



# **REVIEW OF SOCIAL CARE FOR CHILDREN**



## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL**

**April 2012**

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## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL**

### **REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF SOCIAL CARE FOR CHILDREN**

#### **CHAIR'S FOREWORD**

This report has been prepared by a cross-party Social Care for Children Review Group following an intensive piece of work over four months and is presented to the Children and Young People (CYP) Scrutiny Panel.

The membership of the Review Group was: Councillors Colin Raistrick (Chair), Mrs Christine Bampton-Smith, Howard Blagbrough, Barry Collins, John Hardy, Keith Hutson and Daniel Sutherland.

The Social Care Review Group was established as a result of a unanimous decision of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel in response to serious concerns about social care services for children. Our report focuses on areas for service improvement and, in particular, the contribution that Members of Council can make to that improvement.

Improvement has taken place since the reports by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PWC) and by Ofsted and the recent peer review acknowledged this. However, the rate of change has not been fast enough and we need to step up the pace. However "satisfactory" is not enough. Nationally, around 80% of Councils' children and young people's services are good or outstanding and it is not acceptable for Calderdale to be in the bottom 20%.

The draft report, *Delivering Dignity*, that has just been published by the Commission on Improving Dignity in Care, recommends fundamental changes to the culture, leadership, management, staff development, clinical practice and service delivery of care homes and NHS hospitals to secure the dignified care that is the right of all older people. It is fundamental change like this that we need to seek in services to children and young people in Calderdale.

The Council has good plans for service improvement. What appears to be missing is a top to bottom strategy, with the clear aim of becoming "Outstanding". Our recommendations should drive us towards the development of that strategy and commitment. This requires clear cross-party non-political and managerial leadership and significant cultural change.

A minor adjustment to the way the Council does things will not be sufficient to make the improvements necessary.

As Councillors we have a variety of roles. Some sit on Cabinet, most are members of a Scrutiny Panel, but every one of us has a role as a corporate parent, which should not be seen as an "add-on" but as one that is as important as any of the Panels or Committees on which we sit.

This has been a rapid period of change for the Children and Young People Directorate, including the appointment of a new Director and a predominantly new Senior Management Team. The Review Group has seen strong evidence that the Directorate recognises those issues that need addressing and has taken good and rapid steps to bring about improvement. Our recommendations will strengthen the position of the Director and his management team in bringing about improvement and are supportive of them whilst recognising the importance of challenge to the process.

The Director and his management team are best placed to propose the steps that need to be taken to improve the lives of looked after children and other children in need, so we have made few recommendations in these areas. Rather, our recommendations focus on making sure that the council as a whole and Members in particular can support these improvements. This support will include robust and effective scrutiny.

The CYP Scrutiny Panel has not been as effective as it could have been in contributing to improving the lives of looked after children and other children in need. The work of the Review Group has been an important part of scrutiny “upping its game”. Cabinet and Officers have not always assisted scrutiny to fulfil its role as well as they might have, not necessarily through individual actions, but because of the culture and style of the relationships between the Scrutiny Panel, Cabinet and senior officers. This has begun to change.

The Review Group’s work has led to:

- A greater understanding by the members about the problems that were faced by social care services for children and the nature of the Directorate’s work.
- A strong commitment by the members to support efforts to improve the lives of looked after children and other children in need. This will sometimes be achieved by robust scrutiny.
- A clear message being given that members must be supplied with full, accurate and timely information, which is essential for effective scrutiny.
- Recommendations that will improve the ability of the Council to support improvement and to recognise quickly when there are problems.



Councillor Colin Raistrick, Chair, Social Care for Children Review Group and Chair, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

## Introduction

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel decided to establish a Review Group at a meeting on 8 November 2011.

The Scrutiny Panel identified the purpose of the review as producing a public assessment of the response of the Council to the poor performance to Social Care Services for Children and to make recommendations in any areas that the Scrutiny Panel felt appropriate;

In order to undertake this review the Scrutiny Panel decided to establish a Review Group that would:

- consist of the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel and up to 6 other Members of Council. The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel would be empowered to decide the membership of the Working Party following nominations from political groups. The membership would be confirmed by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel when it met on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011;
- adopt the “Select Committee” model of operation, taking evidence from witnesses. That evidence would be recorded and an anonymised transcript produced. Evidence gathering sessions would not be open to the public;
- meet before 17<sup>th</sup> November 2011 in order to set a programme of work and to decide a more detailed remit;
- hold evidence gathering sessions at least weekly until Christmas 2011;
- prepare a public report that should be presented to the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Panel by 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012

The Review Group adopted the following ambition and objectives:

**Ambition: To make sure that the Council is doing everything it can so that services for looked after children and children in need are rapidly and sufficiently improved**

### Objectives

- To identify the causes for the under-performance of social care services for children
- To make recommendations that will lead to improved performance of social care services for children
- To provide public assurance that the Council is taking seriously concerns about the performance of social care services for children

The Review Group met 12 times between 15 November 2011 and 6 March 2012 and took evidence from:

Stuart Smith, Director, Children and Young People's Service on 23 November, 2011 and 6 March 2012

John A Heron, Interim Principal Officer, Placements, Calderdale MBC on 2 December 2011

Discussions with a Calderdale Foster Carer on 2 December 2011

Two Members of the Public who had accepted an invitation to attend the Review Group and give evidence on their personal family experiences of Child protection issues in the Calderdale area on 2 December 2011

John Walsh, Head of Human Resources, Calderdale MBC on 6 December 2011

Councillor Keith Hutson, about his understanding of the Corporate Parenting Role as a new Councillor on 6 December 2011

Amanda Venning, Member Training and Development Officer, Calderdale MBC on 14 December 2011

Owen Williams, Chief Executive, Calderdale MBC on 14 December, 2011

Mr Craig Whittaker MP and Mrs Olwen Jennings, both former Cabinet Members with responsibility for Children's Services on 16 December 2011

Discussion with Councillor Megan Swift, Cabinet Member, Children's Social Care and Lead Member for Children's Services on 12 January and 6 March 2012

Discussion with twelve children's social care social work staff, Calderdale MBC on 18 January, 2012.

Discussion with Pamela Wharton, Interim Service Manager, First Response and Raheeda Inayat, Principal Officer, Locality Teams, Children's Social Care on 23 January 2012

## **Leadership and Management**

It is clear to us that leadership and strong management are fundamental to continuous improvement. We believe that the new management team is well placed to provide the necessary leadership and management. The ambition of the Council must be to achieve “Outstanding” for services to children and young people and this should be stated publically, bought into at the top level, providing clear and irrevocable evidence of the cultural change required.

This requires a clear high level strategy owned at the top political and managerial levels. It requires a culture that demands high performance, but recognises that people sometimes make mistakes.

Some of the social workers we spoke to felt that the response to external criticism of the service was the introduction of more policies and procedures, which sometimes left them feeling that their professionalism had been undermined. The Munro review says that the Government and local authorities should operate in an open culture, continually learning from what has happened in the past, trusting professionals and giving them the best possible training. We believe that this is the approach that should be adopted.

## Communication

### Communication through the hierarchy

The importance of effective communication and the free flow of information within the service is paramount. Managers need to make sure that staff are clear what is expected of them. But just as important is that staff feel they are being listened to and that when managers are not able to support a line of action proposed by a staff member, that member of staff is given clear reasons about why that is the case.

We heard from both management and staff that effective supervision is key to maintaining the quality of social work and to managing cases so that the best outcomes can be achieved for children and young people. We strongly support this view.

### Whistle blowing and feedback

Throughout the Council, staff are able to report concerns they may have about services without fear of recrimination. Nowhere is this more important than in services to children and young people.

We heard from a foster parent who was reluctant to raise concerns with her link worker as it was felt that this could damage their relationship and ultimately affect her position with the Council.

The Council does have *whistle blowing* policies and publicity for staff. We are not sure that they are sufficiently well publicised or used.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**We recommend that the Head of Human Resources should review the whistle blowing procedures and the use that has been made of them.**

We need to make sure that there are similar opportunities for people such as foster carers or staff working for organisations that contract with the Children and Young People's Services Directorate to express any concerns they may have without risking their contractual arrangements with the Council, or feeling that this may put their contractual arrangements at risk.

#### **Recommendation 2**

**We recommend that the Director of Children and Young People's Services reviews the arrangements for foster carers and others in a similar relationship to raise their concerns and reports the outcome of that review to the Scrutiny Panel.**

However, in many respects use of *whistle blowing* procedures reflects a failure. The culture of the organisation needs to change to one in which both staff and those we work with feel comfortable about raising their concerns and managers receiving those concerns have the confidence to identify feedback as useful



intelligence rather than a threat. As in so much of our review, effective leadership and management are key.

## **Adoption and Fostering**

The evidence we received demonstrated that there is considerable scope for improvement in adoption and fostering services.

The fostering recruitment campaign has begun and we hope that it will succeed in finding a good number of new foster carers. We don't underestimate the challenge, especially as this is a national issue.

We also wish to see adoption procedures speeded up. Ofsted has just announced that local authorities will fail to secure an "Outstanding" rating from Ofsted unless they place all children identified for adoption within 12 months.

As well as providing certainty for children, adoption is also a downward pressure on the number of looked after children.

We were encouraged by the discussions that we had with managers in CYP directorate about adoption and fostering. There is recognition that the service has not been good and steps are in place to improve it.

We have no specific recommendations to make about adoption and fostering. The service has recognised that it needs improving and has taken steps to bring about those improvements.

The fostering recruitment campaign has been high profile and seems to have had some initial success. The test will be whether initial interest can be turned into sustainable increases in the number of foster parents.

The Government has recently announced plans to speed up adoption procedures, so that more looked after children can be found a permanent alternative family.

### ***Recommendation 3***

**We recommend that adoption and fostering services should form a significant part of the work programme of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel for 2012/13. Issues considered should include; the accommodation strategy; the fostering recruitment campaign; and all relevant Council procedures in light of the changes to Adoption standards nationally.**

## Members as Corporate Parents

We discussed the role of members as corporate parents on a number of occasions. We all acknowledged the importance of this role, but we also had a number of concerns.

- A Member who had been on corporate parent training praised the quality of the training in relation to giving information about services for looked after children, but had still not been clear what he should actually do as a corporate parent.
- We were clear in stating that the council must make sure that it does not pay lip service to corporate parenting.
- We need to recognise that Members join the Council for many different reasons and it is unrealistic to expect all Councillors to see being a corporate parent as their number one priority, but we must ensure that their responsibilities as a corporate parent are clearly explained to them and that the political leadership emphasises this.

The Director of Children and Young People's Services gave us some useful pointers about how Councillors could make an important contribution as corporate parents. If there is a sufficiently large pool of Members prepared to undertake Regulation 33 visits (where Members visit the Council's children's homes) this makes an important contribution. Many Members are school governors and they will be fulfilling their corporate parent responsibilities if they ask questions about how the particular needs of looked after children are met at school governor meetings. Training specifically for Councillors who are school governors should be supplied by Member Development and attendance at these sessions recorded on the Council's website.

We consider that the corporate parenting pledge is an important symbol of the Council's commitment to its looked after children. We think that all members should be prepared to sign the pledge and that a public event, with looked after children present, should be arranged for the pledge-signing.

There is no point in signing a pledge if Members' signatures are illegible and it isn't available to be viewed.

Council has already agreed that all Members should undertake Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks to enable them to fulfil their role as corporate Parents.

### **We recommend:**

#### ***Recommendation 4***

- **That all members should sign the Corporate Parenting pledge and the party group Leaders should be asked to take all steps possible to ensure their members sign the pledge.**

***Recommendation 5***

- That an event early in each municipal year be arranged for members to sign the Corporate Parenting Pledge and that looked after children should be invited to attend this event. Ideally, we should like this event to take place immediately before the first ordinary Council meeting of the municipal year, or, if not, then at the Annual Council meeting.

***Recommendation 6***

- That the Corporate Parenting Pledge should have all Members' names printed on it so that it is clear which members have signed the pledge.

***Recommendation 7***

- That the Corporate Parenting Pledge should be displayed in the Town Hall, Halifax and should also be published on the Council's website.

***Recommendation 8***

- That training specifically for Councillors who are school Governors should be supplied by the Council's Member Training and Development function and attendance at these sessions recorded on the Council's website.

## **Member Engagement with Services**

We were very concerned that Members had not been undertaking *Regulation 33* visits to children's homes or *Recommendation 41* visits to social work offices.

The Director of Children and Young People's Services stressed the importance of these visits to us and we are very pleased that he has taken the necessary action to get them started.

Two members of the Review Group have made Regulation 33 visits to children's homes during the course of the review and they have confirmed how valuable they were. Consequently, the recommendations we make have already begun to be implemented. We have decided they should remain in our report as recommendations so that future monitoring of the implementation of this report is complete.

### ***Recommendation 9***

**We recommend that a pool of members is agreed by Cabinet to make Regulation 33 visits. A programme of regular visits should be arranged by the Director of Children and Young People's Services. Quarterly reports setting out the number of visits completed and any problems that have been identified through those visits should be prepared for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel.**

### ***Recommendation 10***

**We recommend that a pool of members is agreed by Cabinet to make Recommendation 41 visits. A programme of regular visits should be arranged by the Director of Children and Young People's Services. Six monthly reports setting out the number of visits completed and any problems that have been identified through those visits should be prepared for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel.**

## Member Training

We took evidence from the Council's Member Training and Development Officer and were pleased to learn about the volume and range of training that takes place on the corporate parenting role.

We do have concerns that all members are not giving this training sufficient priority.

Induction training for new members has not included training on the corporate parenting role. Rather, such training has been delivered later in the municipal year. We consider that this does not acknowledge the importance of the corporate parenting role.

We see member training on corporate parenting as of paramount importance. Whilst child protection issues affect a smaller number of our constituents than many other things that arise from our Council work, the impact on those children and families that are affected is profound. We have a duty to those children and their families to make sure we have a clear understanding of child care legislation and services and of our particular role as members.

We consider that every step possible should be taken to ensure that all members receive the appropriate level of training.

### **Our recommendations are:**

#### *Recommendation 11*

- That whether training can be made available for election candidates before each election be investigated, and that such training should include a session on social care services for children and the role of the member as corporate parent. Pre-election guidance and literature for potential candidates should include information about looked after children and the corporate parenting role.

#### *Recommendation 12*

- The new member induction programme will always include training on social care services for children and corporate parenting.

#### *Recommendation 13*

- All Group Leaders should strongly encourage group members to undertake training and development on looked after children and the corporate parenting role, so that corporate parent training becomes seen as the norm.

#### *Recommendation 14*

- Training should be undertaken wherever possible before members and co-opted members can undertake certain roles, eg sit on Corporate Parenting Panel, Fostering and Adoption Panels, CYP Scrutiny Panel.

*Recommendation 15*

- Details of member attendance on corporate parenting training should be recorded on the Council's website. The level of corporate training achieved should also be available for inspection on the Council website.

*Recommendation 16*

- The Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel should receive an annual report from the chair of the Member Development Working Party itemising training undertaken on corporate parenting and the social care services for children by each Member of Council.

## **Corporate Parenting Panel**

We discovered that a number of meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel have been cancelled and that attendance by Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel has been patchy.

We are pleased that recently some steps have been taken to improve the operation of the Corporate Parenting Panel. All Members of Council are now substitute members of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

All members of Council were informed about the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel and several attended the meeting.

The Corporate Parenting Panel is an important part of our governance arrangements for social care services for children and young people and should continue to seek to improve the way that it operates.

### ***Recommendation 17***

**We recommend that the CYP Scrutiny Panel should review the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel annually**



## **Council and Cabinet meetings**

Council meetings provide an excellent opportunity to engage all Members as corporate parents, to publicise important matters relating to social care services for children and young people.

As well as raising the profile of important matters concerning social care services for children, regular information about the Council's looked after children and children in need will serve to stress that this is a normal part of the Council's business and not something exceptional.

Cabinet is the key decision-making body of the Council and looked after young people in particular should feel that they can engage with the Cabinet on matters that affect them.

**Our recommendations are:**

### ***Recommendation 18***

**At the first ordinary meeting of Council in each municipal year, the Council should be asked to renew its corporate commitment to looked-after children. This would be a public demonstration of the importance with which we all hold our ambition to provide outstanding services to children and young people.**

### ***Recommendation 19***

**At least once a year the opportunity should be taken to provide briefings and/or training on issues relating to social care for children before a Council meeting**

### ***Recommendation 20***

**The Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care at each Council meeting should always give an update on the number of looked after children and the number of children on the child protection register**

### ***Recommendation 21***

**When Cabinet is considering matters that affect looked after children and young people, Cabinet should take steps to encourage looked after young people to contribute to those discussions.**

## **Children in Care Councils**

The Children in Care Council is a way that Children and Young People who are looked after by Calderdale Council can have a say about things that really matter and affect their lives. It gives Looked After Children and young people a chance to say what is good about living in care and what we can all do to make it better.

### ***Recommendation 22***

**We recommend that the profile of the Children in Care Council should be raised and commit to making sure that the CYP Scrutiny Panel engages more effectively with the Children in Care Council.**

## Engagement with young people

Councillors need to engage more effectively with young people, this is a particular developmental role for members of CYP Scrutiny Panel. All Members should be invited to and actively encouraged to attend all events involving young people. Invitations should not be restricted to those members with particular responsibilities for children and young people, eg as Cabinet member or as a member of CYP Scrutiny Panel.

Examples of progress and more recent engagement with young people include the work undertaken by members involved in the detailed Review of the Young People's Service in the Autumn of 2011 and the meeting with Children and Young People held at the Queen's Road Neighbourhood Centre on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2012. Also, the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel recently met with a group of young people from Youth Works to listen to their views and earlier in the year met and held discussions with three members of the Calderdale Youth Parliament.

### *Recommendation 23*

- **We recommend that all Members should be invited to and actively encouraged to attend all events involving children and young people**

### *Recommendation 24*

- **We recommend that a Corporate "Children's and Young People's Corporate Parenting logo" should be developed and used on correspondence to raise Member awareness.**

## Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

The Ofsted inspection completed in January 2010 and the Peer Review completed in September 2011 both had comments to make about the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel.

The Ofsted Inspection said:

*The role of the scrutiny panel is adequate. The panel is well chaired by a suitably experienced elected member. However, the experience of co-opted members is weighted towards education rather than children's social care, which is a weakness.*

The Peer Review said:

*The Scrutiny function should be reviewed to provide a sharper focus on activity to support safeguarding children activity. It would be worth looking at how this function operates elsewhere to develop this for Calderdale's needs and it may be that the chair of Scrutiny and members of the committee would benefit from peer mentoring support.*

*The scrutiny function in relation to safeguarding could be more productive. Currently it receives an update on the work of the Improvement Board at every alternate meeting. This is duplicating the work of the Improvement Board and did not appear to be productive. In addition there was little evidence that Scrutiny was working to provide effective challenge nor did it appear to be engaged in a programme of reviews that could add value. Scrutiny should be refocused to work on the key areas of importance for the child's journey and how these may be improved. The council has committed resources to the function with the creation of Scrutiny Support officer posts. These provide a valuable resource to support the work of Scrutiny.*

We were very aware during the review that scrutiny has not always been as effective as it could be in the past. Scrutiny has an important part to play in driving improvement so we hope these recommendations will lead to us finding the *sharper focus* that the Peer Review sought.

We think our own work on this Review Group has been an example of the way that the operation of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel could improve. We believe that we can add more value by looking at a few issues in depth rather than receiving a series of "traditional" committee reports that are often just noted. The reduction in the number of arranged Scrutiny Panel meetings from fifteen to ten for 2012/13 gives an opportunity for the Scrutiny Panel to develop a work programme that is focused around detailed reviews, rather than traditional meetings.

Council has already responded to the comments from Ofsted about the balance of co-optees from an educational background, rather than a social care background by reducing the number of co-optees for 2012/13. The

decision of Council to reduce the number of co-optees on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel has created the space to examine how the Panel can involve service users more in its work, although not necessarily through formal co-option. Options include:

- Co-opting a foster carer to the Scrutiny Panel;
- Encouraging the Church of England to fill their vacant statutory co-optee position;
- Encouraging the Governor Support Unit/Calderdale Governor's Association to seek/provide a nomination to fill the vacant Parent Governor statutory co-optee position on the Panel;
- Making sure that children and young people, parents and Directorate staff regularly get the opportunity to contribute to Panel discussions about social care for children and young people.

A mentor has been appointed for the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel as recommended by the Peer Review and this is already proving invaluable. We hope that it can be arranged for the mentor to meet with the whole of the Scrutiny Panel at some stage.

The CYP Scrutiny Panel should receive clear and focussed performance reports on a regular basis.

#### ***Recommendation 25***

**We recommend that the Scrutiny Support Team work with officers in CYP Directorate to agree a format for regular performance reports, learning from best practice in other local authorities. The CYP Scrutiny Panel Work Plan should include a timetable for regular performance reporting.**

#### ***Recommendation 26***

**We recommend that the CYP Scrutiny Panel should pay careful attention to our comments when it decides its work plan for 2012/13 and the way in which it plans to work. We recommend that the Panel should include a series of detailed reviews in its Work Plan.**

#### ***Recommendation 27***

**We recommend that the Scrutiny Support team undertake desktop research of other Local Authorities to see how their Children and Young People Scrutiny Performance reports are written and for a Scrutiny Panel appointed Review Group to be set up to look at data and how it is presented.**

#### ***Recommendation 28***

**In the light of comments made by external organisations about the way in which the Scrutiny Panel has worked, we recommend that the Panel commissions an external review of its work to take place in Spring 2013, so that progress can be assessed.**

## **Cabinet Member Role (Children's Social Care) and CYP Scrutiny Panel Role**

We talked to the current Cabinet Member with responsibility for Social Care for Children and Young People and to her two predecessors. Two of those people had also chaired the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel.

We believe that Job Roles should be developed for both the Cabinet Member and the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel. This will not only help both of them undertake their roles, but will also be helpful to other Members and Officers.

- The role of the Cabinet member should include
  - Driving cultural change.
  - Proposing a strategy for children in need in the borough to Cabinet and driving that strategy forward.
  - Working with Cabinet colleagues and the boards of partner organisations to ensure they make their full contribution to achieving the strategy.
  - Maintaining a high profile for services for children in need both publicly and within the council.
  
- The role of the CYP Scrutiny Chair / Deputy Chair should include
  - Supporting cultural change.
  - Ensuring that the Scrutiny Panel works as an effective team so that all members of the Panel can contribute to the best of their ability.
  - Ensuring that the Scrutiny Panel can provide effective critical friend scrutiny in a way which is challenging, but does not leave officers and other witnesses feeling "attacked".
  - To work with officers and others to ensure that the information provided to the Scrutiny Panel helps members see the whole picture, rather than one aspect of it.

Formal meetings of the Scrutiny Panel are the arena where Scrutiny Panel members hold the Cabinet Members to account. It is important that this is not the only place where the two Members can discuss issues relating to social care for children. We would anticipate regular informal contact, but there would also be merit in more formal discussions between the Cabinet member and the Scrutiny Panel Chair (supported by the Director of Children and Young People Services and Scrutiny Support) where the Cabinet Member can update the Scrutiny Panel Chair on upcoming issues and items that have been included on the Forward Plan. Equally, the Scrutiny Panel Chair can discuss the Scrutiny Panels work programme and how it is planned to address the issues that are included in the Work Plan.

The Scrutiny Panel Chair also met recently with the Children and Young People's Services Directorate Senior Management Team to discuss the Scrutiny Panel's Work Plan, which proved to be a very useful meeting.

***Recommendation 29***

**We recommend that such meetings should take place at least twice during each municipal year.**

It is invaluable for members to be able to discuss issues with colleagues who hold similar positions within other local authorities.

***Recommendation 30***

**We recommend that Calderdale should take a lead in establishing and supporting regional meetings of Lead Members from all Councils in Yorkshire and Humber and that the Cabinet member should participate in these meetings.**

***Recommendation 31***

**We recommend that Calderdale should take a lead in establishing and supporting regional meetings of Children and Young People Scrutiny Chairs from all Councils in Yorkshire and Humber and that the Scrutiny Panel Chair should participate in these meetings.**

## **Recruitment Process – Chief Officer Appointments**

The Review Group had some discussion about the recruitment process for chief officers and invited the Head of Human Resources to join us for those discussions. Our discussions centred on making sure that recruitment processes result in decisions that have full support across all political groups. Members need to recognise that management of staff, however senior, rests with officers. We would like to see Council review the process by which senior appointments are made.

### ***Recommendation 32***

**We recommend that Council review the process through which senior appointments are made.**



## **Appendix One**

### Membership of the Review Group

Councillor Colin Raistrick (Chair)  
Councillor Mrs Christine Bampton-Smith  
Councillor Howard Blagbrough  
Councillor Barry Collins  
Councillor John Hardy  
Councillor Keith Hutson  
Councillor Daniel Sutherland

(Support to this Review Group was provided by Mike Lodge, Senior Scrutiny Support Officer and Paul Preston, Scrutiny Support Officer, Democratic and Partnership Services)

## **Appendix Two**

### **Summary of Witnesses Giving Evidence**

Owen Williams, Chief Executive, Calderdale Council

Councillor Megan Swift, Cabinet Member, Children's Social Care and Lead Member for Children's Services

Councillor Keith Hutson, newly Elected Member, May 2011 – re understanding of the Corporate Parenting Role

Stuart Smith, Director, Children and People's Services, Children and Young People Services Directorate

John A Heron, Interim Principal Officer, Placements, Children and Young People Services Directorate

Pamela Wharton, Service Manager, First Response Team, Children's Social Care, Children and Young People Services Directorate

Raheeda Inayat, Principal Officer, Locality Teams, Children's Social Care, Children and Young People Services Directorate

John Walsh, Head of Human Resources, Calderdale Council

Amanda Venning, Member Training and Development Officer – Calderdale Council

Mr Craig Whittaker, MP (former Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children's Services)

Mrs Olwen Jennings (former Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children's Services)

Evidence gathering session: Three invited public witnesses – 2 December, 2011

Focus Group / Evidence gathering session: Twelve front line Social Work staff – 18 January, 2012

## Appendix Three

### References and Bibliography

Report and minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

Reports and notes of the meetings of the Social Care for Children Review Group – meetings held during period November, 2011 – March, 2012.

Background Documentation Pack One circulated by the Scrutiny Support Team (15 November 2011) including the following information:-

- *PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) – Diagnostic Report: Children’s Social Care at Borough Council – 18 January, 2010*
- *PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) – Report to Members Working Party re Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan – dated July, 2010*
- *Ofsted – Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services – Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council (inspection dates 18 - 29 January, 2010) – report published 26 February, 2010*
- *Ofsted – Letters dated 6 August, 2009 and 16 February, 2011 - Annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council children’s services*
- *Ofsted – Children’s Services Annual rating letter – 9 December, 2009 and Annual Children’s Services Assessment letters dated 9 December, 2010 and 8 November, 2011*
- *Local Government Group – presentation slides – Peer Challenge Presentation - Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2011 – Calderdale MBC – Safeguarding Children Peer Challenge*
- *Local Government Group – letter to Director of Children and Young Peoples Services confirming the findings of a Children’s Services Safeguarding Peer Challenge Team dated 7 November, 2011*
- *Executive Summary / Minutes of meetings of the Calderdale Children’s Social care Improvement Board (14 meetings) – period 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 to 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2011*
- *Local Government Improvement and Development commissioned document written by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) – Guide – 10 Questions to ask if you’re scrutinising services for looked after children*
- *Calderdale Children’s Social Care - Improvement Plan – April 2011 to March 2012*

Background Documentation Pack Two circulated by the Scrutiny Support Team (23 November 2011) including the following information:-

- *Minutes of the Calderdale Safeguarding Children Board*
- *Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Panel*

Calderdale Safeguarding Children, Single Integrated Improvement Plan (SIIP)

Discussion Document on role of Members – The Peer Review and Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

Procedural Briefing Note provided December, 2011 by Head of Human Resources on Recruitment and Appointment processes to Heads of Service and Director (and Interim Director) posts

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