

The Cabinet – 15 March 2005

Report of the Director of Children's Services

The Structure of the Directorate of Children's Services

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to seek the Cabinet's endorsement for the new structure for the Directorate of Children's Services.

Background

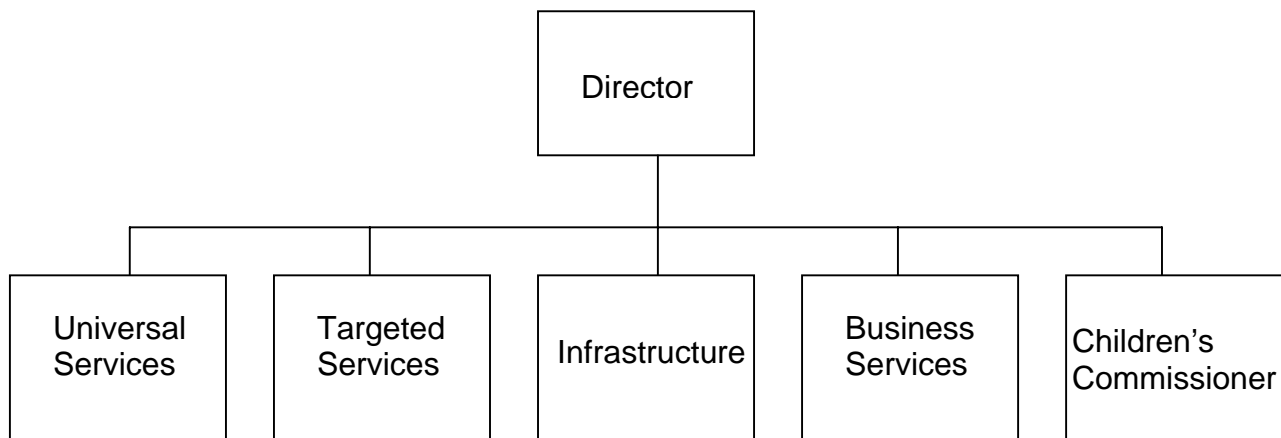
2. Over the last two years the Council has been considering the future alignment of services within Directorates. In July 2005, the Council appointed a Director of Children's Services. In October 2005 the Children's Social Care Division transferred to the line management of the Director of Children's Services. (In parallel with these changes, consideration has been given to arrangements for the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the arrangements for business services for the new directorates.)
3. During this period, consultations have taken place with staff within the Directorate, studies have been made of the arrangements made by other Councils, and a seminar has been held by the Select Committee on Lifelong Learning with speakers from Solihull MBC and Shropshire County Council.
4. As a consequence of this work, proposals are now being brought forward to redefine the senior management responsibilities within the Directorate. These changes will involve all the present Assistant Directors in new Job Descriptions and revised responsibilities. The intention is to carry through the necessary personnel procedures to have the new Assistant Director arrangements in place for 1 April 2006.
5. The proposed structure takes account of all the available information on structures in other Councils; however, to date no two Councils have

adopted an identical structure. The structure being proposed meets Dudley's needs, will enable statutory functions to be delivered, and is achievable within available resources.

6. After the new senior management arrangements are in place, arrangements will be made to reconfigure line management of existing functions and staff. This process will take place over a period in order to ensure full consultation, and to allow time for the necessary practical arrangements to be made. The process will be concluded as rapidly as possible with a target date for completion of 1 September 2006.

The structure of the Directorate of Children's Services

7. The Directorate will be structured around five Divisions, each headed by an Assistant Director reporting to the Director. The titles of the Divisions are at this stage descriptive; the final titles will be agreed by the Cabinet Members and the Director following further discussions with the staff concerned.



8. The **Universal Services Division** will be responsible for all services that are available to all children and young people including support for schools, early years provision, and the youth service.
9. The **Targeted Services Division** will be responsible for all services that are targeted to individual children, young people and their families, including additional and special educational needs, and children's social care.

10. The Targeted Services Division will bring together services previously under separate management in order to promote both more co-ordinated and efficient planning and more joined-up delivery.
11. In order to ensure that there is sufficient management capacity within this Division, a deputy to the Assistant Director will have strategic responsibility for either children's social care or additional education needs.
12. The **Infrastructure Division** will be responsible for the planning and delivery, including the capital programme, of provisions, including schools, children's centres and children's homes. This Division will also be responsible for school resourcing.
13. The **Business Services and Performance Management Division** will be responsible for Directorate support functions including business support, strategic planning, performance management (including external inspection and internal scrutiny), and information management.
14. The **Children and Young People's Commissioner** will carry out the new rôle and function for the Council as set out in the statutory guidance to the Children Act 2004: "*... listen to and involve children, and champion their interests both across functional boundaries within the local authority and across local partnerships, so ensuring that the needs of children, young people and their families or carers are addressed.*"
15. The Commissioner will be responsible for all of the processes by which children and young people are informed, consulted and involved in decision-making, both in individual settings (including schools, colleges, early years, PRUs) and across the Borough (including Youth Parliament, Dudley Youth Forum, Area Youth Forums).
16. The Commissioner will provide a link into our statutory partners' decision-making processes to ensure that children's and young people's voices are heard, and that they are properly informed. The CYPC will also have a more general advocacy rôle on behalf of children and young people and their families. The Division will lead multi-agency work on participation and advocacy.

Finance

17. The costs of the new structure will be met from within approved budgets.

Law

18. The statutory requirements for children's services are set out in the Children Act 2004 and associated Regulations and Statutory Guidance.

Equality Impact

19. The proposed new structure will be implemented so as to follow the Council's equality policies.
20. The proposed structure is intended to meet the needs of children and young people.
21. Children and young people were not directly involved in framing the proposals. A Member of the Youth Parliament was informally consulted and gave strong support to the proposals to strengthen the processes for engaging children and young people through the appointment of a Children and Young People's Commissioner.

Recommendation

22. I recommend that the Cabinet endorse the structure for the Directorate of Children's Services



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Background documents

None