

**Arrangements for Discharging the Statutory Role of Director of Children's Services:
Local Test of Assurance**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the outcomes of the peer led test of assurance, concerning Barnsley's arrangements for complying with the statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services (DCS).

2.0 Background

2.1 In 2013, updated statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the DCS, as defined within the Children Act (2004) was issued. It identifies that Local Authorities are legally allowed to combine the DCS with other duties, however that they should undertake a local test of assurance to ensure that the focus on outcomes for children and young people is not weakened or diluted as a result of adding such other responsibilities.

2.2 As part of "Future Council" in 2015, two senior management posts were merged to create a new post of Executive Director (People) with responsibility for the statutory roles of both Director of Adult Social Services and DCS.

2.3 In complying with the national guidance, a local test of assurance was recently undertaken by the Corporate Director of Children & Young People's Services, North Yorkshire County Council, based upon a series of interviews and a review of documentary evidence. The full report can be found at Item 6b - attached.

3.0 Findings & Recommendations

3.1 The Test of Assurance concluded that statutory duties, accountabilities and responsibilities, and effective partnership and inter-agency working are all being effectively met.

3.2 Two, non-binding recommendations are highlighted in the Test of Assurance Report:

- Barnsley Council needs to ensure that moving forward, its generic scrutiny arrangements do not develop targeted work plans which reduce the focus and quality in the scrutiny of children and young people's services
- A recognition that structural arrangements for the leadership and management of children's services in Barnsley, are currently dependent on high calibre individuals fulfilling key roles and that the lean or streamlined structure needs to ensure excellent succession planning and strong recruitment arrangements are in place.

4.0 Invited Witnesses

4.1 Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director (People) and Cllr Margaret Bruff Cabinet Spokesperson (People) will be present at today's meeting to answer any questions regarding this work.

5.0 Background Papers & Useful Links

- Test of Assurance Cabinet Report (Cab.6.9.2017/6):
<http://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s24445/Arrangements%20for%20Discharging%20the%20Statutory%20Role%20of%20Director%20of%20Childrens%20Services%20-%20Test%20of%20Assuran.pdf>

6.0 Officer Contact

Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officer (01226 775794)

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