

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 12 SEPTEMBER 2011

REPORT ON: REVIEW OF EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 377-2011

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise committee on the proposed review of the Education Service Delivery Model and to seek authority for implementing the new structure.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

- a. approve the new service delivery model for the Education Department; and
- b. authorise the filling of vacant posts through the matching process or through competitive interview as appropriate.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Education Department has experienced a reduction in central staffing during the course of the last 18 months. As a result, a number of professional and administrative posts have been deleted through natural wastage, retirement or the early retirement scheme. In total £829,000 has been saved as a result of the early retirement scheme and non filling of posts. This represents 15% of the EMSS staffing budget.
- 3.2 It is anticipated that further savings will be achieved through the integration of administrative and support functions and the consolidation of the new departmental structure. These will take time to be realised and existing post holders who are unplaced as a result of such consolidation will, where appropriate, be offered the opportunity of voluntary redundancy, early retirement or alternatively redeployment. The role of Support Services is subject to ongoing corporate reviews and an additional paper will be presented at a future Policy and Resources Committee.

4 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 The starting point of this report is the current governance structure of the Education Department. (Appendix 1) The departmental structure comprises a Senior Management Team (SMT) of the Director of Education and five second-tier officers. Three of these officers have responsibility, respectively, for the early years/primary, secondary and special sectors while the remaining two take responsibility for human resources and finance. The senior management team is supported in turn by six Education Managers, the Principal Educational Psychologist, the Principal Officer (School Community Support Service), a Quality Improvement Manager and Finance Manager. This team forms the Department's Extended Management Team. As a result of early retirement the following senior posts have been removed from the new structure:

- Head of Support for Learning
- Education Finance and Resource Manager
- Secondary Education Manager
- Primary Education Manager
- Quality Improvement Manager

- Quality Improvement Officer

In addition to the removal of a number of senior posts, a considerable number of professional, support and administrative posts have been deleted. These include staff tutors, ICT staff, music instructors, support staff and administrative staff.

The revised structure (Appendix 2) has been developed through:

- a comprehensive review of the current staffing complement;
- an evaluation of existing staff roles, remits and responsibilities; and
- consideration of the views expressed in an external SOLACE report (Appendix 3) on departmental structures, processes and organisational procedures.

4.2 The revised structure reflects the recent staffing changes within the Education department and takes due account of the SOLACE report. (Appendix 3) This report was commissioned for the specific purpose of providing guidance to help influence future structural changes to the department. The report content provided a useful source of information for the new Director of Education in shaping the revised departmental structure. The main findings which are to be incorporated into the proposed new structure are:

- a marked reduction in the number of Chief Officer posts;
- the need for clearer definition of the roles and responsibilities of posts at each level in the structure, particularly in relation to the specific role of the remaining education managers;
- increased responsibility and involvement for Head Teachers at departmental and corporate level;
- a comprehensive review of the existing scheme of Devolved School Management (DSM) leading to increased decision making at establishment level;
- increased autonomy for establishments in the staffing process;
- the move to a more cluster based approach for quality improvement using the existing Quality Improvement team;
- changes to the school review process and the introduction of a more proportionate response to support and challenge establishments;
- an increased emphasis on self evaluation at establishment level; and
- ongoing revision of the professional review process.

4.3 The new structure reflects the need to provide a quality educational service. It has been designed to ensure the successful implementation and delivery of the key priorities in the current Education Department Service Plan. The structure takes full account of the professional experience and expertise of the remaining members of the education department by realigning the responsibilities previously held by the senior staff who have now left the department. It also sets out individual and collective responsibility for implementing each priority within the Service Plan. The current Education Department Service Plan has three principal objectives, which it shares with the Council's own Service Plan. These are:

- Getting It Right For Every Child
- A Working City
- Corporate Improvement and Change

Each objective has a number of strategic actions and associated performance indicators and targets, but the desire and commitment to raise levels of achievement and attainment in children and young people permeates the entire plan. This also reflects one of the key Council priorities as set out in the Single Outcome Agreement and Dundee City Council's own Service Plan.

4.4 The actions and targets of 'Getting It Right For Every Child' (GIRFEC) lay emphasis on ensuring a positive learning environment for all young people, including those who are

vulnerable or have additional support needs, and developing the whole child, including health and wellbeing. The emphasis is on the development and implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence and the Early Years Framework, and tracking and monitoring the performance of every child to help him or her achieve full potential. The Department's contribution to the agenda of 'A Working City' is to promote opportunities for all young people to leave school and move to a positive destination. In this area, our work with the business community in areas such as work experience and shadowing and mentoring takes on particular significance. The actions and targets of 'Corporate Improvement and Change' reflect the Council's wish to be seen as an improving Council. Emphasis is on quality improvement and the capacity for improvement, in which the development of leadership capacity is prominent. This agenda also acknowledges the current financial situation, our commitment to seek efficiency savings and the need to maintain a balanced budget.

- 4.5 The revised structure will ensure that the new remits, roles and responsibilities of the education team are set out in a clear and concise manner and shared widely with headteachers and staff. Under the new proposal, the delivery of the service and the corporate role of the service will be delivered by a slimmer, more focussed management structure, with officers working in closer cooperation with headteachers who, in turn, will have increased flexibility to deliver the service within their own school communities and local cluster of schools.
- 4.6 The new SMT structure (Appendix 2) will comprise the Director of Education and two Heads of Education. The role of Support Services is subject to ongoing corporate reviews. Each Head of Education will have a core sectoral remit as well as shared responsibility for driving forward the 3-18 agenda across the department. The sectoral remit is designed to ensure that there is no loss of focus on the core business of the department in terms of the continued drive to improve pupil attainment across the city.
- 4.7 The number of Education Managers has been reduced from six to four under the new structure with each manager having a core and generic remit. The role of the remaining Education Managers will be essential in driving forward a culture of continuous improvement. The strategic role of the Education Managers is to lead key national and local developments. At an operational level, each Education Manager will be involved directly in supporting the relevant Head of Education, liaising with schools, promoting quality assurance and implementing the priorities within the Service Plan. To avoid duplication of effort and unnecessary bureaucracy, the revised roles and responsibilities of each Education Manager will be developed and shared with headteachers. This will be essential in establishing the core differences and commonalities between the role of Education Manager and Quality Improvement Officer.
- 4.8 The Quality Improvement Team has reduced following the voluntary retirement of the Quality Improvement Manager and one Quality improvement Officer. The focus of the team will shift to reflect the increased emphasis on a cluster based approach. The 8 Quality Improvement Officers will have first line responsibility for ongoing contact with schools and full use will be made of the specialist knowledge of individual team members. In addition, each QIO will have a support and challenge role for a cluster of schools, a curricular role and a lead officer role for the department in a relevant area. There will be close working links between the QIO team and the Education Managers with clear guidance to schools on the specific remits of each group.
- 4.9 The extended management team has been revised to include greater representation from across the education department and the school sector. The extended team will include representatives from the QIO team as well as headteachers from the pre-school, primary and secondary sectors. This will provide an important forum for practitioners to inform the work of the service through professional discussion on key educational issues, national initiatives, service planning and policy developments.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

There are no major issues.

6 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Director of Finance and Head of Personnel have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Current structure of the Education Department

Appendix 2: Revised structure of the Education Department

Appendix 3: SOLACE report

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August 2011

Appendix 1 - Education Department - Current Governance Structure

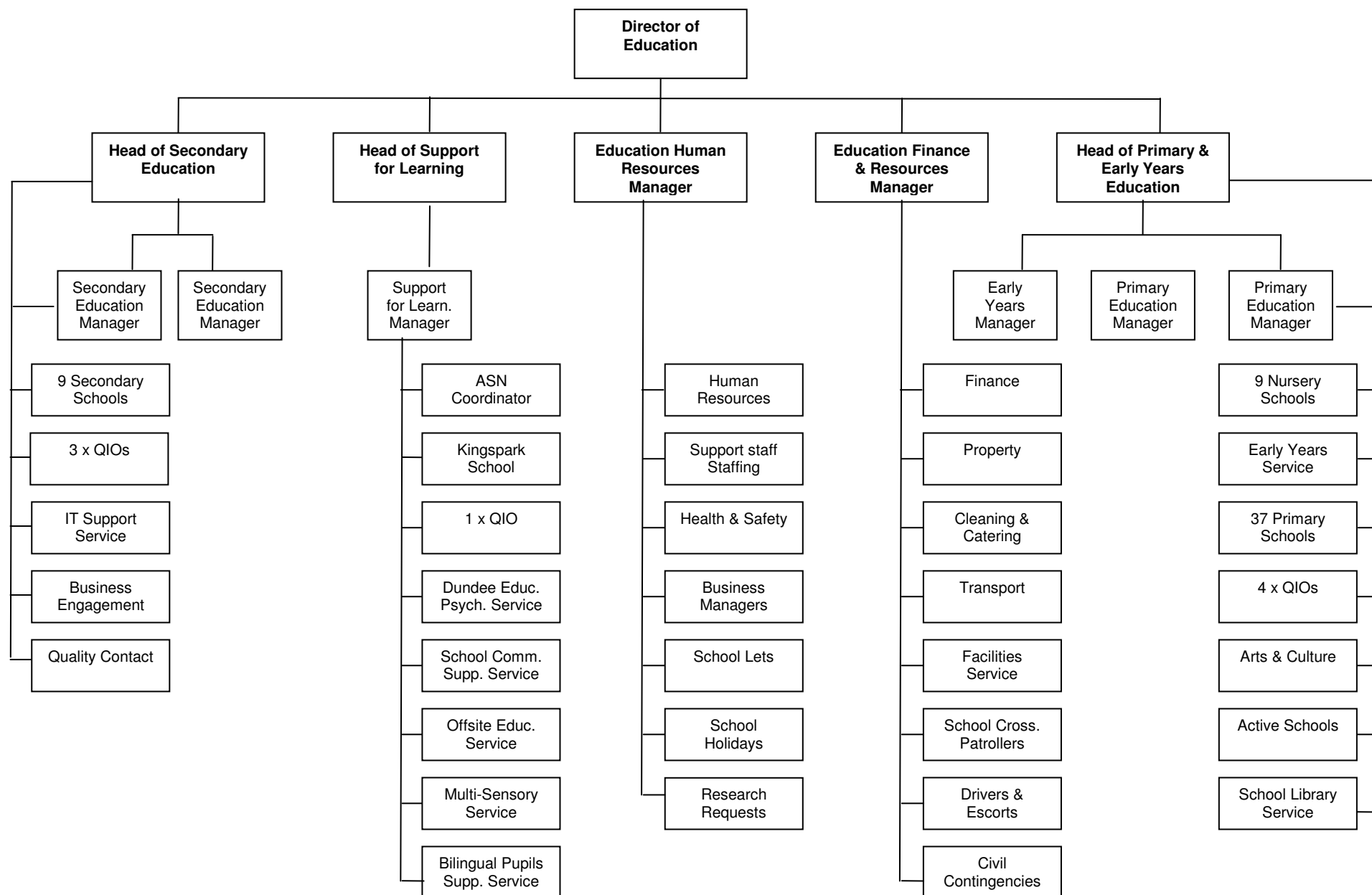


Table 1 - Education Department - New Management Structure and Responsibilities

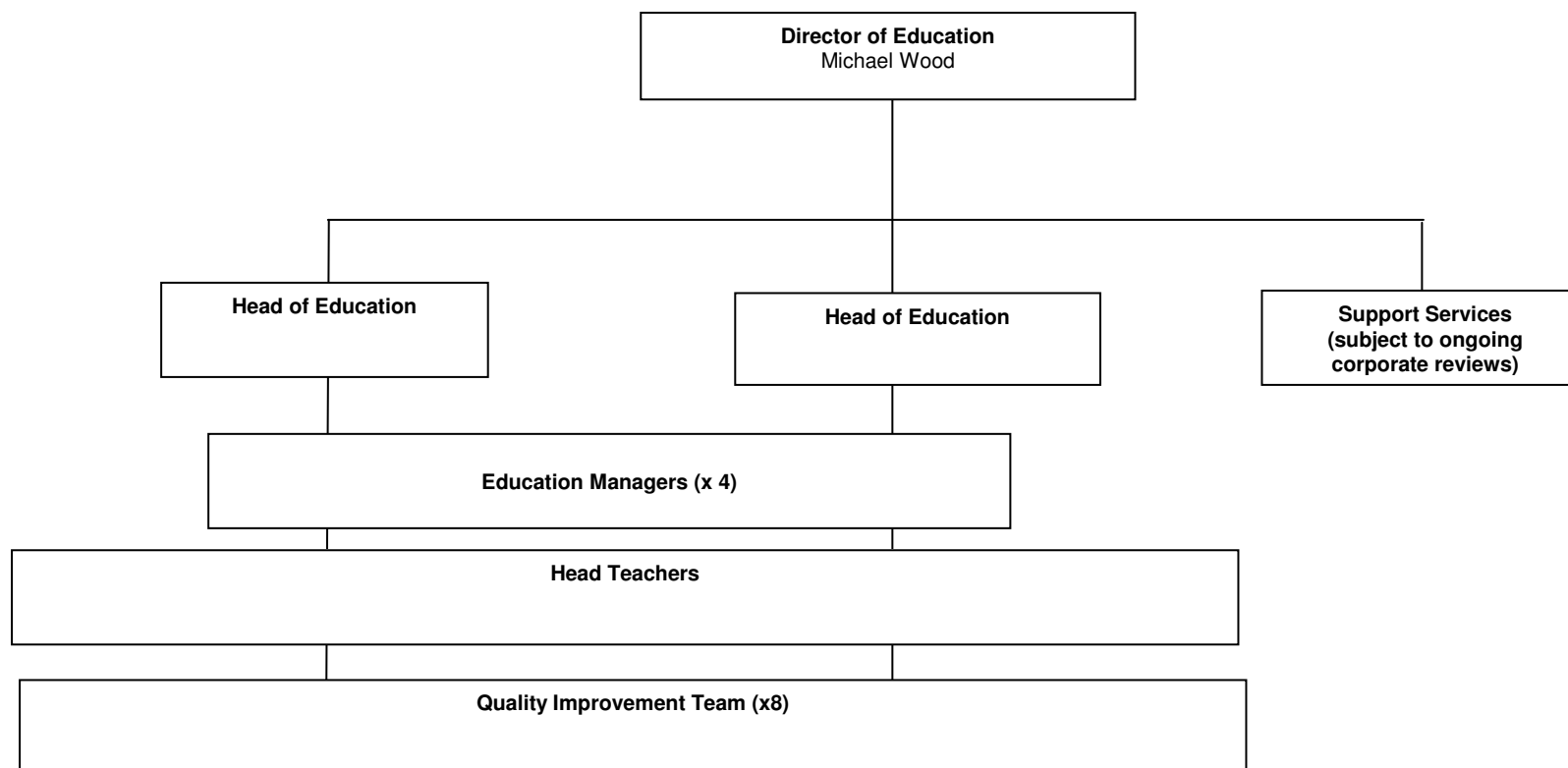


Table 2 - Education Department - Proposed Governance Structure

Senior Management Team

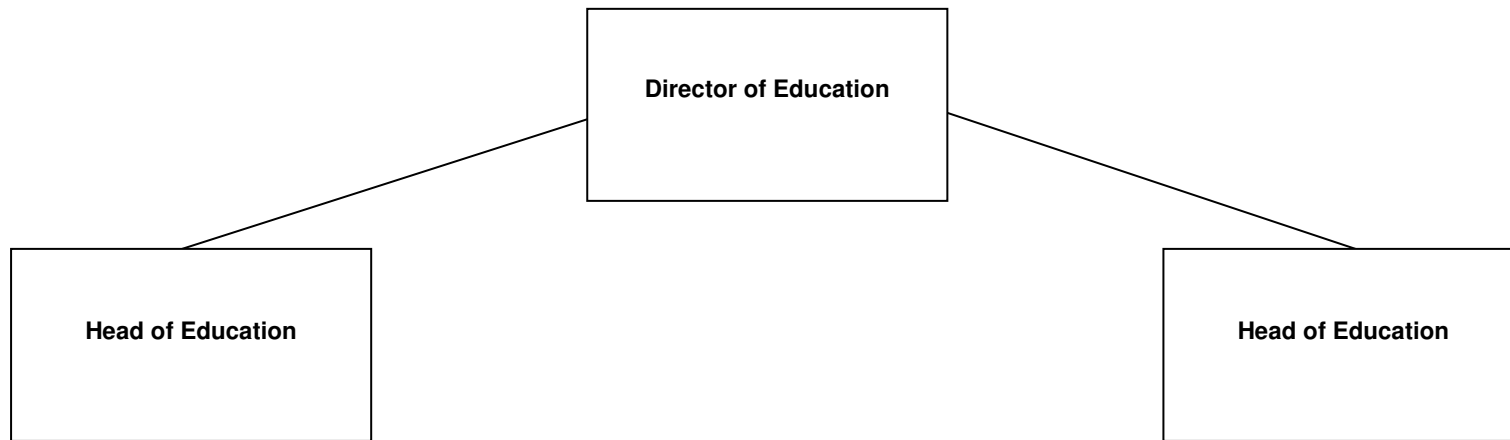


Table 3 - Education Department - Proposed Governance Structure

Extended Management Team

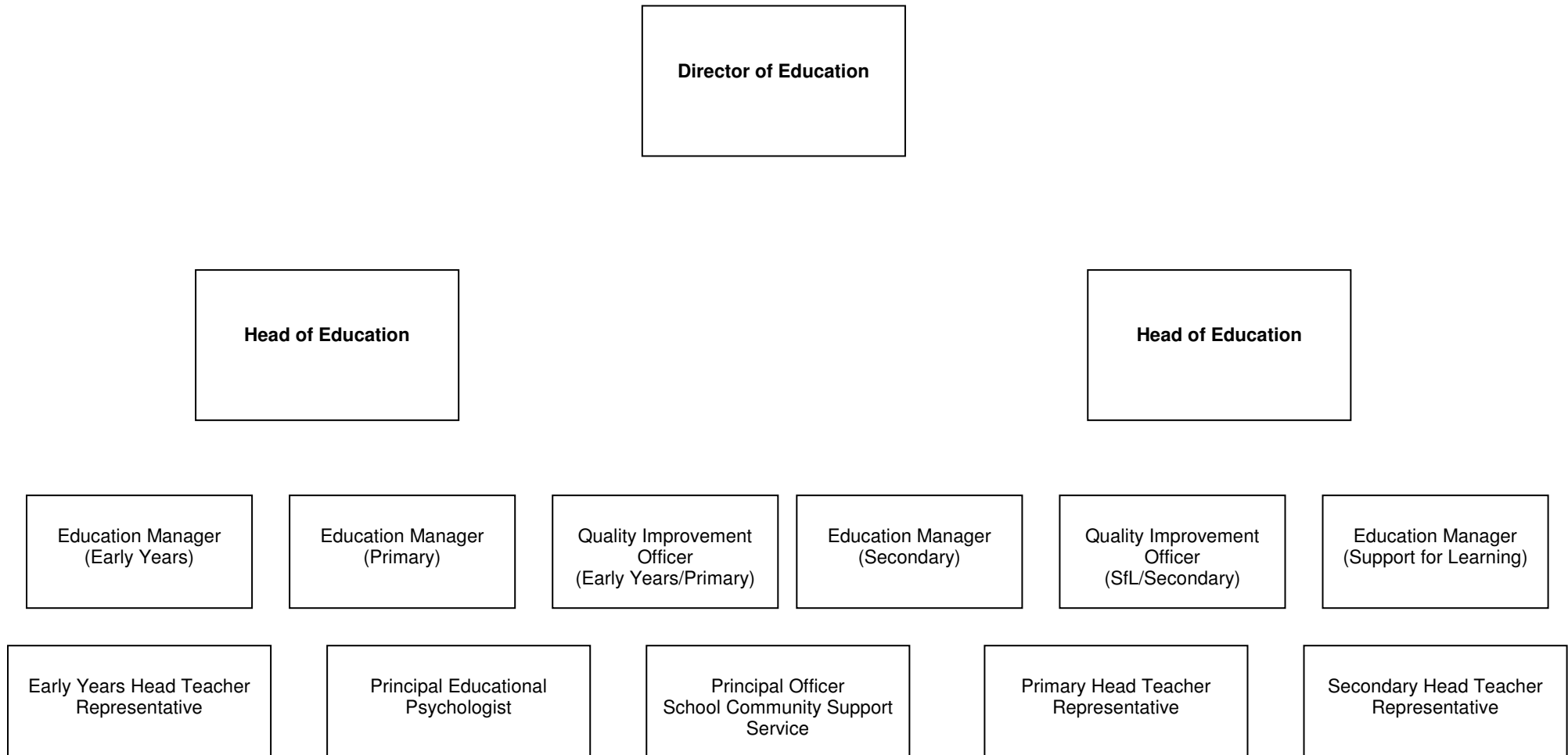


Table 4 - Head of Education (Pre-school, Primary, Communications and Culture)

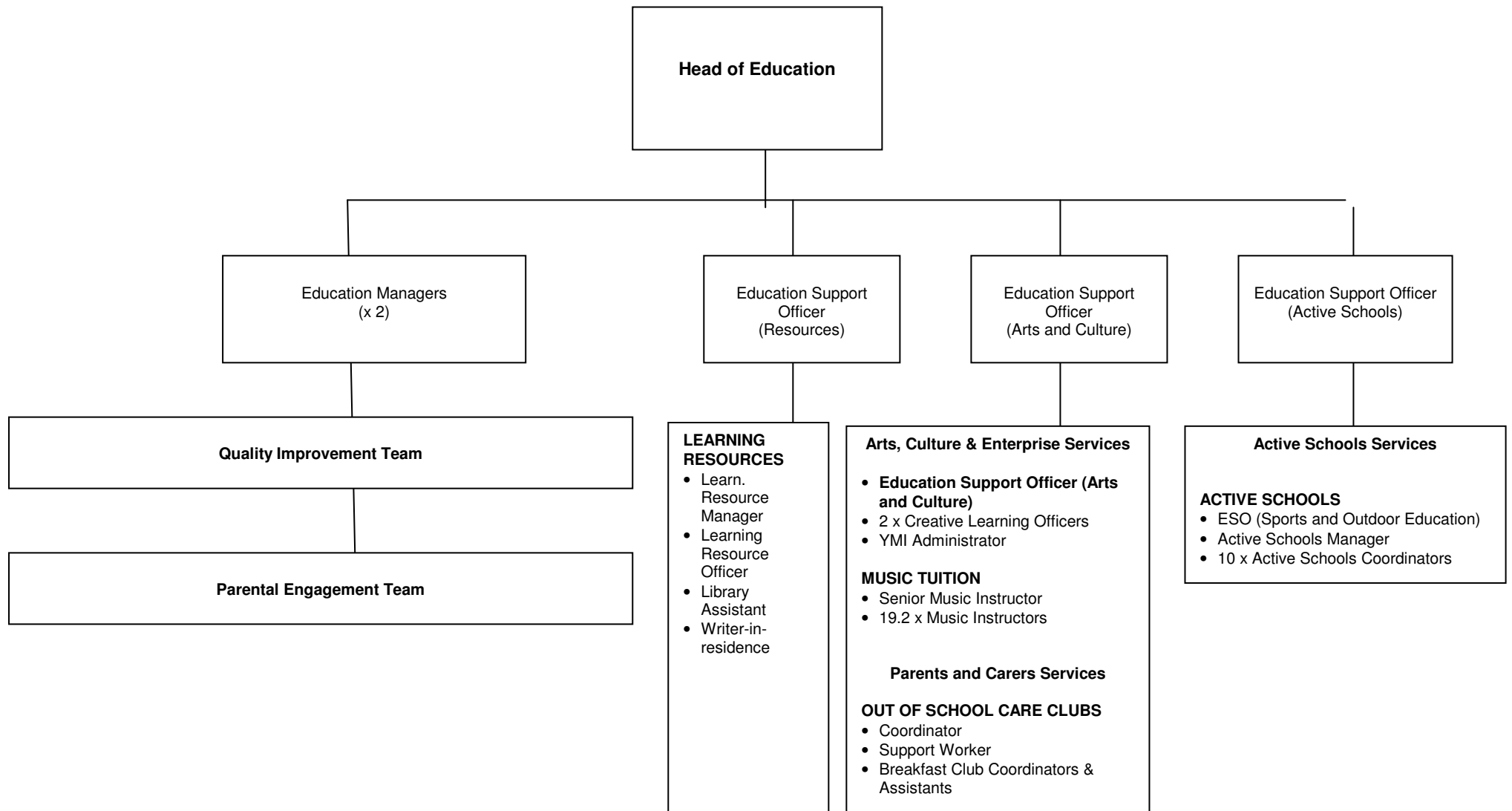


Table 5 - Head of Education (Secondary and Support for Learners)

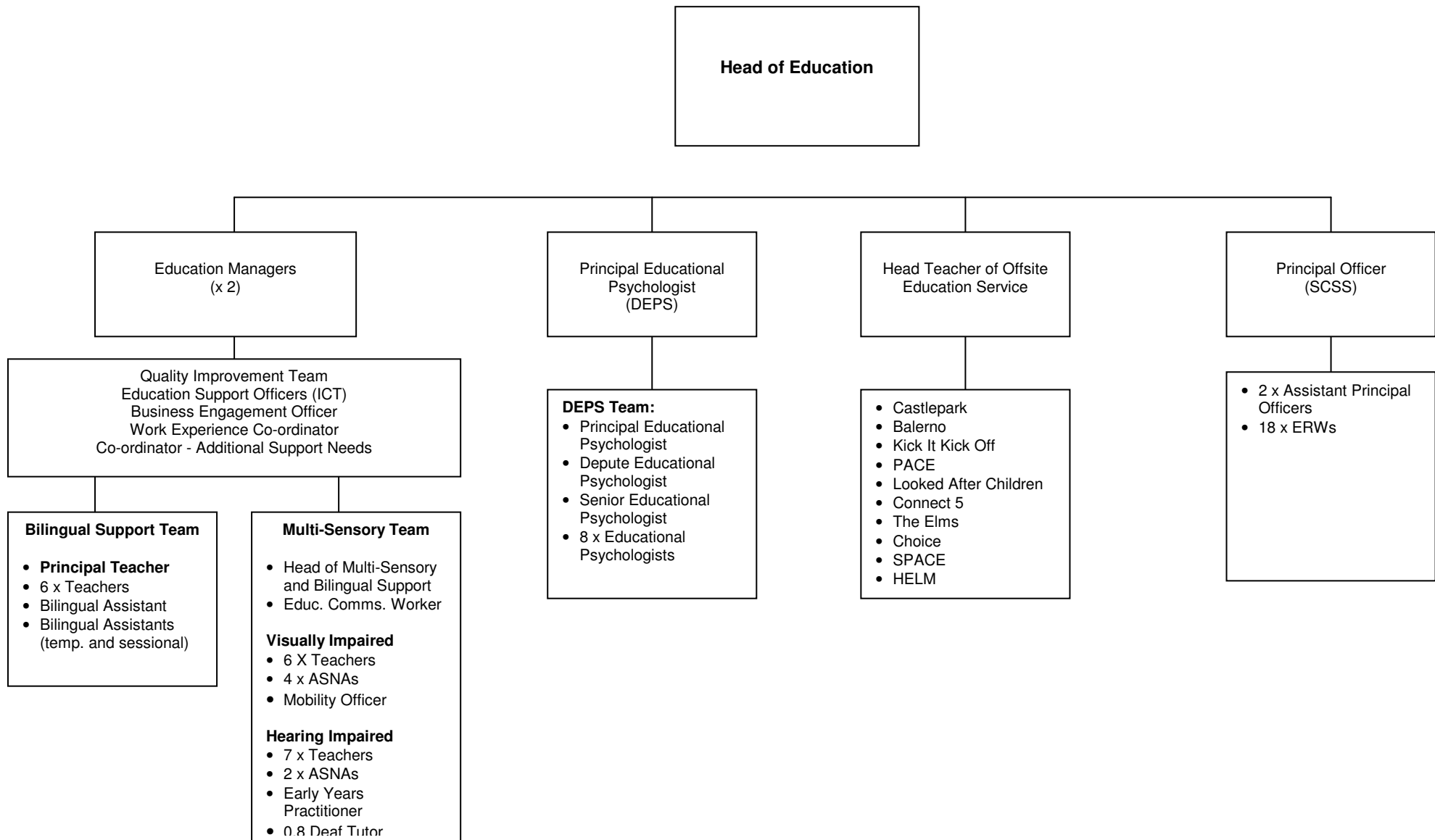
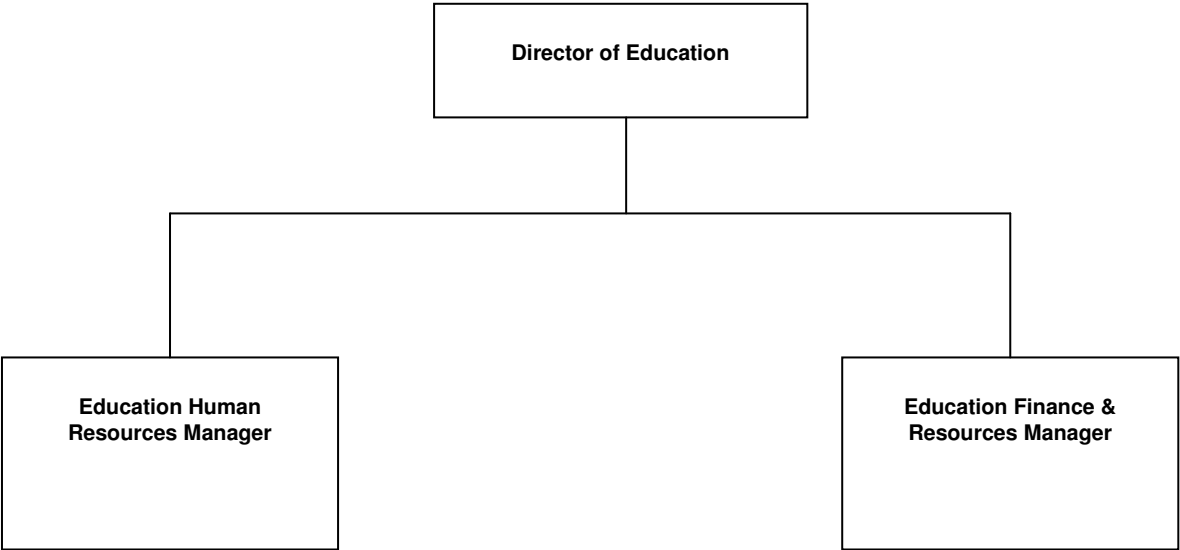


Table 6 - Education Department - Support Services (subject to ongoing corporate reviews)



Dundee City Council Department of Education Confidential Review of Departmental Structure

1. Introduction

This report is based on 10 days work carried out between September and October 2010. Given this relatively short time period, the report focuses on current departmental structures, processes and organisational procedures. It offers observations and recommendations regarding these areas, which, if implemented, would provide financial savings.

2. Methodology

The observations are based on:

- a) A series of interviews with 27 staff across the major departmental functions and at various levels of seniority.
- b) Establishment visits to 3 secondary schools (St. Paul's Academy, Harris Academy and Craigie High) 3 primary schools (Forthill, Downfield, St. Luke's & St. Matthew's) and one nursery school (Jessie Porter)
- c) A review of all relevant departmental paperwork.
- d) A comparison with a number of other councils where Solace has conducted a similar exercise, namely West Dunbartonshire, Aberdeen City, Edinburgh, Renfrewshire, Fife, East Dunbartonshire, Perth and Kinross, North Lanarkshire and East Ayrshire.

3. Underlying Principles

In reviewing the organisational structure, a couple of key principles have been used to underpin the rationale for the various observations.

a) Devolved School Management

The introduction of Devolved School Management (DSM) recognised the key role of Head Teachers as senior managers of the council with a significant degree of autonomy within a framework which provides accountability. Heads were empowered to make decisions in the best interests of their community working in partnership with pupils, parents and staff. Introduced over 15 years ago it was in fact a model of locality planning and management which long predated the more recent national moves in this area on a council wide basis. Within DSM and the scheme of delegation Heads have a considerable element of flexibility and freedom. A corollary of this 'Heads as partners' approach is that there should be less need for layers of management at HQ level, which purport to manage functions, which in reality lie with Heads, or indeed posts which attempt on a daily basis to manage Heads. In the DSM model the role of the centre is to provide support and challenge to schools whilst monitoring their performance within the strategic framework. This is a different type of role and requires a different relationship. Head Teachers are the most senior officers of the council in their geographical area and as such should be responsible for the management of locally based staff such as home school workers, inclusion staff and behaviour

support teachers rather than these posts being subject to another layer of management from the centre.

b) De- layering

The structures in local authorities often lead to a duplication of work at a local level and a layer of management at HQ involved in strategy, change management, and policy formulation which can lead to a fragmented approach to service planning and delivery because of unnecessary bureaucracy. An excess of management layers between front line services and senior management leads to a form of institutional paralysis with staff unclear as to their responsibilities and place within the organisation. By reducing duplication and the number of middle managers, front line staff should be empowered to make decisions and use their professional judgement within a clear framework.

4. Corporate Governance

Whilst it was not part of the specific remit for this review, it is necessary to make some observations about the overall structure of the council and the allocation/ grouping of services since this has a knock on effect to the departmental structure and the number/designation of posts at various levels.

Whilst no detailed work has been done by this review in this specific area, two points can confidently be made:

a) Number of Director Posts

The Chief Executive review of corporate structures seems very timely since the number of Director posts (10) is significantly greater than most councils including much larger ones.

At one end North Lanarkshire as the fourth largest council in Scotland has 5 Directors whilst Midlothian as a much smaller council has 3. A comparison with similar councils would suggest that Dundee should have around 5 Directors.

b) Departmental Remits

If the conclusion is reached that fewer Directors are required, then alternative groupings of services have to be considered.

Comparisons with the 9 other councils mentioned in section 2 may be instructive in helping towards a decision as to the most appropriate structure for Dundee. Any restructuring also has a knock on effect to Head of Service posts/remits.

Firstly the decision to group other services under the umbrella of Education has not always been taken solely for financial reasons.

The majority of councils in Scotland now have Community Learning and Development within the education area often with a change of title for the department to Lifelong Learning to recognise this change. HMIE in their inspection of the education function of LEAs have frequently commented that not having Community Learning and Development within education means that there are two strategic and operational leaders within the education function (since the inspection

covers CLD as well) leading often to a lack of clarity and coherence in strategic planning.

There are clearly educational synergies to be had by creating a single department, which leads on lifelong learning and works in partnership with outside agencies such as Dundee's Colleges and Universities as well as outside agencies such as careers.

A second step towards a reorganised grouping has been to include the Public Library Service in the move to education recognising its links to adult learning and the school library service. This move has also offered up possibilities of rationalisation of posts by putting CLD and libraries under the one Principal Officer and reviewing the co-ordination of school and public libraries.

A third model which again is very prevalent has been to move Leisure, Culture, Museums and Heritage under the Education Department which has become Learning and Leisure or similar.

Given that in many of the councils involved, the bulk of leisure facilities and museums etc. have been passed to an arm's length leisure or culture trust, the prime responsibility of the re-structured department in these areas is client monitoring and developmental activities such as sports development/active schools which have commonly been retained by the department.

The final step for a few councils has been to include Children's Social Work (or indeed in the case of East Ayrshire the whole of Social Work) within the former education department as a renamed Children's Services Department.

In reflecting on Solace's work in this area, it would seem that with the exception of Edinburgh, larger councils have decided against moving Children's Social work on the basis that the scale of such a department would be too unwieldy.

Thus Fife, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire opted not to include Children's Social work within Education as a Children's Services Department but rather move down the CLD, Libraries, Leisure etc. line.

Interestingly, Glasgow City Council, having created one Executive Director for Education and Social Work, has now moved back to two separate Directors and departments. Edinburgh created (perhaps too hastily on the back of a Child Protection tragedy) a single Children's Services Department, but has struggled to make it effective. On their current website, Education and Learning (including CLD/Libraries etc.) is listed as a separate department from Children and Families.

In some smaller councils such as Perth and Kinross a combined Education and Children's Services Department has (according to external audits) proved successful.

Nevertheless it does seem to be a more challenging task to make this model work than to move towards the more modest Lifelong Learning (CLD/Libraries) or Learning and Leisure (CLD/Libraries/Leisure/Culture) models.

An additional factor for many councils when considering re-structuring is to make sure that there is no loss of focus on the core business of the department, i.e. schools and pupil attainment.

There is a strategic benefit in each of the models and a financial saving based on the rationalisation of posts. The next section explores these models and offers some further suggestions.

5. Implications for Education Department

a) Head of Service

Should the decision be taken to retain a '*Stand Alone*' Education Department then two Heads of Service would seem appropriate. In comparator councils there are two HoS posts which link directly to the schools/education function. Where a third post exists, it oversees the area of additionality. In most of the comparator councils the two Education posts at the most senior level below the Director are titled:

Head of Schools and Quality Improvement or similar
Head of Educational Resources or Head of Education Support Services

The model in Fife may offer a helpful guideline. The two posts there are:

Head of Service Curriculum, Learning and Performance
Head of Service Learners Needs and Experiences

The resources remit is carried by one Senior Manager Resources at a third tier level, which in Dundee's case could be a combination of the two current SMT posts.

The title of the Fife second Head of Service post above makes it more flexible than a Children's Services title and allows CLD/Libraries to be absorbed into it while retaining only two Heads of Service.

In an Education and Lifelong Learning model there is a remarkable similarity across all of the comparators with three Heads of Service Posts the norm for such a department. With this in mind it would seem appropriate for an enlarged Education Department which incorporated the areas mentioned to have three Heads of Service. As the Council aims to rationalise its current management structure, this gives the opportunity to generate significant savings.

Before moving to look at the levels below Head of Service a word of caution should be noted in relation to any proposal to move areas such as finance and HR to a corporate rather than a departmental setting. Whilst there are some potential economies of scale in such an approach, lessons from other councils would suggest potential pitfalls. Bearing in mind that the department accounts for around forty per cent of the Council's budget and workforce, the need for effective budget and HR management is crucial. Clear lines of accountability and budget control need to be established. Two councils which transferred the finance function to corporate have since moved a significant resource back to education because of continued overspends related to lack of ownership of ongoing daily budget decisions at various levels. Questions were also asked as to where the ultimate responsibility lay for education finance.

Similarly in a comparator Council transfer of teachers' HR to corporate led to Trade Union agitation and unrest related to the poor handling of complex and distinct teachers' conditions of service.

It would seem prudent to recognise these issues in any discussion about potential changes. Interestingly one comparator council has chosen to move in the opposite direction and devolve more to the larger departments whilst creating a slimmed down centre which focuses on smaller departments and corporate policy.

b) Education Managers

As outlined in section 3, the principles of DSM and de-layering raise a question mark over these posts. Looking at the schools sector the current structure suggests that Head Teachers operating ostensibly with significant autonomy within a DSM structure are managed by a manager (Primary, Secondary or Early Years) who in turn is managed by a Head of Service who is managed by the Director; thus two layers of quasi school management between Head Teachers and the Director.

The above description is clearly not the case in reality where Heads do in fact manage their schools and are not managed by Education Managers. The current structure creates an unnecessary bureaucracy where Heads have to seek permission for certain decisions which should be devolved, and indeed at times in the Primary Sector there is a reluctance to make decisions in case they are viewed as wrong.

Secondary Heads saw no benefit to schools and viewed the posts as a service to the centre, not to schools. Whilst Primary Head Teachers were more ambivalent it was perhaps even more worrying in that the disempowering of Primary Heads over the last five years has led to what one Senior Officer referred to as “*learned helplessness*” where some Primary Heads now contacted managers about trivial decisions. An example of the effect of this kind of disempowerment was the comment from a Primary Head Teacher who had developed an excellent approach to forward planning for a Curriculum for Excellence but wasn’t sure that her manager would approve. Similarly, since these posts don’t manage schools, their function is in many cases identical to that of QIOs who also offer advice and support and whom Primary Head Teachers in particular would often contact for advice prior to contacting the Education Manager. There was as one interviewee commented often a “*blurring of lines*” between managers and QIOs.

In addition the strong position taken when these posts were created, i.e. that they were line managers and senior to QIOs, has led to a de-valuing of the QIO role and less effective use of this significant resource than in comparator councils. It is recognised that the intention was to create a greater challenge from the centre but the model was flawed and has in fact reduced the challenge from the larger QIO group.

Some of the functions of the manager posts such as secondary staffing are either administrative or personnel functions, not a Chief Officer's. Indeed if the retiring current Education Manager Secondary can conclude the move of secondary staffing onto the straight forward roll related model used in most councils then this function should pass to Education HR. A further complication caused by these posts combined with the primary/secondary split used for QIOs, Managers and Heads of Service is a confusion and lack of clarity surrounding leadership of change and the development of a Curriculum for Excellence. A prime example of this lies in the barriers to cluster working, an approach which all Head Teachers were anxious to develop and which all interviewees commented upon favourably. If a cluster (secondary and associated primaries) decided to meet to develop transition planning for P7 into S1 then at such a meeting there could potentially be six senior officers of the department present with none having overall responsibility for leading the development and connecting it to the department’s wider strategy (Education Manager Primary, Education Manager

Secondary, QIO Primary, QIO Secondary, Head of Service Primary, Head of Service Secondary). Indeed, if the transition planning in the cluster had also included early years into Infants, then a further two officers could have been added. Whilst this is obviously an extreme and unlikely example it raises an interesting point about the definition of roles and the importance of clear strategic leadership. Adding the manager numbers to the current six members of SMT gives the department the highest number of Chief Officers of any Education Department in the country.

c) A way forward

A potential solution to this issue, which would also formalise the very good work currently underway in many areas of the department, is to recognise the centrality of the cluster approach and use it as a basis for re-structuring the challenge and support to schools. It is helpful at this point to reflect on the range of strategies which are being developed as a cluster approach but which are not as yet joined up. In terms of a Curriculum for Excellence, clusters are already meeting and working as clusters on implementation. The Head of Service Secondary has recently allocated government monies for a Curriculum for Excellence on a cluster basis to facilitate and encourage this approach. Within Support for Learning, the Head of Service has again proposed that support for vulnerable children be allocated on a cluster basis with each cluster being given a number of support teachers to allocate as they see appropriate. Each cluster has also been provided with at least one school with enhanced provision to assist with this work. The Schools Community Support Service allocate Community Support Workers on a cluster basis. The Educational Development Service also uses a cluster approach to deliver services.

To build on this strength the department could move to a model whereby each cluster had **one** named QIO as the link for that cluster. That QIO is not responsible for managing the schools but for holding them accountable, in a challenge and support model. They would be responsible for co-ordinating and overseeing cluster working, conducting revised attainment and review visits (see next section), responding to school based issues, providing pastoral support and providing advice and support in general.

In parallel with this move, the posts of Education Manager Primary and Secondary could be phased out. A number are retiring, not to be replaced, as part of the proposed savings. The remaining posts could follow in due course. The whole QIO team, each with cluster responsibilities should be one team reporting to the Head of Schools and Quality Improvement. A new post of Quality Improvement Manager could be created to manage the new team which could also absorb the Education Development Service which should not be a separate entity but should be integrated into the new team with each development officer or staff tutor linked to an appropriate QIO to enhance integrated working. The Quality Improvement Manager post could be filled by seeking expression of interest from existing managers or alternatively if none were interested by creating a QIM post from within the QIO ranks which would manage the service but also retain a cluster role. In either case the post would manage the overall attainment and review process. In the short term the existing Education Managers Primary and Secondary could either fulfil the new role or operate in a QIO role on a conserved salary.

The model requires each QIO regardless of their sectoral background to carry out a challenge and support role across a complete cluster or clusters. Clearly it can be challenging to operate in a sector which does not represent your own professional background; however the move from old style Advisory Service to Quality Improvement

Service and the related significant McCrone pay rise recognised that processes related to quality improvement, development planning, reporting and monitoring, leadership and self-evaluation were generic across sectors.

Experience in other councils has shown that QIOs build their own credibility based on how they fulfil their function rather than their background. A number of specific strategies can also be put in place to support officers some of which will be outlined in the section on school review. On a more generic note, it may be possible to 'buddy up' QIOs in pairs with one primary and one secondary background in adjacent clusters.

In this context it is important to emphasise the three aspects of the job that all QIOs should be involved in as Senior Officers. They each should carry a support and challenge role for a cluster of schools, a curricular role and a lead officer role for the department in a relevant area. A comparison with other councils would suggest that the Lead Officer role could be in a number of areas such as:-

- Eco Schools/Grounds for Learning/Sustainable Developments
- Fair Trade/Heart Start/Enterprise
- Equalities/Racist Incidents
- Charter Mark/Quality Awards
- Hungry for Success/Rewards schemes
- International Education/International Links
- Sexual Health/Drugs Education
- PSHE/Positive Behaviour
- SQH/Leadership Development
- Student Council/Speech and Drama Festivals
- Public Speaking and Poetry Competitions
- Educational Trusts
- Outdoor Education
- Vocational Education
- Schools Quality Assurance Programme
- Lead on specific initiatives such as Restorative Practices, Co-operative Learning, Nurture Groups, etc.

The curricular roles should allow for a QIO related to additional support needs and one related to early years along with the usual coverage of the main areas of Curriculum for Excellence.

d) Early Years and Support for Learning Managers

The Early Years Manager's post is identical to the primary and secondary posts in that it should not be regarded as the manager of early years provision. Nursery schools have their own Head Teacher, nursery classes in primary schools are managed by the primary Head Teacher usually via a DHT with early years experience and private providers are managed by their own Heads of Centre. The Quality aspects are shared by a number of QIOs. It would thus seem appropriate in due course to replace the Early Years Manager's post with a Principal Officer Early Years.

The Support for Learning Manager does not manage many people but has mainly a strategic planning/coordinating remit similar in some ways to the Head of Service post to which it reports. In order to justify the post it could, in the revised structure, have management responsibility for the Offsite Education Service, the Multi-Sensory Service and the Bilingual Pupil Support Service with the two current managers of these services

not being replaced when they leave. It should be noticed in passing that the recent changes to the three services mentioned have produced a very effective and very efficient structure, which is also financially prudent.

6. School Attainment and Review Visits

The current structure whereby every school receives two attainment visits and an annual review each year, with an extended review every three years or so, is in the process of being revised by the Head of Service, with the extended review in secondaries recently abolished. This seems highly appropriate and indeed perhaps the primary extended review could also be abolished and rolled into a new proportionate annual model as described below. The current model was necessary to focus on strategies to raise attainment and has served Dundee well but as one Head Teacher commented *"It has seen its day"*.

In the last few years the approach to quality improvement by both councils and HMIE has been refined in two different ways:

- (i) Proportionality
- (ii) Supported Self-evaluation Instead of Inspection

A brief examination of these two themes offers possibilities for a revised model in Dundee.

(i) Proportionality

Councils and indeed HMIE have a vast amount of readily available information on schools performance - standards and quality reports, school improvement plans, HMIE reports, annual performance data on attainment, attendance, complaints, exclusions, leavers' destinations, equality issues, etc. Possession of this data should allow the council to target schools in need of assistance or where particular issues are present rather than subjecting all schools to the same process regardless of their current strengths.

Thus a school with strong attainment/achievement, a good HMIE report, strong leadership and capacity for self improvement requires only a very light touch visit whilst a school which is struggling in these areas clearly requires more support.

Discussions with Head Teachers confirmed this view. Whilst all were very supportive, they also felt that many of the visits were unnecessary as they revisited information already submitted and, whilst pleasant in a pastoral sense, had no real purpose.

Thus rather than all schools receiving 2 visits, an annual review and an extended review regardless of performance, a new proportionate model is required.

(ii) Supported Self-evaluation Rather Than Inspection

As with proportionality there has been in recent years a recognition that the key to improvement lay not in inspection but in supporting schools and councils to develop and implement their own self-evaluation procedures in order to attain a continuous improvement model. This approach is reflected in both the new model for HMIE school inspection and the recently introduced Validated Self-evaluation (VSE) approach with local authorities.

Comments by Dundee Heads again supported this change of direction. With the current model, whilst finding aspects of it supportive, they had a number of questions. What was its purpose? What was the outcome? What was the purpose of the class visits? How did it help them to move on? There was also a general view that it was not particularly challenging. They recognized that the steps taken by the department to assist them in developing a rigorous approach to self-evaluation had been very helpful as had the online support package now available. Perhaps for that reason they felt it was time to move on.

The conclusion from these developments is that a revised approach with fewer visits, a sharper focus and a strong element of proportionality would be welcome.

A Revised Model

Bearing in mind the above comments and the size of the QIO team an appropriate model would have the following characteristics:

(i) What is the purpose of the visit?

The revised system should be proportionate and involve a number of different types of visits. These could include:

a) a focus visit

- ⇒ an individual faculty or department within a secondary or special secondary school
- ⇒ a specific curricular area or other issue within primary, special or early years
- identified by SQA or other attainment data or by QIO/directorate

b) underperforming school/centre

- ⇒ defined/identified by Director/Head of Service based on factors such as HGIOS, Child at the Centre, statistical data such as attendance, exclusions, behaviour, attainment, staff attendance

c) newly appointed Head Teacher/Head of Centre

- ⇒ a supportive visit to ensure progress is being made
- ⇒ ideally within 12-18 months of appointment

d) HGIOS/Child at the Centre

- ⇒ a school that is likely to be inspected

e) new build school or centre

- ⇒ to identify issues which have developed
- ⇒ to identify priorities

f) supporting a Journey to Excellence

- ⇒ result of HMIE inspection which has identified good practice
- ⇒ knowledge from the department

(ii) How many a year/who should be involved?

Although a number of reasons for a visit are suggested the overall number should be around 20% of establishments a year and should be spread throughout the year. This degree of proportionality will sit comfortably with the HMle cycle of school inspections.

Outwith this programme QIO visits to schools would need to be on an informal pastoral/reactive basis.

Secondary schools would still require the annual visit by Director/Head of Service to review SQA performance but this discussion could be wrapped up in a review visit if required.

In order to deliver this new more focused model the department should make use of the considerable expertise in its schools. Review visits should be led by a QIO/Head of Service but should use a small appropriate team of senior staff from other schools. Thus a secondary faculty focus visit could involve a relevant PT and a DHT. A whole school review could involve a peer Head Teacher along with appropriate PTs. Similarly in primary schools an experienced HT/DHT or PT would bring practitioner knowledge and challenge to the process.

The benefits of this approach are numerous. On the practical side it allows a QIO to manage a larger number of reviews whilst on the educational side it is excellent CPD for staff involved, uses Dundee expertise and spreads good practice. It would also be appropriate and indeed appreciated by schools if the Director were personally involved in a small number of reviews.

In order to bring coherence to the work of the department consideration should be given to including a senior CLD officer from the local area team as part of any secondary school review. Given the new focus by HMle on CLD/school partnerships such an approach would be very beneficial.

(iii) Outcome of review

To be helpful each review has to offer the school a brief written report on the validity of its self-evaluation procedures, the appropriateness of its view of its strengths/weaknesses in the focus area and points for action if required.

7. Head Teacher/Professional Review and Development

Closely related to the quality improvement agenda is the structure and quality of the HT PRD process. As numbers of senior staff at the centre decline this area also becomes problematic. A possible way forward linked to the earlier model of involving school staff in the review process would be as follows:

a) Three-Year Plan

Given that most change in education takes time to implement, and in line with 3-year school plans and 3-year budgeting, Heads' PRD plans should cover a 3-year period with an annual review of progress on targets.

b) A Review Team

Heads should be reviewed by a peer Head Teacher and a member of the Directorate. This combination offers both a colleague who understands the problems of the post and a direct strategic link to the council. In order to make this possible the Directorate representative takes part in the initial review meeting, which sets the 3-year plan. In the following two years the two Head Teachers meet once a year to review progress, sending a copy of the signed one/two-page review document to the relevant Directorate member. At the end of the 3-year period the initial group meets to sign off the past objectives and set the new 3-year plan.

This model means that as the new approach is phased in only one third of Heads are reviewed by Directorate thus making it manageable. It also allows the Director to participate in the process on a sample basis.

Another benefit of the approach is the informal CPD for Heads as peer reviewers. Given that the time involvement is only one/two meetings a year it is also manageable for the Heads involved.

In some authorities the peer Head Teacher is also involved in the school review process as described above, bringing a further element of continuity and challenge.

For this approach to work it has to be clear that it is not a voluntary activity but rather an obligation as part of the council's strategic approach to HT/PRD, and the school review process with schools linked for HT/PRD purposes on the basis of similar schools rather than on an individual basis.

8. Nursery Schools

Dundee has a large number of free-standing nursery schools each with its own Head Teacher but providing term time provision, which is no different from the provision in nursery classes within primary schools. Given that nursery classes within primary schools have a number of educational benefits, such as easing the transition from nursery to Infants and making access to a teacher easier and more flexible, the comparator councils referred to have introduced plans to move from nursery schools to nursery classes. Apart from the Education benefits there are also significant financial savings in building and maintenance costs as well as Head Teacher posts. A further popular benefit is often the removal of the need for a school closure if the nursery class or classes are moved into refurbished, spare capacity. Similarly all new build primaries should have early years provision to facilitate the change from nursery schools to classes.

9. School Community Support Service (SCSS)

This service was established in the old Tayside Region and was seen, rightly, as ground breaking. From the outset it was known as the Home School Support Service and was initially staffed by qualified Social Workers. It thus predated the new Community Schools initiative whereby government funds were allocated to improve Home/School links by providing Home/School Link Workers to assist schools with integrated work across agencies in order to help vulnerable or challenging children. Clearly, however, Dundee used some of that funding to further develop their existing model which delivered much of the new agenda. In some authorities a separate external unit was created in order to manage centrally a team of workers operating peripatetically or in area teams. However, many departments in the spirit of Devolved School Management have now devolved these posts to school level so that Support

Workers are managed by the Head Teacher in a secondary school or working across a primary cluster based in one school and managed by the base Head Teacher. This model sits very comfortably with the moves in Dundee described earlier to use the cluster model to devolve staff and resources to the front line. Indeed since the current SCSS allocates two workers to each cluster, it would be a simple matter to devolve the resource to schools, managed by Head Teachers as described, and to remove the centralised management structure of five Team Leaders and one Principal Officer, with significant savings.

If this is too radical an approach (although it replicates moves in other councils and sits well with DSM and clusters) then at least a question has to be asked as to why it requires a Principal Officer and five Team Leaders to manage twenty staff who are mostly school-based. The size of the service and its devolved nature would suggest that a slimmed down management structure is called for if devolution to school is rejected.

10. Concluding Comment

A final point, which needs to be emphasised, is that nothing in this report is a comment on individuals. The report is about structures. It is clear from the interviews and visits that the department has many enthusiastic, dedicated and able staff who have a strong commitment to the department and a desire to make a difference. Equally at school level, all Head Teachers expressed strong support for and confidence in the Director personally and his Senior Team.