Services was to be identified. It was hoped Ms Lock could start with Leicester on a designate basis in early January 06.

The Chief Executive went on to give a summary of the feedback from the consultation exercise. It was noted that it was inevitable that there would be many varied views on the detail, with a number of solutions being workable. One of the main areas of disagreement with the proposals was with regard to the Youth Offending Service, (YOS), which it was proposed to locate in Adult Services. A number of consultees, including the YOS itself felt that this should be located in Children's Services, for which strong arguments existed. Parents may well see the YOS as part of Children's Services and there had to be strong links with the Children and Young Persons Plan and the Children's Federation. However, the Corporate Directors Board still felt that the YOS should be located in Adult Services, as it was part of a wider Crime and Disorder agenda. In addition, a recent Audit Commission report had criticised how crime and disorder related services were organised in the Council, identifying them as too disparate. This proposal therefore, also responded to the Audit Commission's recommendations for Leicester. A unit of 80 staff was a significant addition to the already substantial Children's Service.

The other main area of debate was community services which had originally been proposed for location in the Regeneration and Culture department. Following the feedback from the consultation, the Corporate Directors Board would now be recommending that this be located in Adult Services because of links with neighbourhood development, community safety and health.

It was noted also that there was some feedback which required further clarification on; Border House; transport review; private sector housing; education playing fields and play areas; and awards and grants.

It was noted that a further report would be submitted to Cabinet on 14 November with final recommendations. The next stage would be examination of Service director levels which would be considered by Cabinet in January.

Members views were sought and a number of comments made as follows:-

A view that Libraries should be in Children's Services because of the links with Education.

In response, the Chief Executive acknowledged that there were arguments for Libraries being located in a number of areas. However, as a large service, in order to maintain 'balance' between the size and responsibilities of

departments it had been considered that it would best be given the attention it required, if it was in Regeneration and Culture. Louise Goll also commented to support this view on the basis that Libraries were a resource for the whole community.

A view that links with City Colleges should be in Children's Services.

The Corporate Directors Board felt that this area was more concerned with adult and family learning.

Concerns about the ability to provide an integrated service taking into account the Government's current proposals to allow more autonomy for schools.

It was acknowledged that this provided an additional challenge but the focus needed to remain on supporting children, whether they were in LEA schools or not.

Concerns about the proposed structure for consultation with the Unions.

It was noted that a Joint Union Forum had been set up as a reference group for the review. However, this did not replace the existing formal consultation mechanisms for consultation with Unions but was an addition.

Queries on the proposed scrutiny committee structure – in particular some Members felt that Health should be a stand alone committee

It was noted that this would be a subject of future Member debate.

The need to ensure the review took the opportunity to eliminate duplication and the need for all departments to maintain a corporate view to enable effective cross departmental working.

With regard to duplication and cross departmental working, this was acknowledged and supported. It was noted that although there were costs associated with conducting the review, it was proposed that the restructuring would result in greater efficiency. It was also likely that a 'spend to save' budget would be set up in order to finance any 'efficiency' changes which would yield savings and more effective systems in the longer term.

A query on whether the Multi Disciplinary Centre should not be in Adult Services

The Corporate Directors Board felt that this was largely a housing related service.

The Members asked that some more information be provided on budgets and staffing in relation to the service areas detailed in the Annex to the June Cabinet report.

Officers agreed to provide this and circulate to the triumvirates.

3. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 12 December at 4.30 pm.