

**Department of Corporate and Community Services**

**Deputy Chief Executive: Caroline Innes BSc (Hons)**

Council Headquarters, Eastwood Park, Giffnock, East Renfrewshire, G46 6UG

Phone: 0141 577 3000

website: [www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

Date: 22 October 2021

When calling please ask for: Eamonn Daly (07584 116619)

e-mail: [eamonn.daly@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:eamonn.daly@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

TO: Provost Fletcher; Deputy Provost Cunningham; and Councillors Aitken, Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Devlin, Gilbert, Grant, Ireland, Lafferty, Macdonald, McLean, Merrick, Miller, O'Kane, Swift and Wallace.

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**

A meeting of the East Renfrewshire Council will be held on **Wednesday 27 October 2021 at 7.00 pm.**

The agenda of business is as listed below.

**Please note this is a virtual meeting.**

Yours faithfully

**Caroline Innes**

C INNES  
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS**

1. **Report apologies for absence.**
2. **Declarations of Interest.**
3. **Submit for approval as a correct record the Minute of meeting of the Council held on 8 September 2021.**
4. **Submit for approval as a correct record the Minutes of meetings for the period 9 September to 26 October 2021.**
- 5./...

**5. Notices of Motion**

**Consider Notice of Motion in the following terms:-**

*East Renfrewshire Council recognises the immediacy of the current climate emergency which needs urgent political action on a global scale to save the planet. and it is therefore imperative that East Renfrewshire Council declares a climate emergency.*

*The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, published on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021, starkly highlights the gravity and urgency of the situation. Urgent action to minimise a global temperature increase and avert a catastrophic tipping point for the planet is needed by individuals, companies, local and national government. As a local authority, both as a result of our direct activities and as a consequence of our enabling and leadership role for our residents, we can play a hugely significant role.*

*We recognise and applaud the actions already taken by East Renfrewshire Council. We note that a draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, originally suggested by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, will soon be brought to Council for consideration. We note that this is just one of a raft of measures underway, with others including undertaking a baseline assessment of the council's carbon emissions, and a review of the actions needed to ensure the council's office buildings will move towards being carbon neutral. Our council performance in areas such as recycling is to be applauded. As such we recognise and support the actions that we as a council are already taking.*

*This motion reaffirms the council's commitment to these actions and to protecting our environment and is seeking to accelerate its plans to reduce carbon emissions to zero as soon as practicable. We ask Senior Officers of the Council to*

- assess its resource requirements for tackling climate change as part of the Budget Strategy process for 2021/22 and to investigate all possible sources of external funding and match funding to support this commitment in order that the necessary actions can be undertaken*
- consider the development of climate change impact assessments to ensure that all proposed policies and actions taken by the council assist towards reaching the goal of zero emissions*
- emphasise the importance of our biodiversity and natural environment and encourage and support practices to enhance and sustain the farmed and natural world;*
- embed throughout our entire organisational culture the pursuit of measures to tackle climate change.*
- review all policy and practice across our council directorates to identify ways in which we can move further and faster on carbon reduction measures;*
- consider how we communicate with, encourage and assist local residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and to help achieve this we will set up a Climate Change Partnership Group, involving Councillors, residents, young citizens, businesses and other relevant parties.*

*Finally this motion acknowledges that climate change impacts are already being felt within the local area. Due to past decades of carbon emissions, more frequent extreme weather events are inevitable. The Council must plan for resilience and continue to work with partners across the City Region to ensure that we can flourish in our future climate.*

**Submitted by Councillor Ireland and Bamforth.**

- 6. Statements by Conveners/Representatives on Joint Boards/Committees.**
- 7. Provost's Engagements – Report by Deputy Chief Executive (copy attached, pages 5 - 6).**
- 8. Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report - Report by Chief Social Work Officer (copy attached, pages 7 - 66).**
- 9. National Care Service: Proposed Consultation Response – Report by Chief Executive (copy attached, pages 67 - 78).**
- 10. Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) – Report by Director of Environment (copy attached, pages 79 - 84).**
- 11. Annual Statement on Adequacy and Effectiveness of Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control Systems – Report by Audit & Scrutiny Committee (copy attached, pages 85 - 90).**
- 12. Review of Treasury Management Practices and Policy Statement – Report by Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) (copy attached, pages 91 - 136).**
- 13. COVID-19 Recovery Update – Report by Chief Executive (copy attached, pages 137 - 152).**

For information on how to access the virtual meeting please email [eamonn.daly@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:eamonn.daly@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

A recording of the meeting will also be available following the meeting on the Council's YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/eastrenfrewshire/videos>

This document can be explained to you in other languages and can be provided in alternative formats such as large print and Braille. For further information, please contact Customer First on 0141 577 3001 or email [customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

BLANK PAGE

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL****27 October 2021****Report by Deputy Chief Executive****PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To advise the Council of the civic engagements carried out Provost Fletcher since the meeting of the Council in September.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. That the report be noted.

**REPORT**

3. Throughout the pandemic numerous civic events or engagements that would normally have been attended by the Provost have not been taking place.

4. As the vaccination programme rolls out opportunities for the Provost to attend events have resumed, albeit these have been limited in number.

5. Since the meeting in September the Provost has carried out the following civic engagements:

9 September – Induction of Jade Ableitner, new minister at Eaglesham Parish Church.

20 September – Welcomed to Neilston 96 year-old Navy Veteran who took part in the Arctic Convoys.

**RECOMMENDATION**

6. That the report be noted.

Report Author

Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager 07584 116619

[eamonn.daly@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:eamonn.daly@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

Background papers - None

BLANK PAGE

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL****27 October 2021****Report by Chief Social Work Officer****CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The report presented to elected members is the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report for 2020/21. The report is attached at Appendix 1.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. The Council is asked to comment and approve the content of the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report attached as Appendix 1 for submission to the Office of The Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

**BACKGROUND**

3. In compliance with Chief Social Work Officers statutory functions under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, they are required to produce an Annual Report. This is based on a template agreed with the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser. This report will be presented to the Integration Joint Board on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021.
4. This year, given the workload implications caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the template outline the current pressures being experienced across the service. We will use the completed reports to prepare an overview later in the year
5. The report provides a narrative of statutory social work and social care activity. It describes:
  - Governance and Accountability arrangements
  - Service Quality and Performance
  - Resources
  - Workforce
  - COVID-19
6. Performance data and analysis is set throughout the report and reflects the operational delivery of services for childrens services, criminal justice, mental health and adult services including social care.

**CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

7. The Chief Social Work Officer role is key in a number of partnership arrangements including the Health and Social Care Partnership, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), East Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee, East Renfrewshire Adult Support and Protection Committee, and the Violence Against Women partnership as well as being the professional advisor to the council.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

### Finance

8. There are no financial implications arising from this report, however the report does refer to the significant financial challenges facing the delivery of social work and social care services for the HSCP.

## CONCLUSIONS

9. This report provides an overview of the professional activity for social work and social care within East Renfrewshire for 2020 / 21 through the delivery of the statutory functions and responsibilities held by the Chief Social Work Officer.
10. We have many examples of success to celebrate and build on:
  - An enhanced Family Wellbeing Service achieving positive outcomes for children and young people's emotional wellbeing.
  - An innovative multi-disciplinary Healthier Minds team supporting children and young people with their emotional health and well-being.
  - A multi-agency approach to Signs of Safety.
  - Reducing the number of children and young people looked after away from home and strengthening the voice of families in our processes.
  - Enhanced participation and engagement of looked after young people, ensuring their voices are heard and there is a greater understanding of care experience.
  - In adult social work and social care the number of adults reporting their outcomes are met remains high and carer's quality of life is improved.
  - Continue to improve direct participation with individuals in taking ownership of their own care via Self Directed Support Option 1 (18%) and Option 2 (9%).
  - A Self Directed Support Steering Group was established with over 50% membership of individuals who use social care services and their families to shape, improve and streamline our processes.
  - Enhanced collaboration with individuals and family carers in the design, evaluation and recruitment of staff / managers within adult services.
  - Significant improvement in our Care at Home services with Care Inspectorate inspection in July assessing all areas as good.
  - Improvement in our approach to protecting adults at risk of harm, including improved timescales, higher number of referrals to advocacy and increased number of people who have a protection plan in place.
  - Significant improvement of our multi-agency approach to Large Scale Investigations reducing harm and improving outcomes for local residents.



- The overall strength of multi-agency and partnership working in East Renfrewshire throughout the pandemic across our children's, adult and justice service areas.
  - East Renfrewshire is one of the first pilot sites to facilitate joint investigative interviews under the new Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM). Ensuring that children and their families will receive the practical and emotional support they require to recover and work towards the vision of a Child's House for Healing (Barnahus).
11. There continues to be a number of significant challenges and risks facing social work and social care within East Renfrewshire including:
- Increased demand for social work support across both children's and adult services and care at home for adults both in terms of numbers and complexity of need.
  - Increased referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) alongside staff vacancies resulting in a need to prioritise resources to meet the needs of young people experiencing emotional distress.
  - Growing complexity of significant domestic abuse which we are responding to through multi agency work, Safe and Together and the implementation of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC).
  - Implementation of learning from the Care Review (The Promise) in all aspects of our work with looked after children and young people.
  - The impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) and the challenge of recovery, particularly as we have seen a rise in poor mental health, emotional distress, and for older people, increased physical frailty and dependency alongside capacity challenges within our social care services.
12. The landscape for all Health & Social Care Services will change over the coming years as a consequence of COVID-19 and statutory social work and social care will be required to adapt to ensure we support the recovery, rising demand and renewal associated with protecting and caring for our most vulnerable citizens and all those who are at risk in our communities.
13. At the heart of the social work profession lies a commitment to enabling and supporting vulnerable individuals to make positive, sustainable changes to their lives to achieve the best outcomes for them, their families and communities as a whole.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

14. The Council is asked to comment and approve the content of the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report attached as Appendix 1 for submission to the Office of The Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

**REPORT AUTHOR**

Kate Rocks  
Chief Social Work Officer  
Head of Public Protection and Children Services  
[kate.rocks@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:kate.rocks@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

October 2021

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2019-20](#)



# **EAST RENFREWSHIRE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP**

## **CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT**

**1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021**



BLANK PAGE

**Contents**

<b>Introduction – Reflection on the Past Year</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Section 1: Governance and Accountability</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Section 2: Service Quality and Performance</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1 Children’s Services</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.2 Adult Social Work and Social Care</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.3 Mental Health</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2.4 Criminal Justice</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2.5 Public Protection</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Section 3. Resources</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Section 4. Workforce</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Section 5. Covid-19: Early indication of impact on workforce and services</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>53</b>

BLANK PAGE

## Introduction – Reflection on the Past Year

Social Work professionals work alongside individuals and families providing care and protection for people of all ages, to enhance their wellbeing and improve outcomes for them as children, young people, families and adults.

Over the past year our Social Work professionals in partnership with colleagues across the Health and Social Care Partnership and our communities have continued to do this work in the most unprecedented and challenging times throughout the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. This has involved responding to higher demands for support, supporting individuals with higher levels of emotional distress, complex needs and limited informal support networks. Due to illness this report has been written in collaboration between the Chief Social Worker and the Acting Chief Social Work Officer. We have seen our social work and social care workforce locally respond compassionately, creatively and with an unwavering commitment to improve outcomes for the individuals and families we support and for this I thank them.

We are always proud of the contribution that social workers and social care workers make to our society, this year more than ever with staff working hard to support vulnerable children, adults and families whilst dealing with this the impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) in their own personal and family lives.

This report provides a detailed summary of our statutory services and the commitment of our staff in supporting our residents and improving outcomes. It also provides some reflections on the impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on our work and our plans as we move towards recovery from the pandemic.

We have many examples of success to celebrate and build on:

- An enhanced Family Wellbeing Service achieving positive outcomes for children and young people's emotional wellbeing.
- An innovative multi-disciplinary Healthier Minds team supporting children and young people with their emotional health and well-being.
- A multi-agency approach to Signs of Safety.
- Reducing the number of children and young people looked after away from home and strengthening the voice of families in our processes.
- Enhanced participation and engagement of looked after young people, ensuring their voices are heard and there is a greater understanding of care experience.
- In adult social work and social care the number of adults reporting their outcomes are met remains high and carer's quality of life is improved.
- Continue to improve direct participation with individuals in taking ownership of their own care via SDS Option 1 (18%) and Option 2 (9%).
- A Self Directed Support Steering Group was established with over 50% membership of individuals who use social care services and their families to shape, improve and streamline our processes.
- Enhanced collaboration with individuals and family carers in the design, evaluation and recruitment of staff / managers within adult services.

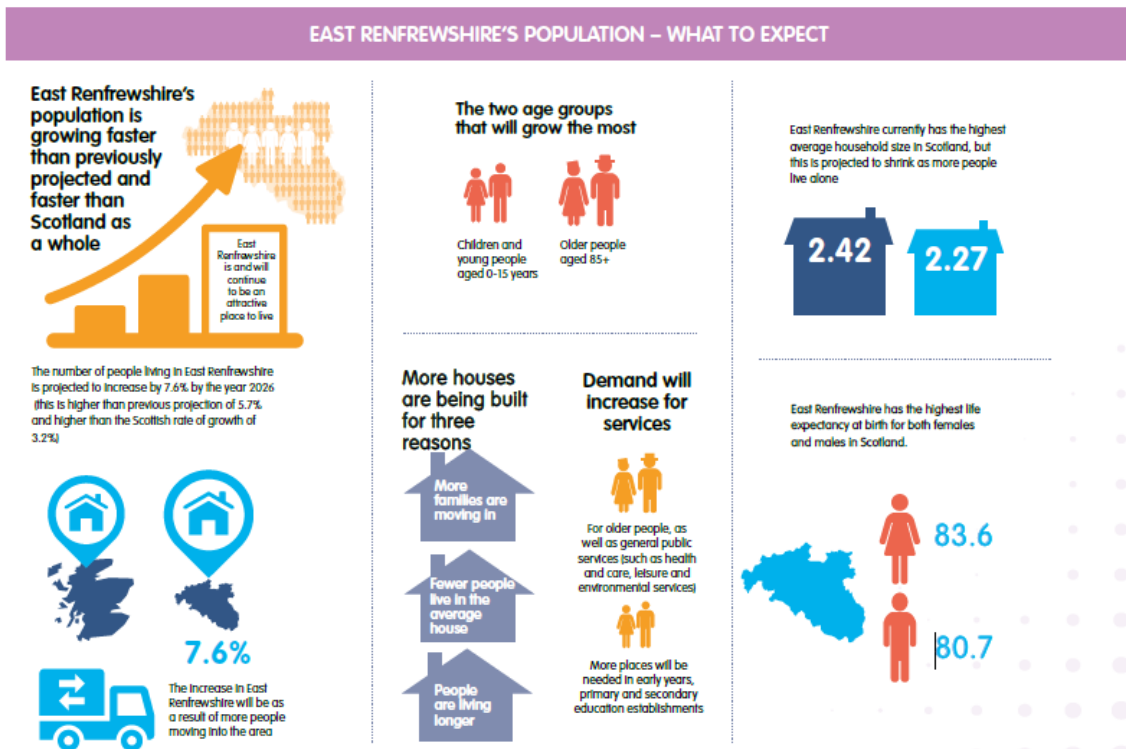
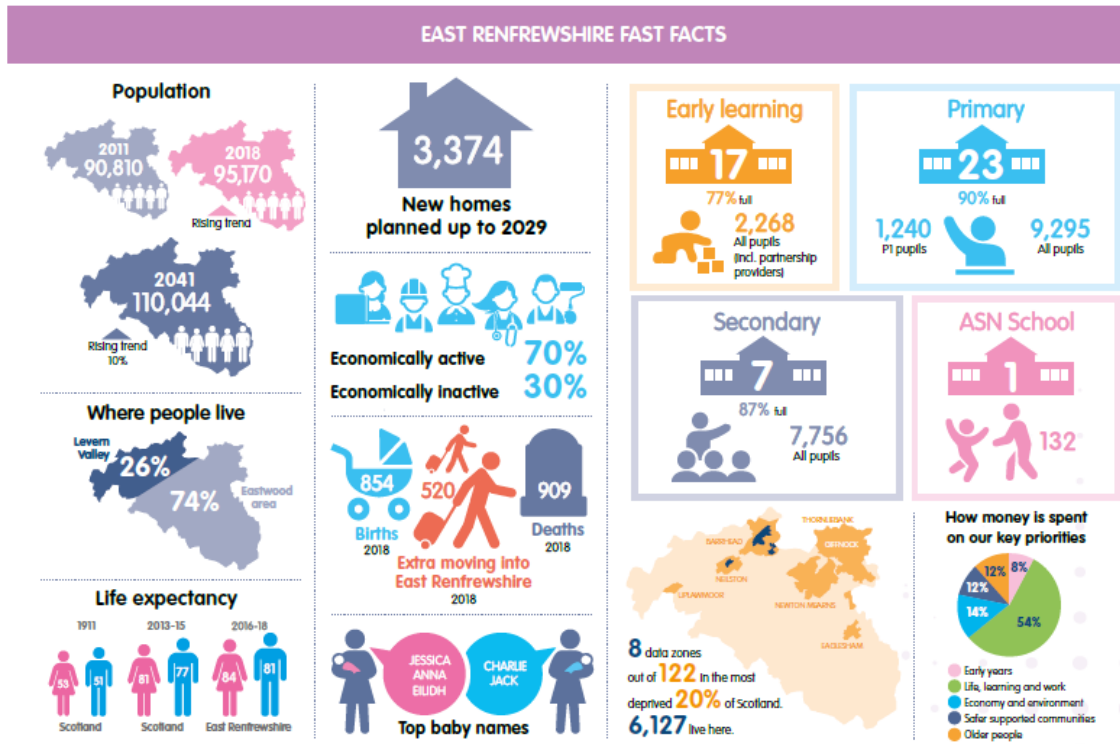
- Significant improvement in our Care at Home services with Care Inspectorate inspection in July assessing all areas as good across all areas.
- Improvement in our approach to protecting adults at risk of harm, including improved timescales, higher number of referrals to advocacy and increased number of people who have a protection plan in place.
- Significant improvement of our multi-agency approach to Large Scale Investigations reducing harm and improving outcomes for local residents.
- Overall the strength of multi-agency and partnership working in East Renfrewshire throughout the pandemic across our children's, adult and justice service areas.
- East Renfrewshire is one of the first pilot sites to facilitate joint investigative interviews under the new Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM). Ensuring that children and their families will receive the practical and emotional support they require to recover and work towards the vision of a Child's House for Healing (Barnahus).

We also know what our most significant challenges are and are making progress in tackling these:

- Increased demand for social work support across both children's and adult services and Care at Home for Adults both in terms of numbers and complexity of need.
- Increased referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) alongside staff vacancies resulting in a need to prioritise resources to meet the needs of young people experiencing emotional distress.
- Growing complexity of significant domestic abuse which we are responding to through multi agency work, Safe and Together and the implementation of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences
- Implementation of learning from the Care Review (The Promise) in all aspects of our work with looked after children and young people.
- The impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) and the challenge of recovery, particularly as we have seen a rise in poor mental health, emotional distress and for older people, increased physical frailty and dependency alongside capacity challenges within our social care services.



East Renfrewshire Population Facts



## **Section 1: Governance and Accountability**

East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) was established in 2015 under the direction of East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board and it has built on the Community Health and Care Partnership, which NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and East Renfrewshire Council established in 2006.

Our Partnership has always managed a wider range of services than is required by the relevant legislation. Along with adult community health and social work and care services, we provide health and social work services for children and families and criminal justice social work.

During the last 15 years our integrated health and social care management and staff teams have developed strong relationships with many different partner organisations. Our scale and continuity of approach have enabled these relationships to flourish. We have a history of co-production with our third sector partners and we are willing to test new and innovative approaches.

East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership is one of six partnerships operating within the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board area. We work very closely with our fellow partnerships to share good practice and to develop more consistent approaches.

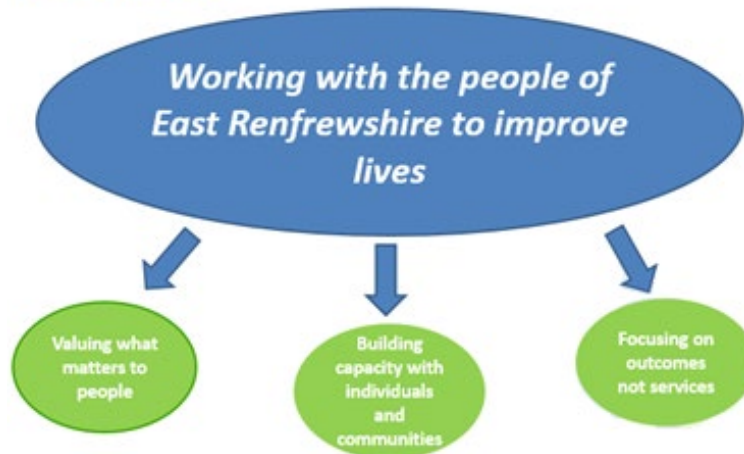
This Chief Social Work Officer's report captures the sixth year of the move to a Health and Social Care Partnership and whilst it outlines the key statutory social work functions, it also explains how they are delivered within the spirit of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 legislation. The Chief Social Work Officer provides the Health and Social Care Partnership and Council with professional advice, leadership and oversight of all social work and social care functions. She reports to the Chief Executive for East Renfrewshire Council in her role. The Chief Executive chairs the Chief Officer Public Protection Group and the Chief Social Worker is responsible for the scrutiny and quality assurance of all public protection services in East Renfrewshire. This also includes Violence against Women and Girls. The group is chaired by East Renfrewshire Council's Chief Executive and usually meets bi-annually and the Chief Social Work Officer acts as their professional advisor. The Chief Officer Public Protection Group has met more regularly during the pandemic. The use of driver diagrams and logic modelling supports the scrutiny of public protection processes, outputs and outcomes. The Chief Officer Public Protection Group met regularly throughout lockdown and will continue to do so through recovery.

The Chief Social Work Officer and the Chief Officer will provide professional advice and leadership to the Health and Social Care Partnership locally and to national forums to help shape the implementation of the Independent Review of Social Care and the development of a National Care Service. This will ensure that our approach continues to be underpinned by human rights and that local implementation meets the needs of the people of East Renfrewshire.

### **Our Strategic Vision and Priorities**

East Renfrewshire has a proven track record integrating health, social work and care services for 15 years. From the outset of the Community Health and Care Partnership we have focused firmly on outcomes for the people of East Renfrewshire that improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities. Under the direction of East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board, our Health and Social Care Partnership builds on this secure foundation. Throughout our integration journey, we continue to develop strong relationships with many different partner organisations. Our longevity as an integrated partnership helps us to improve outcomes for the citizens of East Renfrewshire.

## Our Vision



Our vision statement, “*Working together with the people of East Renfrewshire to improve lives*”, was developed in partnership with our workforce and wider partners, carers and members of the community. This vision sets our overarching direction through our Strategic Plan. At the heart of this are the values and behaviours of our staff and the pivotal role individuals, families, carers, communities and wider partners play in supporting the citizens of East Renfrewshire.

## Our Strategic Plan

The strategic plan for 2018 - 2021 sets out seven strategic priorities where we need to make significant change or investment during the course of the plan. These are:

- Working together with **children, young people and their families** to improve mental wellbeing.
- Working together with our community planning partners on new **community justice** pathways that support people to prevent and reduce offending and rebuild lives.
- Working together with our communities that experience shorter life expectancy and **poorer health** to improve their wellbeing.
- Working together with people to maintain their **independence at home** and in their local community.
- Working together with people who experience **mental ill-health** to support them on their journey to recovery.
- Working together with our colleagues in primary and acute care to care for people to reduce **unplanned admissions** to hospital.
- Working together with **people who care for someone** ensuring they are able to exercise choice and control in relation to their caring activities.

Recognising the continuing pressures as we recover from the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and the current level of dynamism in the health and social care sectors, the partnership chose to establish an interim one-year Strategic Plan for 2021-22. The interim plan builds on the seven priorities listed above and adds a further priority to support resilience and wellbeing among staff across the wider partnership. During this financial year we are undertaking engagement and needs assessment work to support the development of our next three-year Strategic Plan for 2022/25. We plan to do this in collaboration with people who use our services, family carers and local partners. A draft plan will be produced for public consultation by December with the final plan published by April 2022.

## **Annual Performance Report**

Our Annual Performance Report 2020-21 has given us an opportunity to demonstrate how we have delivered on our vision and commitments over 2020/21. It provides information about the progress we are making towards achieving the national outcomes for children, the national health and wellbeing outcomes, and criminal justice outcomes.

## **Clinical and Care Governance Group**

In order to exercise its governance role in relation to the delivery of effective social work and social care services, the Clinical and Care Governance Group focuses on governance, risk management, continuous improvement, inspection activity, learning, service and workforce development, service user feedback and complaints. Although no longer a formal structure of the Integration Joint Board it continues to provide regular scrutiny on the areas requiring development and improvement. Quality assurance is fundamental to safe and effective care and the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report is remitted to the Clinical and Care Governance Group to provide them with assurance concerning the delivery and performance of statutory social work functions. Furthermore, this allows the group to consider the interdependencies of delivering effective and high quality care within the context of integrated practice. More information can be found in the [Annual Clinical and Care Governance Report](#).

## **Section 2: Service Quality and Performance**

### **2.1 Children's Services**

#### **Early Identification and Intervention**

The Request for Assistance team ensures that children and their families receive a thorough and prompt response to any referrals and / or inquiries for a child or young person. We support our partner agencies at the earliest opportunity by sharing information and offering advice that strengthens our preventative approach to children, young people and their families.

The team is staffed by experienced social workers, an occupational therapist, an advanced practitioner in domestic abuse; and also benefits from the expertise of our third sector partner Children 1st, who consider referrals under Section 12 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 for Family Group Decision Making (FGDM).

From 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, the Request for Assistance team completed a total of 1,047 initial assessments, with 19% requiring targeted intervention. These figures are consistent with the previous year's activity.

#### **Family Group Decision Making**

During the period April 2020 to March 2021 there was a focus on specific support to families including delivery of food parcels, help with fuel debt and provision of financial advice. In addition to this, there was a recognition of the impact Coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions were having on families with an initial move away from progressing to meetings and a focus on supporting families with their emotional wellbeing. Engagement with families happened via Microsoft Teams, phone calls, emailing of resources, meeting families outdoors (when restrictions allowed) and text messages. Virtual platforms were used from July 2020 to progress to family meetings and continued for the rest of the year.

The service was able to support 17 families, involving 25 children and young people with eight families progressing to family plan meetings and four in the early stages of the support. The vision continues to focus on prevention on the need for statutory social work involvement when early identification is made.

In response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and to ensure families have immediate support from the service, an additional two Family Group Decision Making workers were employed and are now in post. Continued development with this service has widened the referral routes to include education and health visiting as direct referrers.

#### **Children and Young People's Mental and Emotional Wellbeing**

As a local authority, East Renfrewshire has recognised the extent of mental health concerns among the children's population, and in our new Children and Young Peoples Services Plan 2020-2023 we have agreed mental and emotional wellbeing as a key priority. The impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has exacerbated the circumstances of many children, young people and families, and we are now seeing a significant rise in the number of those experiencing challenges with their mental health and wellbeing. This includes those who have a neuro developmental diagnosis.

In response to this a multi-stakeholder Healthier Minds Service approach aligned to school communities has been developed to identify and ensure delivery of mental wellbeing support to promote children and families' recovery. This is working alongside our existing Family

Wellbeing Service which links to GP practices. In addition local Youth Counselling provision has also been increased. Demand for these services is outlined below.

### **Family Wellbeing Service**

The last year has brought a unique set of challenges and demands for the local Family Wellbeing Service delivered by Children 1st. However, it has also brought opportunities. Working in partnership with families and colleagues in East Renfrewshire the service has been able to continue to build on successes and learning despite the pandemic.

The increase in the demand for the service is evidence of this. Although funded to accept a minimum of 178 referrals per year this figure was exceeded significantly demonstrating the need for emotional wellbeing support from the children and families population. Moving into reporting period 2019/2020 179 families were being supported with a further 159 referrals received during 2020/2021. This amounts to a total of 338 children / young people and their families being offered support from the Family Wellbeing Service during this year.

Promotion of the service among GPs has been highly successful with almost all accessing the service when required for their patients. Programme evaluation indicates a significant improvement in the emotional wellbeing of the children and young people referred with fewer repeat presentations to GPs with distress. This demonstrates the efficacy of the family support and wellbeing intervention model deployed by the service.

### **Healthier Minds Team**

This new multi-disciplinary team established in autumn 2020 is directly responding to the emotional wellbeing needs of children and young people aged 10 – 18 years. Although the majority of referrals are from schools other agencies are accessing the service and very importantly this includes self-referrals from young people themselves. By the end of the 2020/21 academic year 278 children and young people have been referred to the service. Professional membership of the team comprises Children 1st, Recovery Across Mental Health (RAMH), school nursing, educational psychology, social work and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). This professional oversight means referrals are processed quickly and children are seen timeously. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services involvement and oversight also results in children being referred to this tier 4 service urgently if it is required.

### **Signs of Safety - Our Approach**

Over 2020/21 we have continued the implementation of the Signs of Safety model, led by the Chief Social Work Officer and the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity). However, much of our implementation plan has had to be postponed due to the impact on services as a result of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Despite this, we have continued to support practice improvement, with a particular focus on developing relational interventions with children, young people, their families and carers in order to reduce risk and improve children's wellbeing. This has been more important than ever during the pandemic. From analysing our data we have found that our approach and safety planning with families is having a positive impact. Most new referrals coming to our Request for Assistance team are families who were not known to us previously.

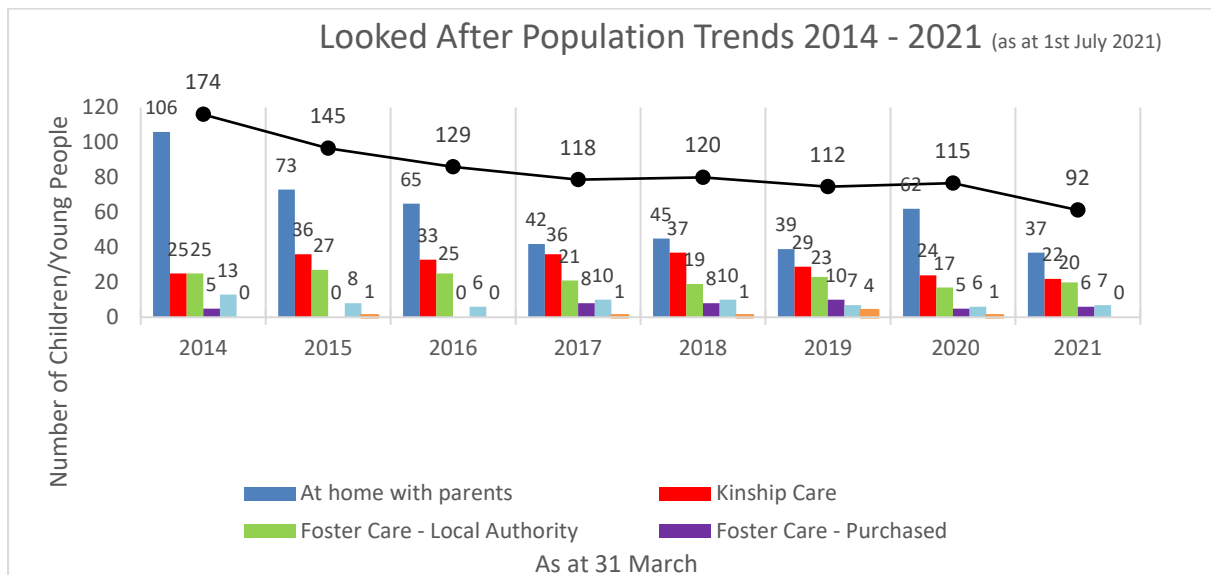
Our key achievements for the second year of our five year implementation plan are:

- Continued commitment from the multi-agency Signs of Safety Implementation Team.

- The multi-agency practice lead network, continued to meet regularly throughout the year, with a clear focus on direct practice improvements.
- Continued workforce training provided at different levels, advanced and generic for all staff groups including education, health, police and adult services. This was adapted to allow for appropriate social distancing guidelines applicable at the time.
- Under the powers of the Coronavirus Act 2020, we reviewed our assessment paperwork to allow for partial assessments to be undertaken. We will revert back to full assessments once the powers cease, however will incorporate all the learning from this into our revised full assessment and plan paperwork
- Continued application of the model in our Child Protection Case Conferences to ensure they are solution orientated, strengths based and risk focused.

**East Renfrewshire’s Looked After Children and Young People’s Population - A Profile of our Children**

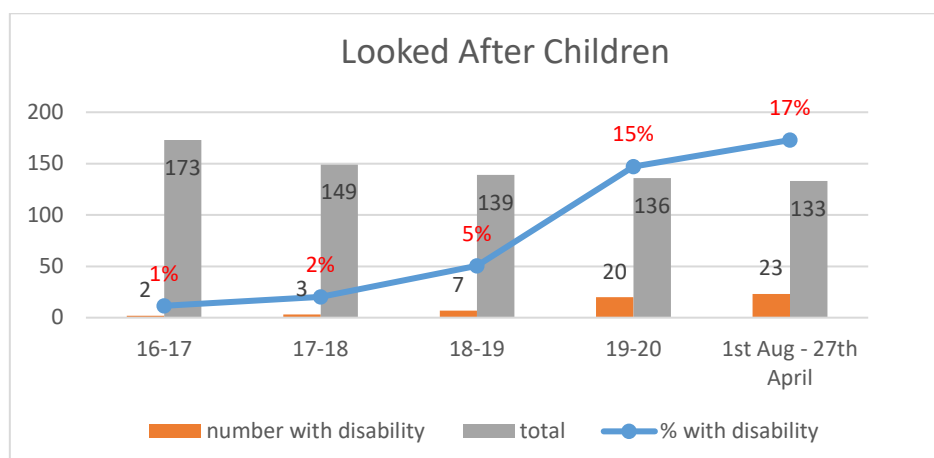
On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, 92 children and young people in East Renfrewshire were looked after in a range of settings. This constitutes approximately 0.5% of the total children’s population of the area and remains one of the smallest proportions in Scotland. The gender balance has been consistent in recent years with 60% boys and 40% girls. We have continued to work to improve outcomes for children by securing permanent destinations for them. This year there has been a decline in the number of children looked after at home with the number looked after away from home remaining consistent. The reduction in the number of children looked after at home correlates with a decrease in referrals to Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) overall.



In this year, the average amount of time children were looked after at home increased from 15 months to 20 months. This can be attributed to the significant reduction in children’s hearings taking place and the powers afforded by the Coronavirus Act to extend Compulsory Supervision Orders.

As a result of the pandemic there has been a significant increase in the number of children with complex and additional support needs who have become looked after. Currently 17% of

looked after children have a disability evidencing that the pandemic has significantly affected families with children who have additional support needs.



### Intensive Family Support Team

The Intensive Family Support Service works alongside families who present with more complex needs and where it has been identified that extra support would be helpful. The service when required works across the full week, including evenings and weekends and on an individual and / or group basis. The team operates a trauma sensitive and strengths based model to improve the safety and wellbeing of children.

Examples of support in 2020/21 include:

- Parenting capacity assessments to support permanence decision making.
- Intensive support to parents and family networks to contribute to child protection assessments and reducing risk.
- Attachment focused work to strengthen relationships and understanding within families.
- Intensive support to build on the identified strengths of families to help them manage family life including building routines; managing boundaries; understanding and addressing the health and development needs of children and the needs of parents.
- Intensive parenting and relationships support to help parents and children recover and support rehabilitation.
- Continued support to allocated families during initial stages of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic providing practical support (collecting prescriptions, food shopping for families with children with additional support needs etc.) and emotional support (helping families maintain face to face connections outdoors).
- Support to families in evenings and weekends during initial stages of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. This included out of hours support, responding to child protection concerns and supporting child protection cases out of hours.
- The team contributed to the distribution of food parcels to families across the authority and liaised with a community based charity to identify families who would benefit from the provision of hot meals. This support continued until schools returned in August 2020 with staff from the team volunteering to support distribution. The team also made up and provided summer activity packs to families.

Between April 2020 and March 2021, 93 children received support from the Intensive Family Support Service, with children from all single year age groups from 0 to 13+. Parental Mental Health is the most common reason for intervention, and this is a consistent characteristic within our report.



Children and young people receive support from the team for a range of legislative reasons. However, the majority (77%) of children fall under Welfare of Child in Need legislation. It should also be noted that 15 children's names were placed on East Renfrewshire's Child Protection Register.

### **Youth Intensive Support Service**

The Youth Intensive Support Service (YISS) was established during 2015 as the lead service for all looked after young people aged 12 – 26 years, recognising that more intensive interventions are required to improve recovery from trauma, neglect and abuse.

Using a relationship based model the team delivers the statutory duties within the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014, namely to support young people eligible for Continuing Care up to the age of 21 years and for Aftercare up to the age of 26 years. The service's aim is to successfully engage the most hard to reach young people in East Renfrewshire by providing and co-ordinating multifaceted support plans. The service has the following shared aims across social work and health services:

- To reduce the number of young people looked after and accommodated and at risk of hospitalisation and custody.
- To reduce the impact of historical trauma and abuse for young people.
- To ensure that the transition into adulthood achieves better long term outcomes.
- To maximise social capital.
- To keep whenever safe to do so a connection to their local communities.

From the period between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 31<sup>th</sup> March 2021, Youth Intensive Support Service directly supported 155 young people and their families.

- 38 were care experienced young people in receipt of Continuing or After Care support.
- 45 of care experienced young people were supported through East Renfrewshire's Family Firm.
- 62 were assessed as being of immediate risk of custody.

Additionally, Youth Intensive Support Service has two Advanced Practitioner posts. The Advanced Practitioner for the Champions Board co-ordinates, plans and delivers participation and engagement activities for care experienced young people known to the local authority. Our Continuing and Aftercare Advance Practitioner focuses on support and provision to this distinct group of young people. Both have additional responsibilities within East Renfrewshire's Corporate Parenting sub-groups and support the practice development of partner agencies.

During the Covid pandemic the contact levels with young people remained very high. This is evidence of the success of our relationship-based practice, averaging at 81% of young people having contact at least once per fortnight.

### **Champions Board, Group Work and Participation**

Despite Covid restrictions in 2020/21, we continued to engage with our children, young people, families and communities. Although participation opportunities were reduced overall there were key successes in the period:

- Continued Champions Board activity including daily video calls during lockdown period and the distribution of wellbeing bags.

- Summer Programme 2020 - daily activities of Yoga, Fishing, Football, Drama, Graffiti and photography for young people run by Youth Intensive Support Service with support from other agencies. 100 opportunities offered. 30 young people attended in total, with most young people attending a number of the groups. (Under 12s group run for graffiti and football)
- Creative consultation around a vision for the East Renfrewshire Children's Services Plan August 2020. Articulate Cultural Trust were commissioned to consult with young people in a creative way to explore their views on what is important to them to help create a vision for the East Renfrewshire Children's Services Plan. A Care Experienced Young Person from East Renfrewshire was paid as a creative consultant to support this. Consultation took place with 30/40 young people from Mini Champs, Champions Board, and young people attending the Education HUBs.
- Young people were involved in a variety of consultation and planning activities as well as being part of staff and panel member interviews.
- Three of our Care Experienced Young Persons have completed their Peer Mentor training with Move On (online). Three young people attended eight sessions.
- Health and Social Care Partnership Traineeships (four care experienced young people were successful in gaining posts and will work alongside the Champions Board).
- Two Care Day events (2020 and 2021) which reached 60 and 50 young people respectively.
- 15 young people attended in partnership with the Culture and Leisure Trust an Easter 2021 activity programme where they were given the opportunity to participate in Sport/Arts and Cultural activities.
- Craftivism Group run by Articulate Cultural Trust- group for under 12s and over 12s (six days, 10 young people attended). Showcase to Corporate Parents.

This is not an exhaustive list of the activity in 2020-2021. However it demonstrates some of the breadth and success of the continued focus on participation and sustained contact with our children and young people despite the pandemic.

### **Fostering, Adoption and Supported Care**

Intensive Services Adoption, Fostering and Supported Care Team have sought to continue to provide safe and stable placements to meet the needs of children and young people during the challenge of the pandemic. Our carers have been integral in continuing their support to our children and young people. They have provided consistency, stability and care throughout this year. We have worked creatively to provide direct visits and indirect support and supervision to carers and continued to review our carers and progress assessments through having an online Adoption, Fostering and Permanence Panel. Development work was postponed, including a planned advertising campaign to recruit carers for older children.

During the first four weeks of lockdown, East Renfrewshire experienced a 14% increase in the number of children requiring to be removed from their family homes. At this time internal resources were approaching maximum occupancy. Through consultation with the Care Inspectorate we were able to approach and recruit registered employees (either Scottish Social Services Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council or General Teaching Council for Scotland) to act as temporary foster carers until such times as alternative measures of care

could be provided for children. Without these measures, East Renfrewshire Children's Service may have had nowhere to place our children safely.

The Care Inspectorate subsequently published a supportive guidance note regarding the use of employees registered with the Scottish Social Services Council or General Teaching Council for Scotland as temporary foster carers.

### Fostering

- Three additional carer households were temporarily recruited along with one carer, increasing registration during this time. All carers were utilised in providing support to children from short term to short breaks care, offering necessary support and care to children at this time.
- Currently 14 registered foster carer households caring for 16 children / young people looked after or ceasing to be looked after in receipt of continuing care.
- Two children accessing short breaks care to provide support to them and their families. This support has been invaluable to families over the past year.
- Four registered Supported Carers, two of whom have approval along with fostering approval providing care for four young people.
- Within the reporting period East Renfrewshire have had eight children in foster placements with independent fostering agencies.

### Adoption

During 2020/21, the service has:

- Offered our post adoption support group to a membership of approximately 35 families.
- Through our indirect letterbox service we offer and provide support to both adoptive parents, birth family and birth parents in engaging in their letterbox exchange.
- Provided targeted intervention and letter box contact support to 11 adoptive families supporting 23 letter exchanges a year.
- We offer origins counselling to individuals and families through our service agreement with Scottish Adoption Support Services and they have provided support to three families.

### Supported Care

Our team has developed specific supported care support groups. To allow for carers to meet together and discuss topics and themes relevant to the role of supported carer. We also offer ongoing support to our supported carers through direct visits, virtual visits and supervision.

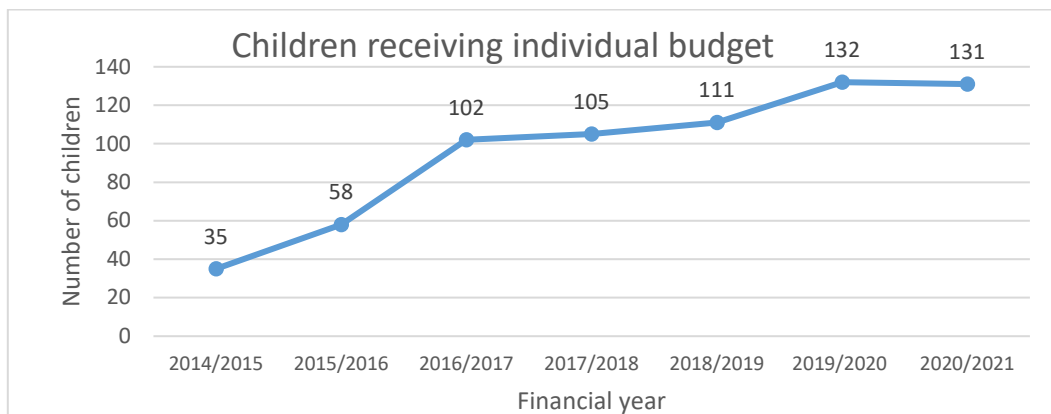
### **Registered Services Inspection**

Our three registered services, fostering, adoption and adult (supported care) placement were inspected in October 2019 and all services received Grade 5 (very good) for the areas inspected with a number of areas commended:

- The strengthened collaborative and relationship based approach by aligning registered services within our Intensive Services structure.
- The commitment from staff especially the partnership working across health, social work and education to ensure we are providing the best possible care to our children and young people.
- The way children, their families and foster households were empowered to contribute to decision making and feel listened to.

## Children with Disabilities

We have fully adopted the principles of Self-Directed Support in partnership with children, their families and other people who are important to them. We recognise that good support planning is reliant on relationship based practice, starting with the family recognising what matters to them, and we are embedding this way of working throughout children's services. Given that 38% of children known to social work teams have a disability, we have undertaken a review of our assessment and planning and have implemented Signs of Wellbeing, a strengths based approach, adapted from Signs of Safety.



The number of children in receipt of an individual budget has quadrupled since 2014 as shown in the chart above. In 2020/21, three quarters of children with disabilities allocated to social workers were in receipt of an individual budget. This will continue to be an area of significant growth and budgetary pressure. Expenditure has increased from just over £200,000 in 2014/15 to £471,558 for option 1 payments in 2020/21 which is consistent with the same period last year.

It is anticipated that this will continue to be an area of significant demand over the years, considering the migration of families who have children with disabilities into East Renfrewshire. Further analysis will be needed to consider the required financial investment moving forward.

This impact is noted at the transition stage with a continued increase in numbers of young people presented at Transition Resource Allocation Group. As a result of this increase in demand a multi-agency working group is developing Transitions Guidance to support practice and improve data. This will support good transitions and accurate projections for coming years including all transitions from children's to adult services.

### Inclusive Support Service.

The Inclusive Support Service (ISS) continues to comprise of three distinct services: holiday provision, out of school activity clubs and individualised support services. The service provides a range of targeted support for children and young people aged 5-18 years. All of the children and young people who access the service have either complex health or behavioural support needs, with a significant number having limited verbal communication.

East Renfrewshire Inclusive Support Team in consultation with social work refocused activity during Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic by working closely with partners in Education, Health and Adult Social Care Services to ensure support for our most vulnerable children and young people. In response to the unprecedented Covid-19 outbreak the team continued to support the 226 children, young people and their families through creative and innovative means. The team adapted service delivery as part of the multi-agency response to the changing and challenging demands placed upon the Health and Social Care Partnership. The team showed

their compassion and commitment to the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families through 308 personalised activity boxes, videos, calls, online chats, outdoor programmes and intensive supports at HUB provisions.

In response to a growing need for families the team organised and delivered a summer, October and December HUB provisions for 52 children and young people with complex support needs, who fell under the Key Worker and Critical Childcare category. The team also supported our colleagues within the adults with learning disabilities teams to provide provisions to young people transitioning from children's services. Further supporting the services ethos of providing the right support at the right time.

### **“At Our Heart” - East Renfrewshire’s Children’s and Young People’s Services Plan 2020-2023**

As in previous years and in accordance with the Children and Young People’s (Scotland) Act 2014, local and national partners who deliver services for East Renfrewshire’s children and families, came together to design and publish the new Children’s Services Plan for 2020-2023 titled “At Our Heart”. Based on a wide ranging assessment of local needs, agencies agreed a plan which has at its heart, the overarching aim of improving the wellbeing of local children, young people, and their families. Children’s planning has a very high profile in East Renfrewshire and all partners again demonstrated a genuine enthusiasm to engage with young people, parents and the communities they reside within. As such the assessment of needs within the plan includes what children and parents / carers told us about their experience of living in East Renfrewshire and the challenges they may encounter.

Furthermore the new **vision** for the 2020-2023 Children and Young People’s Plan was developed by children and families during a series of engagement events, agreed by partners during this year is the following:

*“East Renfrewshire’s children should grow up loved, respected and be given every opportunity to fulfil their potential.*

*We want them to be safe, equal and healthy, have someone to trust, have friends, but most of all HOPE”.*

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, the national lockdowns, and the ongoing restrictions, continue to affect all communities in East Renfrewshire, as they have elsewhere in Scotland and the UK. As the impact on children, young people, and families becomes more apparent, East Renfrewshire Council and partners will adapt our Children’s Services Plan accordingly to ensure emerging needs are identified and where possible addressed.

### **The Promise in East Renfrewshire**

Another important event also took place earlier in 2020 with the publication of the national Independent Care Review report “The Promise”. This long awaited report into the children’s care system in Scotland is regarded as the most significant in a generation and it is anticipated it will have a fundamental impact on the design and delivery of *all* children and family services now and over the next decade. As local authorities are expected to commence with implementing the findings of “The Promise” report, East Renfrewshire Council and partners have reflected the importance it will have over the life time of the new children’s services plan and beyond.

Recently our multi agency Corporate Parenting Group worked with the East Renfrewshire Champions Board - our care experienced young people’s participation group - to agree a set of new local priorities. These priorities are now included in this Children and Young People’s

Service Plan for 2020-2023, along with a suite of measures to track the progress we are making. Integral to these priorities are the findings of The Promise, as implementation of phase one of The Promise is from 2021-2024 and the East Renfrewshire Children and Young People's Services Plan timeline is 2020-2023, there will be opportunities to incorporate newly emerging learning and actions as they unfold. This will also enable the Health and Social Care Partnership to consider how these actions can best be achieved and the resources required.

### **Children's Rights**

Whilst we await the commencement of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill, East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Education Services have established a local Children's Rights Act Implementation Group to begin the process of ensuring we are compliant with the new legislation and the policy guidance that will subsequently be published. The group is building on the considerable work already undertaken to comply with part one of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 'Rights of Children' duties as well as the very long established activity in schools, social work, and other departments and settings.

As required under this legislation in December 2020 we published our first East Renfrewshire Council Children's Rights Report which was approved by Council and submitted to the Scottish Government. The report was the culmination of a series of audits of a wide range of services and some of this was undertaken with the involvement of children and young people. In Health and Social Care Partnership the focus for our audit activity has been in the areas of child protection, kinship care, health visiting, and children with complex needs, with the purpose of ensuring that procedures and processes are informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child articles and children and young people's rights are respected, protected, enabled and fulfilled. The East Renfrewshire Council Children's Rights Report includes a series of improvement actions that the new group has been tasked to take forward into 2021/2022.

The fulfilling of The Promise will be another step forward in enhancing the rights of children and young people who experience the care system, in particular a child's right to a family life, continuing relationships with siblings, and to grow up loved and safe, and protected from poverty and discrimination. We will be considering the changes that need to take place within the Health and Social Care Partnership and also in the wider local partnerships.

Currently we are awaiting the publication of accessible guidance, training and other materials from the Scottish Government as part of the new Act implementation programme that will assist us to be ready for commencement in October 2021.

## 2.2 Adult Social Work and Social Care

### Adults with Incapacity

The support and protection of the rights of adults who lack capacity to make informed decisions regarding their welfare and finances is a core responsibility of all social work practitioners within the East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. Practice to support these individuals is informed by the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 (AWIA) and section 13za of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 as amended by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. Social Work take the lead role in ensuring appropriate processes are in place that enable a human rights approach, supported decision making and appropriate application of the legislation including the ongoing supervision and monitoring of use of legislation and powers. New local procedures to inform practice and ensure consistency have recently been developed with a strengthened focus on:

- The importance of identifying if someone lacks capacity and ensuring their rights are protected including access to independent advocacy services.
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of social work and mental health officer staff in the application of the legislation.
- The development of a clear pathway from point of when incapacity has been identified with regard to section 13za reviews and AWIA Case Conferences.
- The development of documentation within Care First that ensure all decision making is evidenced based and that this information is captured and accessible.
- Ensuring that there is appropriate governance and leadership with oversight of the application of legislation at senior management level.

The procedures are currently in draft form with a plan to roll these out over the coming year alongside a training programme to all relevant Health and Social Care Partnership staff. The training will focus on the process and procedures, the enhancement of skills for those staff taking on new responsibilities and an overarching emphasis on ensuring that rights and strength based practice is enshrined in the delivery of all services going forward.

### Self-Directed Support

The Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2014 is a key piece of legislation and was enacted as part of the 10 year National Self-Directed Support Strategy. The purpose of this legislation was to drive transformation in terms of shifting the balance of power from services to individuals who use them and to provide greater choice, control and creativity to individuals and families in terms of meeting their agreed personal outcomes.

Between November 2020 and March 2021, East Renfrewshire Self-Directed Support (SDS) Forum and East Renfrewshire Carers Centre were commissioned by East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership to sense check local self-directed support implementation, policy, practice and guidance. They completed this by holding focus groups for people who use our services and their unpaid carers and by facilitating focus groups for frontline practitioners and managers.

The East Renfrewshire Self-Directed Support Forum and East Renfrewshire Carers Centre have worked in partnership with East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership to sense check local self-directed support implementation, policy, practice and guidance. The review highlighted many areas of good practice alongside areas where our processes /

systems could be improved to improve practice and the user experience. Common themes were evident as well as responsive positive solutions. Some gaps in the implementation of self-directed support still exist locally although there is a strong value base and willingness to streamline systems to work from.

Person centred and relationship practice is the foundation to social work practice and self-directed support. There are clear opportunities to build on our strengths locally and drive forward improvements in processes and practice.

In the spirit of collaboration and partnership working, a Self-Directed Support steering group has been established to oversee our implementation programme locally. The group will be co-chaired by a Head of Service and Self-Directed Support Forum manager and the membership will include people with lived experience of using self-directed support, practitioners, managers and finance officers.

The group will collaborate to agree and oversee a local implementation plan highlighting key priorities, achievements and risk to the Directorate Management Team, the Chief Social Work Officer, the Performance and Audit Committee and Integration Joint Board as required.

Local Uptake of the four Self Directed Support options is reviewed regularly and detailed below:

<b>2020-2021 Self-Directed Support care packages</b>	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>	<b>Total SDS</b>
<b>Children &amp; Families Total</b>	<b>£476,084</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£739,709</b>	<b>£1,215,793</b>
Community Addictions	£0	£0	£117,534	£117,534
Carers	£2,163	£0	£0	£2,163
LD	£1,410,813	£232,200	£10,678,297	£12,321,309
MH	£39,284	£95,869	£1,138,990	£1,274,143
OP	£1,080,261	£1,333,940	£1,664,109	£4,078,310
PD	£1,133,895	£132,580	£1,088,298	£2,354,773
<b>Total Adult Expenditure</b>	<b>£3,666,416</b>	<b>£1,794,589</b>	<b>£14,687,227</b>	<b>£20,148,232</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£4,142,500</b>	<b>£1,794,589</b>	<b>£15,426,936</b>	<b>£21,364,025</b>
<b>% split Children &amp; Families</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>61%</b>	
<b>% split Adults</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>73%</b>	
<b>% split Total</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>72%</b>	

### **Supporting Unpaid Carers - Carers (Scotland) Act 2016**

Over the past challenging year for carers, East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership Carers Lead has worked closely with East Renfrewshire Carers' Centre (ERCC) who contacted all carers registered with them to identify people most at risk during lockdown to offer support and alert services where necessary. Over the past year 18 carers rights awareness sessions have been delivered to Health and Social Care Partnership teams and partners. Since April 2020 there has been a 21% increase in carers identified by East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership staff, much has overtaken self-referral as the main source of referral to the Carers Centre. The Centre has in turn seen a 20% increase in referrals. The Centre currently has 1,600 carers registered, with 214 being young carers. Throughout the past year East Renfrewshire Carers Centre have offered carers online advice, information, support, including social support and to have their own support plan. Ninety-two Adult Carer Support Plans (ACSPs) have been completed since April 2020 an increase of 1% on the previous year. Schools being closed over such a long period has made it difficult to identify Young Carers this year. A 200% rise in new Young Carers identified (96) the previous



year fell to 26 this year with seven Young Carer Statements completed compared to 35 the previous year.

Examples of creative breaks provided for carers by East Renfrewshire Carers' Centre during the pandemic have been: a tandem bike for a carer and the person they care for; camping equipment; laptops and tablets to allow families to stay in touch; garden furniture to support very short breaks from the caring role. The Carers Collective was established in October 2020 and carers are engaged and involved in shaping local support and services. Examples are with support for autistic young people, their parents and carers and Dementia Day Support Services. Processes and systems are currently being streamlined to ensure each carer identified is being offered the right support at the right time. Equal Partners in Care, an E-learning resource for East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership staff was introduced in 2020 and in January 2021 East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership subscribed to an online resource for carers that offers a range of resources to help manage care and caring, 73 people have since downloaded this resource.

We have strengthened our partnership approach to collaboration with unpaid carers in the design and review of local services and the recruitment of staff and managers. A number of local carers helped to design and deliver a development session for our Integration Joint Board to explore the impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on local carers and to provide re-assurance about the creative support options available locally.

### **Assessment and Review Activity**

Our improvement journey has continued to make significant progress throughout 2020/21, under the most challenging of circumstances.

Whilst Coronavirus (Covid-19) has affected all social work services, our front door, locality and specialist teams have demonstrated great resilience and quickly adapted our delivery models in line with Scottish Government guidance. Staff have been dynamic, flexible and proactive in their response, utilising technology and a variety of communication techniques to ensure that the most vulnerable in our communities have been protected. The Connecting Scotland programme was a great resource for staff to provide digital devices, data, training and support to get online to those who need it most.

The volume and complexity of referrals coming into the service has changed significantly, and led to the decision to complete a comprehensive review of the front door of the service starting in summer 2021. An external professional adviser will support our management team to analyse our policy and procedure, governance, resources and activity and respond with recommendations to support our continuous improvement and recovery processes into next year.

Our pandemic response, coupled with growing demand levels at the front door has led to a growing backlog of overdue community care reviews. In response, plans are in place to utilise the successes and lessons learned from the care home review team, to replicate this model, and broaden the scope to undertake all adults receiving care with outstanding, and pending reviews.

### **In-house Care at Home Service**

The East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership Care at Home Service has been at the forefront of the delivery of good quality, person centred care during the pandemic. The social care workforce within this service have continued to demonstrate compassion and commitment providing care to allow people to be cared for in their own homes.

The unannounced inspection in February 2019 by the Care Inspectorate resulted in the requirement to undertake a significant programme of improvement across in house service provision. These improvements were across nine key areas, including care planning and review of support packages, staff supervision, training and management of medication.

The service inspection in 2020 was delayed due to the pandemic with the inspection undertaken in July 2021 and the inspection reporting the service had met all requirements. The revised grading for the service is now good across all inspection themes that were considered during the inspection process. The inspectors noted the high level of service user satisfaction and the sustained and continued improvements across the course of a pandemic. The additional inspection theme - How good is our care and support during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic - was also graded as good.

The redesign of the service will recommence as part of our recovery plan and will take cognisance of the growing demands on service provision due to the increasing complexity of people being supported as a result of the pandemic. It will also focus on creative and sustainable approaches to recruitment to ensure that we are able to provide support in the right way and the right time. Our focus will be on supporting people to maximise their independence through strengthening our reablement approach.

### **Bonnyton Care Home**

In January 2020 the residents and staff at Bonnyton House in Busby moved to a care home in Crossmyloof for what was meant to be a 12 week renovation.

Our colleagues in Bonnyton House experienced extremely challenging circumstances and long lockdown periods, but they responded with such resilience, flexibility and determination. They lost much-loved residents, nursed others back to health, helped residents through periods of isolation and supported families who lost their loved one or couldn't visit for months. Many of our Bonnyton colleagues also became unwell themselves. To say it was difficult would be an understatement and we are very grateful to every single member of staff.

While residents continued to be cared for at Crossmyloof, as soon as restrictions allowed the team continued to push the renovations forward. The work was complete in October 2020 and after 10 long months, returning to Busby was a huge milestone.

The team worked closely with families during the move back and compiled a short video to show residents and families to support the transition during a time when families could not readily visit their loved ones. The Care Inspectorate noted this as a model of good practice.

The care home underwent a huge refurbishment. All common lounge areas and dining areas were transformed. The bedrooms were fitted with new showers and wet room areas as well as furnishings. The courtyard was paved, making it look much larger and it is now also easier for residents to get about. Residents are enjoying looking after the planters which were installed into the courtyard which are now filled with beautiful flowers, herbs and even some vegetables.

The exterior of the building was painted and the shrubbery areas are also blooming thanks to our colleagues in the council's Neighbourhood Services department.

A Phase two of renovations is planned for next year which will include other communal areas as well as a larger and fit for purpose staff area.

## Care Home Assurance Visits and Care Plan Reviews

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has had a significant impact on health and social care with arguably the most significant impact on our care homes, the residents, their families and care home staff.

In February 2021, The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport requested via Chief Social Work Officers that assurance visits to all care homes were undertaken to provide assurances regarding the quality of care. There was also a request to complete individual reviews for all residents who did not have a recent review completed. This recent assurance activity builds on a the first round of assurance visits within care the home population in response to the Scottish Government update to the National Clinical and Practice Guidance for adult care homes in Scotland during the Pandemic issued in May 2020. The Cabinet Secretary set out additional requirements for enhanced professional clinical and care oversight of Care Homes during Coronavirus (Covid-19) in a letter to NHS Boards outlining immediate actions required to progress this and proposed the need for a longer term supporting structure.

During 2020, East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership has led two Large Scale Investigations both of which were intelligence led. As a result of these investigations one care home closed resulting in 55 residents transitioning to their new care homes between March and April 2021. Whilst the timing and scale of this work for a small Health and Social Care Partnership proved a challenge, the learning and collaborative approach from our work very much informed our approach to both care home support and assurance visits and individual care reviews.

We made a decision early on that we wanted to complete these visits through a joint health and social work lens with a real focus on human rights. The visits were completed by Chief Social Work Officer, Chief Nurse, Head of Service and Senior Nurse. The rationale behind this was partly due to capacity issues across our services and also that we were keen to model a compassionate and trauma informed approach that reinforced the message to care homes that their work was valued and appreciated by our most senior leaders.

### Key Themes

- Overall the quality of care within care homes was very good. We saw many examples of person centred care, specific care plans to support residents during lockdown and when care homes opened to visiting.
- We were humbled and inspired by the care home staff / managers and were shown many examples of where they had provided care and end of life care in the most difficult and unprecedented circumstances. We were very reassured to hear confirmation that residents died well and appropriate just in case medications were in place for residents. Care home managers and staff have undoubtedly experienced significant levels of grief and trauma and despite this have continued to support each other and care for residents. We heard stories of loved ones who were unable to be with their dying relative at the start of the pandemic and who watched from the window and care home staff holding phones to residents' ears whilst their loved ones spoke with them.
- Whilst the experience of those managers and staff who did not experienced a Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak within the home and / or resident deaths due to Coronavirus, the ongoing fear and focus required to protect the residents from Coronavirus over a prolonged period of time has been challenging. In one of the homes visited 59 staff members contracted Coronavirus (Covid-19) out of 65. Despite this the uninfected care staff ran the home until colleagues returned when no longer infectious in many cases unwell too. Their prime consideration was the residents. The successful

roll out of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) vaccination programme for residents and staff however has had a very positive impact on all notwithstanding the need for ongoing vigilance in relation to existing IPC measures.

- We noted resilience amongst residents however noted that reduced physical activity (due to periods of isolation), lack of visits from families and limited indoor / outdoor activities has most definitely impacted on the health, cognitive ability and mobility of the resident population. Locally this appears to correlate with a higher number of falls and we are keen to examine this data with our colleagues in Public Health. There is evidence of the significant emotional / mental impact that deaths of their friends have had on residents. There are many examples that this has triggered physical, emotional and cognitive deterioration.
- We found many areas of good practice around resident visiting, creative indoor activities and wellbeing support for staff. We also provided a sensitive critical friend approach highlighting areas where improvements could be made. The visits also allowed sharing of good practice between homes and helpful solutions to key issues shared. It also requires to be highlighted that our visits and the subsequent review activity has reduced the capacity for the homes to absorb family and friends visiting and this in our view should have been factored into the assurance expectations.
- Communication and networks between the care home managers has developed from pre Coronavirus (Covid-19) position - we heard examples where care home managers reached out to support one another and we anticipate that the now fortnightly care home manager forum will support us to build on this.
- Whilst there was some variability in the level of support from and access to GPs with some very positive reports further work is required to strengthen the local arrangements for GP support to care home residents.
- There was a concern regarding the indefinite use of DNACPR (do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation) for care home residents where there has been little / no consultation with families / guardians. This is a human rights issue and needs to be reviewed. This emotional impact of this was significant and experienced by resident's families and care home staff.
- Despite collaborative planning and reassurance before visits, Care Homes reported staff were anxious about the further level of assurance being required after such a difficult year.
- We found tensions between the guidance around infection prevention and control and resident's human rights.
- Care home staff were observed as demonstrating very good adherence to the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements specific to task and any issues in relation to Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) which required attention were addressed during visit and / or shared with the care home manager as part of ongoing improvement activity.
- Staff put their lives on hold. Their focus and priority was the residents and the selflessness that they demonstrated overwhelmed all of us who visited. We were given many examples of staff moving into the home to protect family members who were shielding and / or where there was workforce resilience issues due to impact. There were only a few homes where the use of agency staff was higher and in most cases they kept this to the same staff by block booking. Moving out of restrictions it was great to

hear and meet some of the agency staff who have been given substantive contracts with the homes.

- Leadership has already been outlined within the report as being visible at all levels. The role of the care home manager however needs to be commended as they were often having to balance the health and emotional risk; to staff, residents whilst being that supportive ear for very anxious carers and combing this with the huge expectations of their external partners, commissioners, public health, and scrutiny body. In retrospect this at times must have been impossible task to deliver on considering the continual changing priorities and the unknowns about the transmission of the virus. There is no doubt this at times the system demands reduced their capacity to meet the very high and public expectations and it created additional stressors. For recovery this should be factored into a more proportionate response as nationally we move out of Coronavirus (Covid-19) and there should be more emphasis on compassionately supporting the sector in a more trauma informed way that seeks to restore and renew.

In March we were able to offer additional resources, through Local Mobilisation Plans, to undertake Care Home Assurance Visits and Care Plan Reviews for all East Renfrewshire residents living in a care home.

### **Telecare Services**

The in-house telecare service has circa 3000 service users and has performed well over the past 12 months. The service recently had its annual audit by the Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Services Association audit. The initial feedback was positive and the final report is awaited. A key work stream over the coming months will be in relation to supporting the progress and implementation of the changes required as part of the analogue to digital transformation.

The service was delighted to secure funding support from East Renfrewshire Council to lead the development of the analogue to digital programme. In addition, funding has been secured from the Scottish Government Technology Enabled Care Pathfinder Programme to ensure that individuals and families are supported to consider technology as part of our early intervention and prevention approach. A Technology Enabled Care Peer Mentor will be recruited to support our workforce to 'think digital' as part of the self-management supports for adults.

**2.3 Mental Health**

Mental Health Officers (MHOs) are responsible for carrying out specific duties on behalf of the local authority detailed within the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015 and Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.

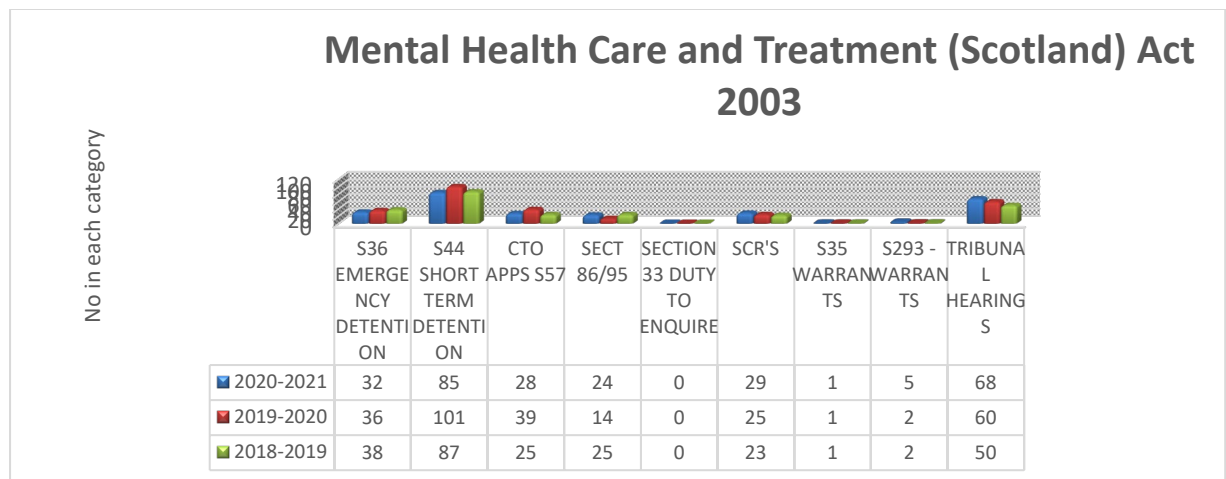
The East Renfrewshire Mental Health Officer service sits within the mental health social work team based in the Barrhead Health and Care Centre. Staff provide the dual role of Mental Health Officer and Care Manager to individuals subject to statutory measures under the Mental Health and Adults with incapacity legislation.

Mental Health Officers work closely with other agencies and professional to improve the quality of experience of people subject to statutory measure and ensure their rights are protected. These include:

- Community health and social work teams including those supporting children and young people experiencing poor mental health.
- Voluntary Sector Partners.
- Independent Advocacy Services.
- The Carers Centre.

Like all staff the Mental Health Officers required to adapt to the changing environment brought on by the pandemic and the associated restrictions in early 2020. Staff were able to work in an agile manner while continuing to provide a responsive service. The introduction of emergency legislation from the Scottish Government created some tensions with regard to ensuring individuals’ rights were protected. Therefore the virtual monthly Mental Health Officers Forums were an essential part of keeping staff up to date with relevant changes to practice and legislation and local practice had individuals’ rights at the heart.

The Mental Health Officers activity generated by the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 over the last 12 months within East Renfrewshire is not reflective of the national picture. The graph below highlights that statutory work relating to Emergency Detention Certificates, Short Term Detention Certificates, and Compulsory Treatment Order applications all reduced in comparison to the previous 12 months. Areas of work which reflected a slight increase over this period were an increase in the completion of Social Circumstances Reports, section 293 warrants and attendance at Mental Health Tribunals, most likely as a result of increased capacity due to these being held virtually.

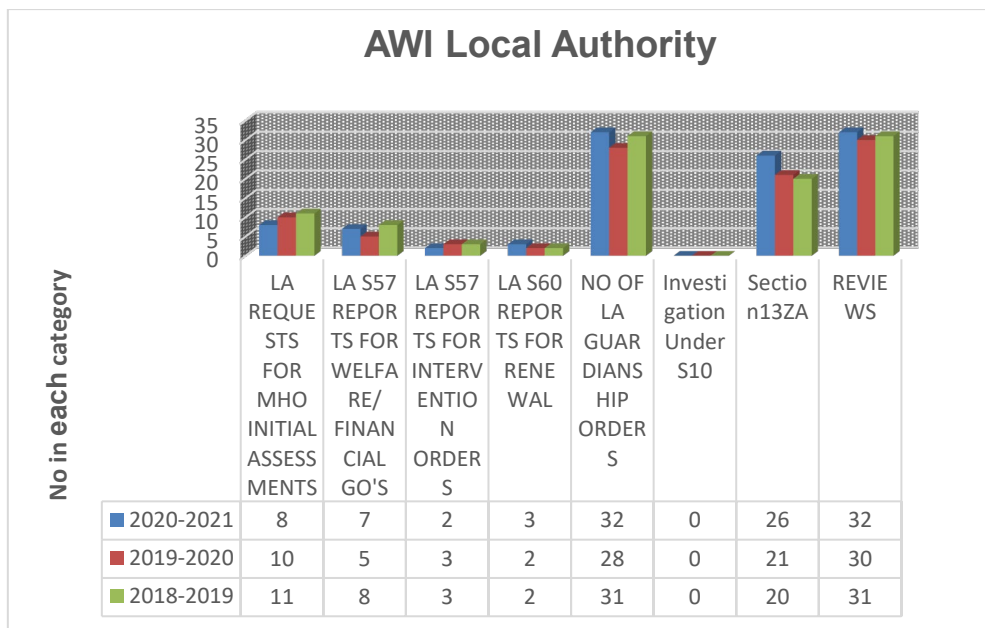


Despite the pandemic figures show that activity remained consistent across the year with a slight spike in Emergency Detentions and Short Term Detentions between October and November.

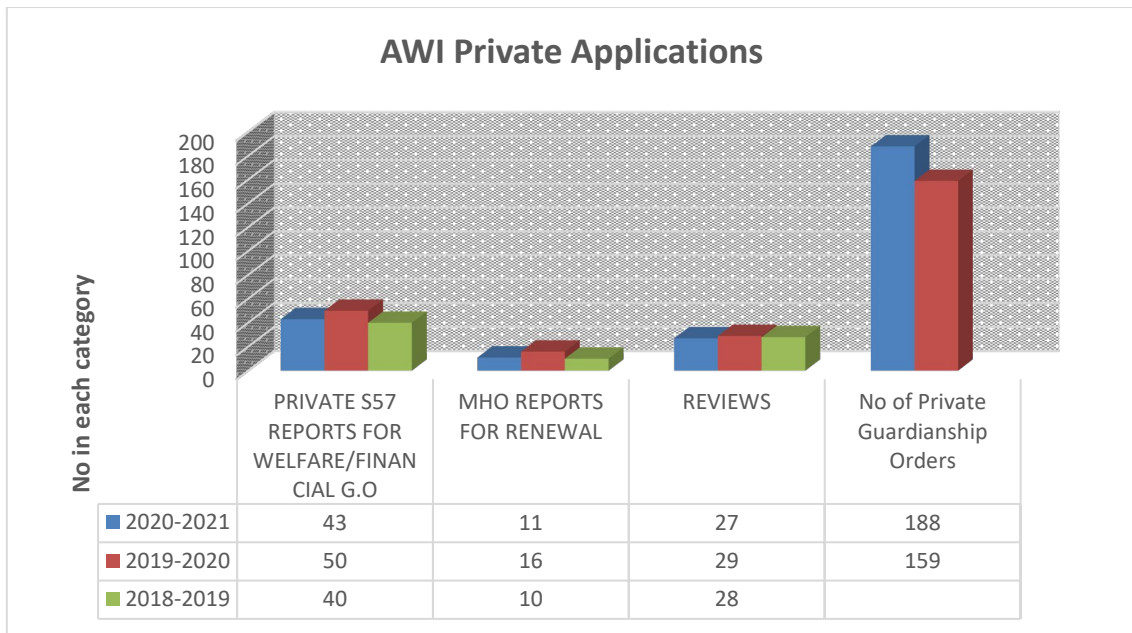
The Adults with Incapacity legislation section 57(2) places a duty on the Local Authority to make an application for Welfare and / or financial Guardianship when specific criteria are met. The Chief Social Work Officer has overall responsibility for the governance and management of local authority Welfare Guardianship Orders while the role of Designated Welfare Guardian is currently delegated to Mental Health Officers. The graph below indicates

- Individuals currently subject to Local Authority Guardianship has increased since the previous year.
- An increase in 13za activity requiring the attendance of a Mental Health Officers to provide advice and guidance regarding the application of the criteria and facilitating a human rights approach.
- A slight increase in the renewal of Local Authority Guardianship Orders. This is despite the 'stop the clock' on the necessity to renew Guardianship orders enacted by the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 for a period of 176 calendar days from 7<sup>th</sup> April to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

Referral for mentally disordered offenders remains low with only four individuals subject to mental health court disposals.



The demand for Mental Health Officer reports to accompany private applications for Welfare and Financial Guardianship continues to increase. The supervision of these orders remains a challenge due to the ever increasing amount of guardians to be supervised which currently sits at 188 (an increase of 29 from last year). Many of these are joint guardians which can bring with it additional complexities. There has been an increase in the number of complex cases where more intensive supervision of the guardian(s) is required. New procedures with regard to the Adults with Incapacity legislation are currently in draft form and it is hoped this will provide a framework for practice moving forward.



The recruitment and retention of Mental Health Officers has presented challenges over the last 12 months. Recent national figures suggest a shortfall of 55 Mental Health Officers across Scotland. With consideration of the age demographic of Mental Health Officers nationally and also the impact of the pandemic we can predict that there will be challenges for the service in being able to continue to meet its statutory duties. Following on from the review of Mental Health services at the end of 2019 a consultation exercise has been undertaken to look at the structure of the service. This along with the recent difficulties in recruitment has led to consideration of including social workers within the service which would allow the Mental Health Officers to focus purely on statutory duties with the exception being those with more complex needs. Moving forward our focus will be the development of the current workforce. *Mental Health Officers Capacity Building (Training) Grant Scheme: (2020-21)* funding has enabled the partnership to put forward two candidates for the Post Qualifying Mental Health Officer award this year and facilitate extra capacity for Practice Assessors.



## 2.4 Criminal Justice

As with all areas of our lives, the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has had a significant impact on the Criminal Justice System and associated Justice Service delivery during 2020/21. This is reflected in the table below which illustrates the number of Statutory Orders and requests for Criminal Justice Social Work Reports received by East Renfrewshire during that year.

	Number 2020-21	Number 2019-20	Change (n)	Change %
<b>Criminal Justice Social Work Reports</b>	123	226	-103	-45%
<b>Community Payback Orders</b>	31	105	-74	-70%
<b>Community Service Orders</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Through-care (released prisoners)</b>	5	11	-6	-55%
<b>Drug Treatment and Testing Order</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Fiscal Work Order</b>	0	2	-2	-200%
<b>Diversion</b>	13	10	+3	+30%

### Community Payback Orders (CPO)

During Lockdown restrictions in 2020/21, there was a limited staff presence in offices with only essential services entering council buildings. Social workers continued to supervise people by phone whilst maintaining office contact with those offenders who were deemed as vulnerable or assessed as posing the highest risk of harm.

Unpaid Work (UPW) was suspended in March 2020. This led to a significant backlog in Unpaid Work hours. In line with other areas, we used a blended approach in order to reduce the backlog of hours. We delivered working at home kits, utilised a learning pack that people could complete with the support of a social worker and ensured other activity hours were claimed appropriately.

Legislation was introduced in March 2021 to reduce the number of hours originally imposed on Community Payback Orders (CPOs) by 35%. This excluded Community Payback Orders imposed for domestic abuse, sexual offending or stalking. This legislation reduced the outstanding backlog of hours by 2329 hours.

The delivery of the nationally accredited sex offender group work treatment programme Moving Forward Making Changes (MFMC), was suspended during increased lock down restrictions. Three people, however, successfully completed the programme which was delivered on a one to one basis by practitioners and a treatment manager within the justice team.

### Key Successes

Strong partnership working was evident in planning support for people who were being released early from prison in May 2020. Throughout the Coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions, we ensured that people being released from custody, including those not subject to statutory supervision, were supported and that housing had been identified for them. Service users released from custody during lockdown necessitated close collaborative working with Housing, Health, Addictions and Police Scotland to ensure needs were met and risks were managed during a particularly challenging time.

During the year we enhanced our Unpaid Work Service by securing workshop premises. We also recruited a full time supervisor and new sessional staff. We have used the period when the service was suspended to ensure the premises were upgraded and equipped with

appropriate tools and machinery. This will enable people subject to Unpaid Work to develop new skills and allow us to address the backlog of unpaid work hours once restrictions ease.

We commissioned the theatre group Street Cones to deliver an online 12 week Road to Change Programme. The 10 service users who attended the interactive lived experience workshops, were credited with other activity hours for participation in this programme which ended with an online performance.

In February 2021, an audit undertaken by the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Unit, evidenced that robust risk management arrangements were in place for those offenders who pose a high risk of harm.

Qualified social workers in the team, continued to access appropriate risk assessment training which was delivered on Microsoft Teams. This training included: Structured Assessment of Protective Factors (SAPROF), Stable and Acute 2007 (SA07) refresher training and The Spousal Abuse Risk Assessment version 3 (SARA V3).

The Justice Team continued to ensure 100% attendance at scheduled Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) to complement the work undertaken by the Service

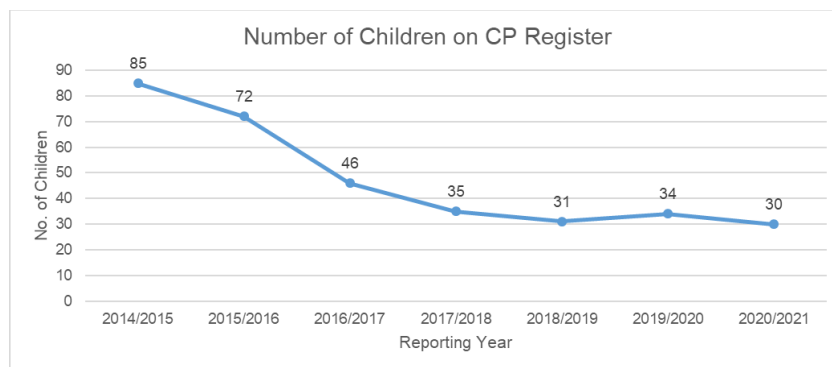
## 2.5 Public Protection

We continue to carry out and enhance our public protection duties safeguarding children and adults across East Renfrewshire.

### Child Protection, Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

The number of children on East Renfrewshire’s Child Protection Register was 30 in 2020/21. This is a decrease of four on the previous year. Although we had experienced variations in previous years higher than the national average, our registration rate appears to be stabilising at around 30 to 35 children each year. In addition to robust management and audit activity, we continue to benchmark against comparator authorities to ensure that the rate of registration activity is proportionate and necessary.

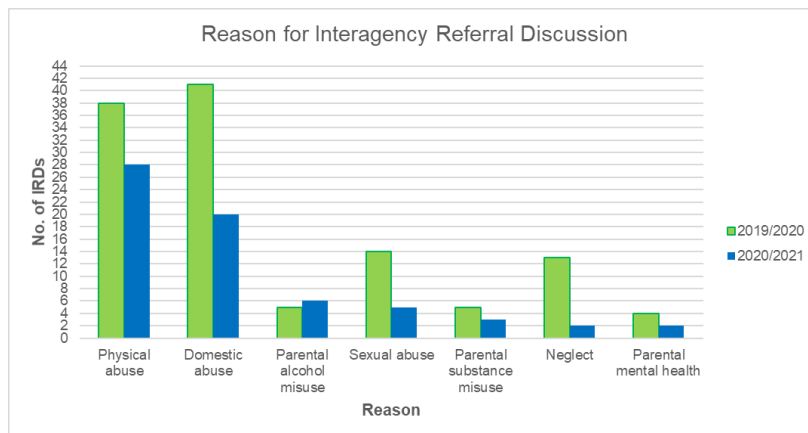
### Child Protection Registrations



### Interagency Referral Discussions

During the period April 2020 – March 2021, we have undertaken 100 Interagency Referral Discussions (between social work, police, health and where appropriate education services) in respect of 148 children.

The most common reasons for initiating an Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) during 2020/21 are shown in the chart below. The highest reason for an Interagency Referral Discussion in the reporting period was physical abuse. There has been a significant decrease in Interagency Referral Discussions in all reasons apart from parental alcohol misuse which increased slightly.

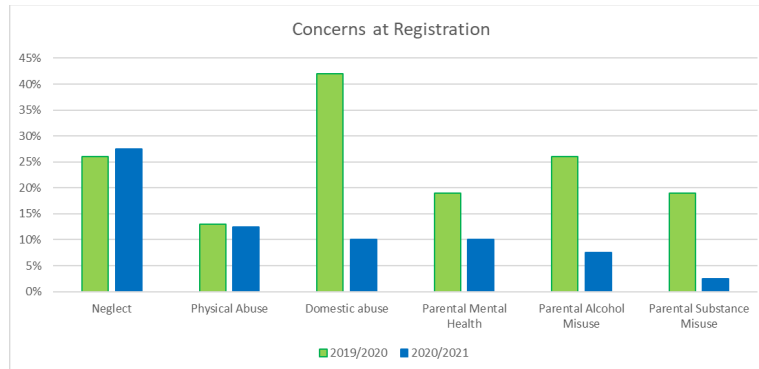


Of the 148 children and young people subject to Interagency Referral Discussions, half were subject to a child protection investigation. 38% went on to have an initial or pre-birth child

protection case conference. Of the 38% of children and young people who were subject to an initial / pre-birth child protection case conference, 75% were registered. This is a significant increase on the previous year of 38%. This equates to approximately 14% of all the children and young people who were subject to an Initial Referral Discussion, which again is a significant increase of 75% from 2019/2020.

### Concerns Identified at Registration

The proportion of children who were registered for neglect increased slightly by 2%. There was a significant decrease in all other concerns apart from physical abuse which was only marginally less than 2019/2020.



### Quality Assurance Activity

#### Interagency Referral Discussion Audits

A quarterly programme of Interagency Referral Discussion audit is now an established part of our continuous improvement programme for Child Protection, allowing us to maintain an overview of the initial decision making in child protection processes. We have completed our quarterly audits for the reporting period.

The findings of the audits are discussed by the Child Protection Committee Continuous Improvement Subgroup and presented to the Child Protection Committee. The feedback is shared with frontline Team Managers to support development of practice. Any appropriate areas for improvement will continue to be taken forward as part of the new Scottish Interview Model for joint investigative interviews.

The following strengths were identified from the 2020/2021 audit:

- Almost all (97%) Interagency Referral Discussions reflected actual or potential risk to the child/young person.
- Almost all (93%) Interagency Referral Discussions considered the historical information relevant to the concern being discussed.
- Most (83%) Interagency Referral Discussions were able to reach a clear conclusion of risk.
- Almost all (94%) ensured the child / young person's safety throughout the process.
- The Interagency Referral Discussions audited achieved an average rating of 'Very Good' in terms of overall quality.

## **The North Strathclyde Child Interview Team - Pilot**

The North Strathclyde Pilot, consisting of four Local Authorities and two Police Divisions went live on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020. The pilot continues to develop and fulfil the aim to ensure that all interviews take place in a safe, child friendly, age appropriate way that gives consideration to any developmental or additional needs. Moreover, that all children and their families will receive the practical and emotional support they require to recover.

The four local authorities, two police divisions and Children 1st continue to work collaboratively through monthly operational and strategic group meetings involving partner agencies from Health, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to ensure early escalation of process and practice challenges so that learning drives required changes throughout the pilot.

Support for staff in the child interview team to address vicarious trauma as part of our resilience arrangements is progressing via a Forensic Psychologist whereby face to face group supervision as well as one to one sessions will be built into the operational diary at a frequency of six weekly, with each staff member being invited for further sessions at their own request.

In the reporting period, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, the team have received 273 referrals and completed 218 interviews. Quarter 1 data recorded an overall disclosure rate of 79.2% and Quarter 2, 73%. Over a period of eight months, five months recorded a disclosure rate over 80%. This provides evidence that children and young people feel safe to speak and the interviewers themselves believe the extensive training has informed best practice and focus on planning which anecdotally was too often an oversight. March brought about the highest number of referrals to the team since going live in August 2020. Over 30 primary concerns were recorded as sexual abuse or assault and due to the demands placed upon the interviewers, our learning over this month has highlighted the need for increase resource and resilience for the team due to volume and complexity.

### Breakdown of Completed Interviews:

Over this reporting period, East Renfrewshire made 28 referrals to the child interview team, where 22 progressed to a joint investigative interview. A disclosure rate of 57% was recorded against these interviews with a crime report raised for all 16 of these disclosures. Suitable venues are often a challenge for the team however East Renfrewshire have been able to provide accommodation at the Children's Hearing room in Barrhead Health and Care Centre and Children1st have given access to their premise in Giffnock. A total of 13 interviews were carried out between these two venues for East Renfrewshire children and young people.

The Children1st participation project encompasses a rights-based approach with a right to be heard at the heart of the work. In order to maximise opportunities for gathering feedback a range of tools have been developed to seek views in an ethical, trauma-informed and sensitive way. Continued development in respect of innovative ways to advise families of the opportunity to provide feedback in order that we can impact positive change in respect of the vision that North Strathclyde pilot have in respect of the healing house for children. The provision of support is the main reason for referral to Children1st, which will always be responded to as priority.

Feedback received from the child or young person and their family's perspective will offer valuable insights and from early indications, the interview is only one part of the process for families. It is therefore imperative that all involved partners continue to build upon the commitment to improve the before, during and after interview for families to ensure a trauma-informed model of practice throughout any investigation whether that be criminal proceedings or child protection.

The child interview team continue to be highly motivated and remain eager to contribute to the learning and development to achieve system change for children and young people.

Children 1st alongside East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and partner agencies continue to build upon the vision of a child's house for healing, which will be delivered in a building which is child friendly and brings together child protection and justice system to one place. Children and young people will also access medical intervention if required. The child / young person will immediately be able to get support to recover. All court appearances will be carried out at the house by video link. This will be the first model of its kind in the UK and it is hoped that by using research and evaluation the house will be scaled across the whole country.

#### North Strathclyde Child Interview Team Audit Work

Development work continues under the new Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM), and audit work to date has included:

- Peer evaluations undertaken on a quarterly basis involving four members of the team on each one.
- Monthly self-evaluation undertaken by each member of the team. On a quarterly basis, a detailed evaluation is undertaken by a Detective Sergeant and Social Work Team Manager and feedback provided to the interviewer. To date, this has been carried out by the National Joint Investigative Interview Team and will now transfer to North Strathclyde pilot after completion of training and shadowing opportunity.
- Two multi-agency audits have been completed and have included representation from: Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), Police Scotland, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Social Work, National Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) Team, Joint Investigative Interviewing Coordinator and a member from the child interview team.
- Scottish Children's Reporter Administration have evaluated three joint investigative interviews undertaken by the pilot team.

Audit work, along with the extensive level of data capture is providing us with evidence that the new model is offering the child / young person an environment and process that they feel safe to disclose. Furthermore, evidence that the planning taking place reflects the complexities of the allegations referred to the team. The audit work and data capture have identified:

- Children / young people appearing comfortable in their environment and having their needs met by interviewers who utilised breaks, comfort / fidget aids, and regularly checking in on their wellbeing throughout interview.
- Data shows high adherence to the key planning tools, in North Strathclyde 100% of interviews had all four planning tools completed.
- Evidence from audit work that interviewers are applying the Scottish National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) protocol and the rapport and episodic memory training phases are completed to a high standard.
- Recent evaluations by Scottish Children's Reporter Administration have highlighted that interviewers should ensure they take opportunities to clarify language, phrases or concepts expressed by the child / young person during interview that may be open to

interpretation. A thorough exploration of these types of occurrences during the interview itself is likely to reduce the requirement for these to be tested out in cross-examination.

### **Our biggest challenge – Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse continues to be one of the most common reasons for referral to children's social work services. Over the course of 2020/21 East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership received 517 police concern reports relating to 445 children which is a 16% increase on the same period last year.

In the reporting period 2020/21 Women's Aid supported 805 women and children across the three core services (Refuge, Outreach and Child and Young People support) including helpline and drop in enquiries. This is a decrease of 17% compared to the previous year. Reports from survivors and specialist services during Coronavirus (Covid-19) has shown that lock down restrictions prevented women from seeking support especially where perpetrators remained in the family home.

In the reporting period 2020/21 East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership received 1047 referrals of which 351 recorded domestic abuse as the primary concern (this was the most common primary concern and makes up 33% of the total referrals).

Domestic abuse features as one of the most common concerns within Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD) held in East Renfrewshire. During the reporting period 2020/21 of the 100 Interagency Referral Discussions held (involving 148 children) 31% of these listed domestic abuse as a significant factor. Compared to the previous year this is a 9% decrease in Interagency Referral Discussions and 18% decrease in the number of children where domestic abuse was listed as a significant factor. There was no change to the overall proportion of Interagency Referral Discussions with domestic abuse as a significant factor which remains at 31%.

There were 34 adults referred to East Renfrewshire Adult Support and Protection team where Domestic Abuse was highlighted as a concern during the reporting period.

### **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in East Renfrewshire**

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences are recognised nationally as best practice for addressing cases of domestic abuse that are categorised as high risk. In East Renfrewshire Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences was first introduced in March 2019. Over the course of the last year Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences in East Renfrewshire continued each month, switching to an online platform due to Coronavirus (Covid-19). This has worked very well and we have had 100% attendance from the range of agencies that attend.

In this reporting year 120 high risk victims and 172 children were discussed at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences. This is an increase of 40% and 28% respectively in cases discussed compared to the previous year.

Of these figures:

- Of the 120 victims discussed, the age range was 17 – 91 years old
- 58% of victims recorded a disability
- 9% of victims were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities
- <1% of victims identified from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) community
- 29% of children referred were under the age of 5 years (including Pre-Birth)

- 44% of children referred were aged between 5-12 years
- 1% of victims were between 17-18 years
- 5% of victims were male (an increase of five men compared to the previous year).

During the reporting period 2020/21 Police Scotland remained the main referrer to East Renfrewshire Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, followed by children and families social work, Women's Aid and then adult social work.

A total of 592 actions have been agreed via Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference in this reporting period (compared to 469 the previous year). It is important to note that in the reporting period 2020/21, 33 victims did not have school aged children compared to 21 survivors the previous year. This is an increase of 57%. Victims without school aged children were not previously visible in the domestic abuse pathway. The increase demonstrates increased awareness, identification, risk assessment and improved pathway response for domestic abuse across both adult and children's services.

Safe Lives carried out an independent observation of the East Renfrewshire Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference in May 2021. The observation report and findings were very positive highlighting a range of strengths in best practice, procedure and strategic oversight. This reflects the commitment by all agencies to share information to keep victims of domestic abuse and their children safe and improve outcomes.

### **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference and Risk Assessment Training**

Domestic Abuse Awareness and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference briefings have also moved online due to Coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions. These picked up again in September 2020 and have run each month; 127 staff have attended the training from September 2020 – March 2021. The sessions continue to be oversubscribed such is the demand from across the Health and Social Care Partnership including delegates from the following: Children and Families, Criminal Justice and Adult Social Work, Health Visiting, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Adult Mental Health, Addictions, Housing, Education, Care at Home organisers / reviewers, Police, Fire and Rescue, Women's Aid and Human Resources.

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference and Risk Assessment Training Course has evaluated extremely well and high demand for the course has resulted in a waiting list.

In addition to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference and Risk Assessment Training a previous review highlighted the need for training opportunities for Home Care and Telecare Staff. This training takes place monthly again online at this time. 41 staff have attended this training up to March 2021 and this continues to be delivered with dates booked into the autumn.

### **Safe and Together**

The Safe and Together Model provides improved safety planning for children and adults and improves the assessment and management of perpetrators. Multi agency training has been delivered to key staff across addictions, children and families, adult services, mental health, primary care, housing, education, children's hearing panel members and the third sector.

One day overviews have continued to be delivered online since September 2020 (one day is split into two half days). In total from this period 161 participants from across the Health and Social Care Partnership have attended.



The monthly Safe and Together “drop-in” consultations started in March 2021 and have occurred each month. Monthly dates are identified for the rest of the year and are open to everyone across the Health and Social Care Partnership who would like to discuss any aspects of the Safe and Together training and or how to apply it with an individual or family they are supporting.

The drop-ins are now extended from the Safe and Together Model to encourage staff to use this time to discuss any aspect of domestic abuse in relation to the families they support. For example staff are being supported to create safety plans, discuss a Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour based violence (DASH) risk assessment or a referral to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences.

## **Adult Protection, Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement**

### **Adult Support and Protection Inquiries**

Within the Reporting Period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 there has been a total of 857 inquiries undertaken by Council Officers (Adult Service Social Workers) of which 224 progressed to investigations. Within the previous reporting period 2019/20 there were 697 inquiries carried out and 191 investigations. This demonstrates that there has been an increase of 23% (160) in the number of inquiries and of 17% (33) of the number of investigations undertaken compared to the previous period. This is consistent with the trend of increasing demand noted since the introduction of the 2007 Act alongside the impact of the pandemic on adults at risk of harm within East Renfrewshire.

Of those inquiries carried out during 2020/21, 27% were received from third sector organisations delivering care and support to people in their own homes. This is the second year we have noted an increase in reporting of harm in people’s own homes. This provides assurance that the identification of harm by providers is improving, which has been of particular importance as adults have had limited contact outwith their homes during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Police Scotland continues to be the main reporter for Adults at Risk, having generated 21% (previously 23%) of all inquiries. We have seen a slight reduction in terms of our care home reporting in this year to 19%, (previously 20%). The rates of reporting by these agencies is consistent with the rate of reporting in 2019/20 despite the significant increase in Adult Support Protection Inquiries.

In November 2020 we introduced new Adults Support and Protection procedures, adjusting our expectation for the completion of inquiries from five working days to two working days.

While there has been an increase in the number of inquiries requiring more than five working days, this must be considered against the backdrop of the pandemic and its impact on working practices.

The introduction of data collection as to the reasons / barriers for non-completion of inquiries within two days will allow us to identify them and develop solutions to improve practice in relation to timescales. This mirrors the approach taken in children’s services.

### **Adult Protection Investigations**

For the period 2020/21 there were 224 Adult Support and Protection investigations that involved 193 individuals, this is 15% increase from 2019/20 (190). The conversion rate from inquiry to investigations is 26.1%, this the second year conversion rates have been recorded

at approximately this rate (27% in 2019/20) down from previously high rates of conversion (36% in 2018/19).

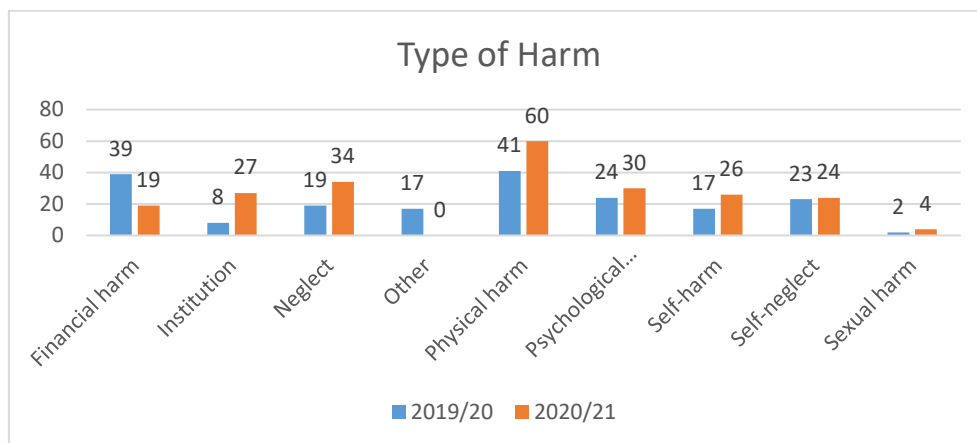
Internal audits carried out in autumn 2020 considered manager oversight and conversion highlighted no immediate concerns regarding conversion. The reduction from previously higher rates may be as a result of the improvement activity around practice procedures and oversight. This will be further examined through ongoing quality assurance and audit activity.

### Type of Harm

Consistent with the 15% increase in investigations in 2020/21, we have seen an increase in almost all types of harm at investigation, with the exception of financial harm which has decreased by 51% by comparison to last year. This reasons for this reduction will be further explored locally and nationally in 2021/22.

Physical Harm remains the most common harm experienced by adults having increased to 27% of the investigations carried out in 2020/21, in 2019/20 this accounted for only 22% of investigations.

Institutional harm has seen a significant increase during this period, accounting for 12% of investigations, in 2019/20 this was only 4% of investigations. This increase is believed to be due to the two large scale investigations (LSIs) undertaken during this period. In order to promote more accurate recording the 'other' category of harm was removed, as such it is recorded as zero this year.



### Key Characteristics

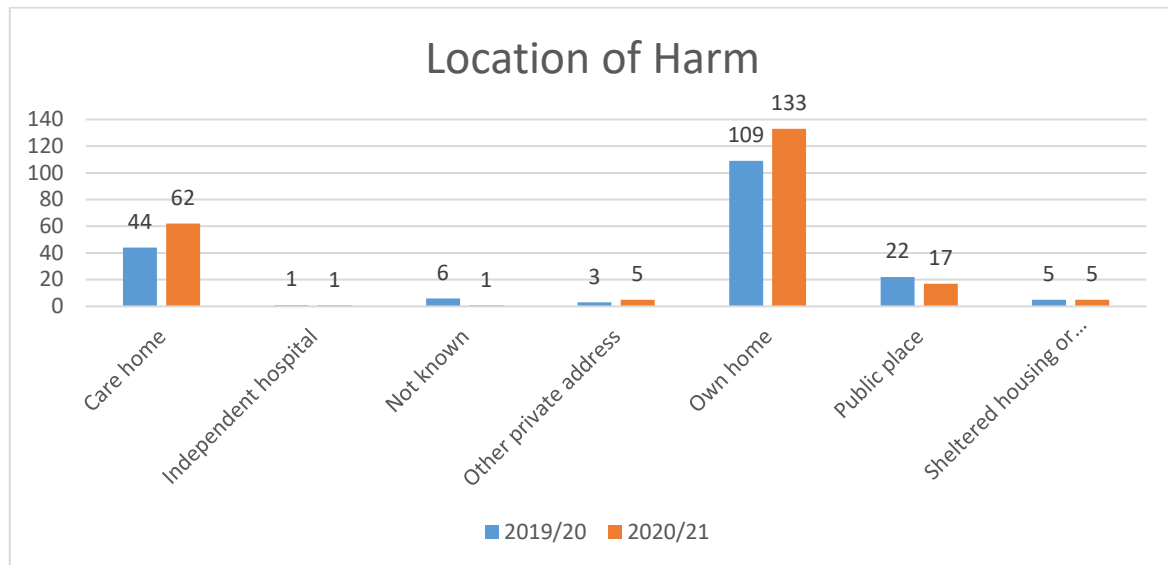
The adults most affected continues to be those with dementia, who make up 34% of all investigations, this has increased from 28% of inquiries in the previous reporting period. This increase may be as a result of the two large scale investigations which took place within care homes. However, as it demonstrates a continuation of the prevalence of harm for this group, further study is required. This study was not conducted in 2020/21 due to pressures of the pandemic.

Adults affected by mental health problems constituted 16.5% of investigations, this is a 1.5% decrease from the previous reporting period. Anecdotal evidence suggests mental distress had been key feature during the pandemic. It is of note that while there was decrease in the number of investigations for adults affected by mental health problems, there was a 20% increase in psychological harm and 35% increase in self-harm during this period, suggesting an impact on the wider demographic.

## Location of harm – Adult Support and Protection Investigation

The primary location of harm in 2020/21 in 59% of investigations was within the adult's home. This is comparable to data from 2019/20.

In 2020/21 Care Homes were the second highest location of harm in 28% of investigations progressed. There is an increase compared to reporting period 2019/20 when this occurred in 23% of inquiries as there were two large scale investigation, both within care homes, this increase is not unexpected.



## Adult Support and Protection Improvement Activity

Over 2019/20 we reviewed and implemented new professional leadership and governance arrangements in adult services. We have also supported the development and enhanced management oversight and decision making within Adult Support and Protection through new management arrangements and targeted training by internal and external facilitators.

Adult Support and Protection practice in East Renfrewshire has continued to improve in protecting and supporting adults despite the impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. This has been at times challenging as the rates of referral for inquiries have increased and two significant large scale investigations have taken place in local care homes. During these large scale investigation we piloted revised large scale investigation procedures which received positive feedback and will be implemented in the 2021/22 period. The leadership and multidisciplinary working throughout the large scale investigation has been positively evaluated by council officers, key Health and Social Care Partnership staff and external agencies.

The performance of the service has continued to be reported to the Adult Protection Committee, supported by a quarterly reporting format that identifies referral rates from agencies, patterns of harm and analysis of key performance indicators. Targets have been set to ensure that we are responding timeously in our interventions to keep adults at risk of harm safe.

In addition to the quarterly reporting format we have also implemented an Adult Support and Protection Quality Assurance Framework. This scrutiny and monitoring is undertaken by team managers and provides two monthly reporting to the Chief Social Work Officer and Heads of Service of the safeguarding and support we provide adults within Adult Support and Protection.

## **Adult Support and Protection Service Delivery Response to Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic**

Throughout the pandemic our commitment to supporting adults at risk of harm remained paramount, requiring our service to adapt and respond in a flexible manner while still maintaining the safety of our workforce and those we support. Our workers have risen to the challenge of these difficult times with creativity and compassion adapting to the changing needs of those we support as the pandemic changed the way in which we all engaged with each other.

The establishment of a specific Adult Support and Protection team has assisted in an effective and consistent response to the increased volume of inquiries timeously, keeping the adult at the centre of what we do. It has also supported the development of relationships and partnership working with other agencies in responding to inquiries. We look forward to supporting the development of and working in partnership with a newly formed Police Scotland Adult Support and Protection Team (across G division) further strengthening joint work in relation to protecting adults at risk of harm.

We have employed a range of ways to engage and support individuals using virtual technology. This has helped individuals participate and contribute to the Adult Support and Protection process and link with key agencies such as independent advocacy. This has been particularly evident in case conferences. These have been largely delivered virtually via Microsoft Teams. This has seen benefits in terms of increased participation of carers and family members.

### **Protection Plans in Adult Support and Protection**

In the reporting period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 we have seen a significant increase in protection plans. This improvement in practice has strengthened oversight of our ability to protect and support adults. This has taken place against the background of Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and the challenges of supporting adults at this challenging time.

The launch of new Adult Support and Protection procedures locally in November 2020 provide a clearer framework for practitioners and will help to strengthen practice.

### **Adult Support and Protection – Referrals to Advocacy**

We have seen a significant increase in advocacy referral rates in the period 2020/21, compared to 2019/20. This improvement has occurred during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and whilst the Advocacy Project have followed national guidelines that limited face to face contact during the pandemic, it is a testament to the way in which advocacy workers and council officers have adapted their practice utilising virtual technology to ensure that adults get the correct level of support.

### **Adult Support and Protection – Improvement and Quality Assurance**

The reporting period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 saw the ongoing impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic which has required the Health and Social Care Partnership to adapt while still maintaining our focus on our improvement agenda that has been in progress over the last two years.

The key successes in our improvement journey have been

- In November 2020 revised Adult Support and Protection Local Operating Procedures were implemented. This was preceded by a substantial programme of training which introduced the procedures to council officers and managers involved in adult support and protection activity, second workers (registered professionals) the wider staff group within the Health and Social Care Partnership and partner and provider organisation. This included the following topics:
  - ❖ Adult support and protection – Roles and Responsibilities Practice Note. This has given clear guidance to all in Health and Social Care Partnership of their own responsibilities in adult support and protection.
  - ❖ Further clarity in referrals of criminality to Police Scotland provided within the Adult Support and Protection procedures and practice guidance.
  - ❖ Clarity on the role of the second worker and renewed focus on 3 point test throughout all adult support protection training delivered in 2020-21
- Adult support and protection notifications involving Commissioned Services
  - ❖ Which has strengthened our information sharing between operational social workers and commissioning allowing the early identification of risk and support to providers at an earlier stage.
- More effective use of quarterly reporting and audits of data
  - ❖ Informing senior management and Adult Protection Committee of areas of significant improvement and further areas to monitor.
- Increased levels of awareness within adult services workforce of the interface between Adult Support and protection and Domestic Abuse / Violence against Women.

### **Adult Support and Protection – Large Scale Investigation**

East Renfrewshire completed two Large Scale Investigations within local care homes within the reporting period resulting in the voluntary closure of one home. The Large Scale Investigations were completed in highly challenging circumstances, with significant efforts from the social work team, the wider Health and Social Care Partnership and partner organisations to reduce the risk of harm for local residents.

## Section 3. Resources

### Financial Modelling for Service Delivery

In 2020/21 we ended the financial year with an underspend of £0.833 million against a budget of £179 million (including set aside). This underspend increased our budget saving reserve. We had expected to draw from reserves as we recognised we would not achieve all savings required during the year however we received Coronavirus (Covid-19) funding to support us as we did not have capacity to progress the required work as a result of our focus on the Coronavirus (Covid-19) response.

The impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) throughout the year meant that the focus of many of our services was on response and the variances against budget reflect this; the £9.1 million we spent on Coronavirus (Covid-19) related costs was fully funded by the Scottish Government so has no impact on each service's budget.

The main variances to the budget were:

- £0.410 million underspend within Children and Families and Public Protection from staff turnover and the costs of care packages.
- £2.071 million underspend in within Older Peoples Nursing, Residential and Day-care Services. This reflects the reduction in care home admissions but does offset the increase in community activity; predominantly Care at Home.
- £1.744 million overspend within Intensive Services as our Care at Home costs reflect that we were able to operate a near full service throughout the pandemic, in part as a result of a successful recruitment campaign early in the year.

Our unaudited annual report and accounts was considered by East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board on 23<sup>rd</sup> June and we plan to take our audited annual report and accounts to East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board in November.

### Financial Modelling for Service Delivery

East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board continues to face a number of challenges, risks and uncertainties in the coming years and this is set out in our current [Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2022/23 to 2026/27](#) which supports our strategic planning process and provides a financial context to support medium-term planning and decision making. The funding gap in future years could range anywhere from £0 to £4.7 million per year, excluding unknown factors and any additional savings requirements in future years. The resulting funding gap will be dependent on the funding settlement for each year.

The budget for the year 2021/22 was agreed by East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and identifies a funding gap of £3.9 million which relates to the £2.4 million legacy savings from 2020/21 we did not achieve as a result of the pandemic response and the funding gap of £1.5 million relating to 2021/22. This fell within the poor settlement range of scenario planning.

Scottish Government support for Coronavirus (Covid-19) costs continues into 2021/22 and we will utilise this along with all other ring fenced funding throughout the year.

We are working on our Recovery and Renewal programme; a complex and multi-year programme of work that will allow us to emerge from the pandemic in a stronger and more informed position to face the challenges ahead. This should not only support the significant financial challenge we are facing but will also help us to better understand and quantify the longer term impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on our population.



East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board has recognised this needs to be an iterative and emerging approach as we work towards recovery, including any implications from the independent review of adult social care and the creation of a National Care Service.

Our Recovery and Renewal Programme is summarised:



In setting the 2021/22 budget East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board recognised the scale of the challenge; that we were still in response mode; that there are still many unknowns as we work our way towards recovery and the impact and implications from the plans for a national care service are unknown.

Prior to the pandemic we had identified that the majority of the 2020/21 savings would come from the introduction of a contribution from individuals towards the cost of non-residential care, the prioritisation of care package costs and that we would need to further consider prioritisation and eligibility criteria for future savings options. This is now potentially at odds with the recommendations included in the Independent Review of Adult Social Care and the timing of any local decisions will need to be balanced with the risk of implementing change that may require subsequent reversal.

The implications from this review will be reflected in our short and medium term financial planning and in our Recovery and Renewal Programme as 2021/22 progresses and the policy decisions and directions become clearer. We will support any changes to policy/strategic approach that are adopted following the review and will look to include these in our strategic planning engagement for 2022 and beyond. During 2021/22 we will implement any recommendations or specific actions arising from the review as requested by Scottish Government.

East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board has recognised that 2021/22 will require an iterative approach and we will need to adapt, respond and flex in a timely manner. As one of the smaller Integration Joint Boards we are nimble and can react quickly however we do have a significant financial risk; our funding gap is £3.9 million, we have c£2 million in reserves to phase in those savings we can achieve, but we will only achieve savings by fully resourcing our Recovery and Renewal programme; and the only options to do this, at present are to divert existing resources and / or invest in the short term thus reducing the reserve available to phase in the savings.

The 2021/22 budget recognises that we may require to invoke financial recovery planning if we cannot close our funding gap on a recurring basis.

Demographic pressures remain a very specific challenge for East Renfrewshire as we have an increasing elderly population with a higher life expectancy than the Scottish average and a rise in the number of children with complex needs resulting in an increase in demand for services.



## Section 4. Workforce

### Workforce Development

East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership's workforce, our people – are key to our success. As at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership has a workforce of 881.72 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) staff, consisting of 506.72 employed by East Renfrewshire Council and 375 WTE employed by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The significant majority of the workforce work directly with patients, service users, carers and their families to support them.

The Partnership has developed a one year interim Workforce Plan covering the period 2021/22. The plan was developed in partnership with colleagues from across the partnerships, including representatives from the independent and third sector. The plan has four main sections

- Supporting Staff Physical and Psychological Wellbeing
- Short Term Workforce Drivers (Living with Covid) 12 months
- Medium Term Workforce Drivers 12 – 36 month
- Supporting the workforce through transformational change

The population of East Renfrewshire was 95,530 in 2019 and is growing. There is particular growth for our younger and older residents, who are the greatest users of universal health services, and in our oldest residents who are most likely to require social care. This in turn causes demand on our services and in turn resourcing pressures.

Some of the further challenges identified within the report are skills gaps, for example Mental Health Officers within Social Work.

The age profile within East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership is an older workforce. There are some services where this differs, for example within Social Work Children's services where the workforce is younger and less experienced and further piece of work on recruitment and retention is being taken forward in relation to this.

Within the social care sector both our in-house service and providers reported no difficulties with recruitment and retention during the pandemic. However we anticipate that as we recover from the pandemic in that roles in other sectors become vacant a combined within the impact of Brexit (in that European National can longer move to the UK and may have left to return to their home country) recruitment and retention may become more challenging. East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership will work with partners to look at solutions. At time of writing, recruitment to care at homes services is particular challenge.

### Health and Wellbeing

The review of strategic priorities for 2020/21 has provided an opportunity to widen the focus on mental health to community wellbeing and now includes an additional priority of the wellbeing of our workforce, of particular relevance in this current landscape. The Health and Wellbeing group was established this year and meets monthly, comprising of representatives from across social work, health, HR, finance and resources, and trade unions.

The group ensures communication and equal access to a range of practical resources - targeting both physical and emotional health needs of staff (e.g. Walking and Pilates groups) as well as promoting specific campaigns (e.g. men's mental health). A Lead Officer post for

Health and Wellbeing has recently been approved to progress this agenda further and develop the longer term, culture change we aim to embed across the workforce.

### **Learning and Development**

The Council's Learning and Development Service continue to offer a range of courses to council staff within East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership to support essential learning, qualifications, continuous professional development (CPD). In addition East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership Learning and Development service offer a range of learning and development activity to support and develop practice.

### **Practice Learning**

In response to Scottish Government highlighting concerns regarding the plight of final year Social Work students, significant efforts were made to increase the number of student placements offered. A temporary change in policy allowed for an increased payment to staff engaged in practice teaching, in recognition of the additional challenges involved in taking on a student in these circumstances. Work is currently taking place to increase the availability of placements for the next intake.

The restrictions arising from Coronavirus (Covid-19) have undoubtedly had a significant impact on learning and development activity. However the move to digital learning has been more successful than might have been anticipated, with a vast array of activity having been undertaken. Moving forward, it will be important for the service to reflect on the effectiveness of different models of service delivery and identify potential solutions to any gaps in learning that may have arisen during the pandemic, while at the same time recognising the pressures services are under and the type of challenges that might be faced post lockdown.

## **Section 5. Coronavirus (Covid-19): Early indication of impact on workforce and services**

Coronavirus (Covid-19) will no doubt be recognised as having the greatest impact on our people and communities in our lifetime. Social work and social care services across the Health and Social Care Partnership continued to rise to the complex challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic to ensure that our most vulnerable people were supported and kept safe throughout the pandemic.

This section of the report details the key impacts, successes and themes for recovery planning across Social Work services. Statutory social work services are not delivered in isolation and we will continued to need strong partnership arrangements, whether through our integration of services, our joint delivery with Education and our partnership with the third sector will be key as we approach recovery.

### **Chief Officer's Public Protection Group**

The Chief Officers continue to meet more regularly during the early recovery phase in order to oversee a recovery programme where the protection of vulnerable children and adults are at the forefront of our work in communities.

### **Children's Services**

Key impacts:

Our engagement with families during this period has highlighted the following key impacts that must be a focus of our recovery plans:

- Increased number of children became looked after, particularly children with autism and or complex needs, who required alternative care. There is a lack of foster care placements internally and externally and therefore a fostering recruitment campaign is required.
- Permanence plans for children require to be addressed focusing on the effect the pandemic has had on timescales.
- Additional pressures on the system due to the complexity of the needs of the children becoming looked after.
- Implementation of learning from the Care Review and The Promise in all aspects of our work with looked after children and young people.
- Coronavirus (Covid-19) has brought particular challenges for disabled children and their families. This can be seen by the increase in numbers of disabled children in the child protection system and becoming looked after.
- Delivery of training on Children's Services assessment, planning and resource allocation for all staff that was delayed due to the pandemic.
- Development of a third sector market place for service provision for disabled children, young people and their families in recognition that options are limited.

- Partnership working with Education, Health and adult services to develop new transition pathways for children aged 14 upwards.

#### Key Successes during Coronavirus (Covid-19)

- Implementation of Signs of Safety has continued and the approach has strengthened the voice of the family network in looked after reviews and permanence planning.
- First stages of development have begun to develop the Children's House which will bring approaches aligned with the Barnahus Model to Scotland for the first time.
- Our inclusive support service provided 308 personalised activity boxes, videos, calls, online chats, outdoor programmes and intensive supports at HUB provision for children who have either complex health or behavioural support needs,
- The number of children looked after away from home has continued to decrease.
- Improvement work in multi-agency contribution to Scottish Children's Reporter Administration to support effective decision making.
- Improvement work in Looked After Independent Chair role to ensure effective and consistent decision making for children.
- All staff have been trained in Signs of Wellbeing assessment approach.
- Children Service's processes for resource allocation are aligned with adult services.
- Effective joint working between children and adult services in transition planning.
- 

#### Key Priorities for Recovery

- To continue with the implementation of the Signs of Safety model with a focus on relational interventions with children, young people and their families.
- To further progress the development of the Children's House for children who have been victims or witness to abuse or violence or whose behaviour has caused significant harm. This will include have access to trauma informed recovery support.

#### Child Protection

##### Key impacts:

- The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has seen an increase in child protection referrals in particular of children who have a diagnosis of autism and or complex needs
- Despite the increase in referrals registration numbers have been retained at a relatively low level, indicating that many of the families coming through the child protection referral route are in need of increased supports rather than child protection plans.

## Key successes:

- Early information sharing and decision making through the Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) is well established and has been audited quarterly to provide quality assurance and management oversight. This has been an important process in maintaining relatively stable child protection registrations despite there being an increase in referrals.
- Provision of iPads to children and their families to enable them to take part in virtual child protection case conferences / children's hearings.
- Staff provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) equipment to enable them to safely respond to families in crisis and ensure critical services to protect vulnerable children and young people in their communities

**Adult Services including Mental Health**

## Key impacts:

- Staff across the adult services have had to respond to the pandemic with incredible resilience, commitment and creativity. Teams were required to establish and adjust to alternative ways of working in a short space of time.
- Across adult services we have seen increased demand and higher levels of complexity among the people we support.
- As a direct consequence of the pandemic restrictions we have seen increased frailty and social isolation particularly among older people. The period has been especially challenging for our unpaid carers with impacts on health and wellbeing, increasing the difficulties that many carers face as they look after their loved ones.
- The lockdown periods have been challenging for people experiencing mental health or addiction problems and we have seen increased concern about the mental health and wellbeing of the population more generally. There has been a significant increase in demand across mental health and addiction services and increased complexity.
- Some adult services have experienced capacity issues due to staff absence at various stages of the pandemic.
- The pandemic has changed some of the choices service users make and disrupted pathways within the health and social care system. For example, care at home has seen additional pressures due to a desire from more people to be supported at home and we have seen earlier and more complex hospital discharges.
- As we move beyond the crisis period some teams are dealing with operational backlogs having focused on pandemic response and supporting those with most urgent need.

## Key Successes:

- Our teams in adult services have managed throughout the pandemic to maintain and deliver safe and effective services to our residents.
- Through strong local partnerships our teams have responded with great innovation and greater collaborative working in support of our communities.

- With the aid of technology teams have been able to offer people ongoing support throughout pandemic, and access to treatment has been maintained.
- We have developed and coordinated many additional services and supports to residential care homes, who have been caring for some of our most vulnerable residents.
- Whilst we had to close our day services, our learning disability staff worked with partner providers throughout the pandemic to establish outreach and wraparound support for individuals and their families and our older people's Kirkton service staff were redeployed to support care at home.
- We have worked with individuals with lived experience and our partner Penumbra to design and develop a successful peer support service, which works alongside existing mental health and addictions services.
- Mental health services have delivered a mental health and wellbeing remobilisation programme with the third sector including a recovery pilot, staff capacity building around bereavement, mental health and suicide prevention, and wellbeing support to carers.
- Our Hospital to Home team has continued to support effective hospital discharge despite significant challenges in relation to accessing residential care and care at home as well as disruption to procedures for establishing Power of Attorney.
- Working with East Renfrewshire Carers, we have been ensuring carers have access to guidance and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Check-in calls to carers were introduced by East Renfrewshire Carers, and carers have been offered support to set up and manage a peer support Facebook Group. The Mental Health Carers group continues to run virtually.
- We have worked with the Care Collective to refresh our Carers Strategy. East Renfrewshire's Short Breaks Statement has also been updated to ensure all advice and information is current and includes the development of creative, Coronavirus (Covid-19)-safe online breaks that meet the outcomes of the carer and the cared for person.

#### Key Priorities for Recovery

- Many older people, shielding residents and those who live alone have become more isolated and had less opportunities for leisure, exercise and social activities. To ensure greater resilience and higher levels of choice and control, we want to build on the positive joint working we have seen during the pandemic and increase the community-based supports and opportunities available.
- Going forward we need to make best use of digital technology and health monitoring systems to support independence and self-management of conditions.
- To support mental health and wellbeing we will emphasise a particular focus on prevention, early intervention and harm reduction; high quality evidence-based care; and compassionate, recovery-oriented care recognising the importance of trauma and adversity and their influence on well-being. We will test and develop the impact of lived experience in the delivery of services such as peer support, alongside formal services.

## Adult Protection

### Key impacts:

- The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has seen our workforce as individuals and teams respond with creativity, adaptability and flexibility.
- Even during the challenge of the pandemic our focus remained the safety and reduction of harm for adults. We maintained our Adult Support and Protection response throughout the pandemic and kept each person at the heart of what we do.
- We adjusted our practice to incorporate virtual communication which has not only met the immediate necessity of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, but also made many aspects of the Adult Support and Protection process more accessible for service users and carers. We have been able to engage with individuals in the way that work for them and overcomes barriers, such as mobility, distance.
- We have developed stronger relationships with partner agencies, promoting an approach that keeps all partners involved and included in discussions and planning particularly in the undertaking of Large Scale Investigations. We have seen increased partnership working with a focus on keeping adults and their families and carers engaged and informed.
- There is an atmosphere of continuous improvement which is a benefit to all, with space given for self-evaluation.

### Key successes:

- Successful test of change and development of a permanent dedicated Adult Support and Protection Team, ensuring continuity and focus on the most at need. The new procedures and new structure of the team and management makes things clearer and much more straightforward.
- In response to Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic we created an abbreviated Adult Support and Protection process to keep adults and our workers safe. The lessons learned from the introduction of these measures contributed to a review of all existing Adult Support and Protection procedures and the production and implementation of new procedures.
- Our newly developed Adult Support and Protection procedures help us to reflect the work we do to address risk from the point of contact through to investigation a, case conference and protection planning.
- We maintained training and development activity in relation to Adult Support and Protection and provided dedicated virtual training on the new Adult Support and Protection procedures for council officers and second workers and leadership training and oversight training for managers. This has increased workers confidence relating to policy, procedures and supported effective leadership and oversight.
- We have strengthened and created channels of communication between partners, providers, care homes and others to which are meaningful and support information sharing and partnership working.

- We have developed a shared awareness of the complexity and multifaceted nature of risk, particularly in relation to violence against women, which has improved our joint working and understanding of the roles of other services and partners.

Key priorities for recovery:

- A period of stability and consideration is required to allow workers, teams and services to establish a new equilibrium and reflect on lessons learnt during this challenging period. By necessity there have been many changes in practice and procedures during this time, consolidation and development of learning and developments in practice should be supported by training practice forums and quality assurance activity with regular reporting schedules.
- As we move from out of restriction towards recovery a new balance will need to develop recognising the benefits of virtual meetings and needs of adults, allowing us to deliver support in the most effective manner for the individual. This will include ensuring that supports are delivered in the right way to meet the needs of the individual, including by partners such as advocacy.
- More work is needed to help raising awareness of Adult Support and Protection and support available, such as advocacy. By developing how we communicate with adults and their families, the general public and our partners / providers through resources such as our website we can raise awareness and receive timely evaluation / feedback from those who use our services.
- Building on the relationships developed during the pandemic we would look to develop further joint working and training opportunities with partners and providers.

## **Criminal Justice**

Key impacts:

- The inability to progress Unpaid Work Orders due to suspending the service during the Coronavirus (Covid-19). This has resulted in increased numbers of people subject to Unpaid Work Orders requiring to carry out the work.
- The nationally recognised sex offender group work treatment programme Moving Forward Making Changes (MFMC) was suspending due to the Coronavirus (Covid-19). This has resulted in increased numbers of people requiring to complete the programme.

Key successes:

- Staff were creative in developing ways of allowing unpaid work to be completed, this included developing working at home kits.
- Three people completed the Moving Forward Making Changes (MFMC) programme which was delivered on a one to one basis by practitioners and a treatment manager.
- Strong partnership working with Housing, Health, Addiction Services and Police Scotland was developed in planning support for people being released from prison from the point of release to ensure needs were met and risk were managed during the pandemic.



Key Priorities for Recovery:

- To reopen the Unpaid Work Unit to support people to complete their unpaid work hours and maintain strong health and safety arrangements.
- To resume group-work programmes such as Moving Forward Making Changes.
- Social workers to increase face to face meetings with the people they supervise as opposed to telephone supervision.

## Conclusion

As we moved into the second year of working in the uncertainty of Coronavirus (Covid-19) our social work and social care workforce continued to respond quickly and compassionately to ensure they just did the right thing for our most vulnerable citizens.

We continued to see increased demand for social work services both in terms of numbers and complexity of need. As outlined in the report we have seen a rise in public protection activity across the partnership, increasing domestic abuse incidents, child and adult protection inquiries and notification of concern and mental distress.

For children's services, we continue to see the impact of the pandemic for our children and young people with an even greater impact for children with neuro-developmental conditions and those presenting with emotional distress.

Moving out of lockdown the level of complexity we are managing, particularly in Adult Services, is again unprecedented and very complex. For individuals we are seeing increased frailty and social isolation in our older population and for unpaid carers we are seeing increased impact on their physical and mental health and at times their ability to continue to care for their loved ones.

There are pressures across the service, mainly at the front door of children and adult services which we expect will continue to grow during the early recovery phase.

Finally, we would wish to thank all the social work and social care workforce for their hard work over the past year and would wish to commend their passion for people, their commitment to doing the right thing and for their continued energy and drive even when I know people have been through so much both professionally and personally. We have learned so much from our social work and social care workforce and have been truly humbled by your values, ethics and practice over the past 12 months. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the workforce.

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL****27 October 2021****Report by Chief Executive****National Care Service - Proposed Consultation Response****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation on creation of a new national care service.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. Council is asked to:
- a) Note that the response has been drafted in line with an Elected Members session on 23 September and discussion within a cross-party working group of Councillor Buchanan, Councillor Lafferty and Councillor Wallace on Monday 18 October; and
  - b) Approve the response for submission to the Scottish Government by the deadline of 2 November.

**BACKGROUND AND REPORT**

3. On 8 September 2021 Council noted the consultation on a national care service and that the formation of one is likely to have significant implications for all councils.
4. Council noted the Scottish Government's extension of the deadline for responses from 18 October 2021 to 2 November 2021 and agreed to an Elected Member and Officer discussion on 23 September to explore the detail and provide initial comments.
5. A cross-party working group was convened on 18 October to discuss the Council's draft response to the consultation, a copy of which is attached..

**REPORT AUTHOR**

Jamie Reid, Strategic Insight & Communities Senior Manager

**PREVIOUS PAPER & RELEVANT LINK**

- Full Council paper 'National Care Service Consultation' (Agenda Item 12)  
8 September 2021  
[https://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/5933/Council-papers-08-September-2021/pdf/Council\\_papers\\_-\\_08\\_September\\_2021.pdf?m=637662558858330000](https://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/5933/Council-papers-08-September-2021/pdf/Council_papers_-_08_September_2021.pdf?m=637662558858330000)
- Scottish Government National Care Service consultation document  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-care-service-scotland-consultation/documents/>

BLANK PAGE

## Appendix

### National Care Service for Scotland – Consultation

*Proposal: To create a comprehensive community health and social care service that supports people of all ages*

#### Summary Position

East Renfrewshire Council is committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for all its residents and communities. The Council believes that achieving the best health and social care outcomes requires:

- local leadership and democratic accountability, empowerment and flexibility underpinned by coherent national policy, delivery, finance, improvement and scrutiny frameworks;
- an effective and collaborative multi-sector, locally-led partnership united by a clear strategic vision and ambition based on local needs and circumstances;
- a relentless focus on improving outcomes, standards and client pathways;
- a workforce and volunteers who are well-trained, supported and feel valued; and
- a realistic and sustainable funding model.

East Renfrewshire is always open to change and improvement. We believe that local leadership, clarity of purpose and control are the most powerful drivers of sustainable positive change. We believe that localism should be a core principle that informs the design of any new arrangements. The Council believes any change to health and social care should give priority focus to:

- improving outcomes;
- improving the client pathways;
- never losing sight of how any changes impact the cared for and their carers;
- avoiding unnecessary institutional changes that divert attention away from clients and service improvement; and
- ensuring procurement, standards and scrutiny arrangements are proportionate and effective by building on good practice and what has been shown to work successfully.

We welcome the stated commitment to taking a person-centred, human rights-based approach to care services, where care is seen as an investment in society, not a burden and is underpinned by ethical commissioning alongside a fair and consistent charging framework. However, there are three key caveats:

1. There is nothing inherent to a nationally centralised governance model that will improve local outcomes in and of itself. Indeed, the Council believes that there is a risk that a national approach may result in “levelling down” in areas such as East Renfrewshire rather than “levelling up” areas where there has not been the same successful integration, leadership, partnership working and ability to deliver positive outcomes.
2. The Council very much welcomes the commitment to increase funding for social care. The Council recognises the proposed increased investment of 25% and this will certainly go some way to addressing the current and future financial challenges faced by the HSCP with service delivery. However it is important to note that significant structural change will cost time and money and consume a great deal of senior

leadership and management time. Increasing funding to Councils and HSCPs for social care will improve the situation more quickly and effectively. Mandating fully-integrated HSCPs within each community planning partnership alongside increased investment would appear to be a more rapid, effective and efficient way of delivering positive change in the system.

3. Ethical procurement is welcome; however, the consultation fails to recognise the effective leadership of local government already through Scotland Excel's work to date. Any new arrangements should recognise and build on that work, using the insight and experience that already exist.

### **Partnerships**

The provision of services within the health and social care remit is not done in isolation. It touches a broad gamut of services including: education; housing; justice; and employability which involves complex partnership working, relationships and interdependencies across multiple public, private and third sector bodies.

The Council believes social care is an area which cannot be centralised into simplicity.

### **Building on success**

The Feeley report stated:

*"We heard and saw compelling evidence of where current integrated arrangements were working well under Integration Joint Boards and their delivery arm, Health and Social Care Partnerships. This was especially the case where all social care, social work and community-based healthcare was delegated to its greatest extent" ('Adult social care: independent review', Derek Feeley, Former Scottish Government Director General for Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland, February 2021)*

East Renfrewshire has had an effective and fully-integrated HSCP since 2014 and an integrated Community Health & Care Partnership (CHCP) prior to that.

The Council supports the proposals to retain local government boundaries in the proposed new arrangements. However, the Council does not believe that dismantling successful, locally-led integrated HSCPs is the answer to improving provision across the country. The Council would recommend mandating locally-led fully-integrated HSCPs before creating a national body that undermines local democratic control, as locally-led fully-integrated HSCPs have been shown to be the most effective delivery model.

### **Conclusion**

There are established local arrangements which we believe are fundamental to the successful delivery of services and outcome improvement. We support the principle of a fully-integrated services model but with two key caveats: local authority control is maintained and the existing Community Justice arrangements are retained.

It is not clear how the proposed governance arrangements would improve outcomes. Instead, we believe a strong national framework with local flexibility is the best approach and that funding for local authorities to improve and deliver services, within set national parameters, is increased rather than removed.

There is a number of workforce related considerations which have not been unpacked in the consultation document and provide some concern. The current proposals would require significant institutional change, diverting attention away from local care needs and bringing disruption to services for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

## Themes

### 1. Core Ambitions, Objectives and Principles

East Renfrewshire Council supports the Scottish Government's stated ambitions of:

- Tangible improvements to outcomes for people in social care of all ages
- A person-centred, human rights-based approach to care services
- Care seen as an investment in society not a burden
- Ethical commissioning, fair and consistent care charges

We support the proposed shift in paradigm around how we think about social care as shown in the Scottish Government's diagram below:

Old Thinking	New Thinking
Social care support is a burden on society	Social care support is an investment
Managing need	Enabling rights and capabilities
Available in a crisis	Preventative and anticipatory
Competition and markets	Collaboration
Transactions	Relationships
A place for services (e.g. a care home)	A vehicle for supporting independent living
Variable	Consistent and fair

We agree that the Independent Review of Adult Social Care (IRASC) highlights important national social care concerns and offers some effective proposals, such as embedding human rights, introducing additional funding, putting service users' health and wellbeing at the core, but do not agree with the National Care Service governmental structure as is currently proposed in the consultation. We believe that the standards of care parameters should be set nationally but feel that services should be delivered at a local level because local authorities know their areas' needs and requirements best. There are established local partnerships and relationships which are fundamental to the successful delivery of services. We would like to see the findings of the review used to improve our services and deliver the best outcomes for our residents but through a local approach within a national context with additional funding in place.

The focus of the work of the Local Governance Review to date has been localism – ensuring that decisions affecting individuals and communities are taken at the closest level to those affected and that resources are targeted in flexible and effective ways, working in partnership with other local organisations, to meet the needs of local people. The proposals outlined in this consultation, however, would contradict this with responsibility and decision making becoming centralised.

It is critical to recognise the importance of the role of local choice, local governance and accountability, and local discretion in a democratic society. Moving legal accountabilities and decision making away from local communities would be premature and ultimately damaging. The need for local integration, local knowledge and relationships all point to the retention of these services within local authority control.

## **2. Establishment and Scope of the National Care Service (NCS)**

The consultation proposes the introduction of a fully-integrated National Care Service delivered through Community Health and Social Care Boards (CHSCBs) with the full integration of Healthcare; Children's Services; Social Work and Social Care; Nursing; Justice Social Work; Prisons; Alcohol and Drug Services; and Mental Health Services.

East Renfrewshire Council supports the principle of a fully-integrated services model with two key caveats: local authority control should be maintained and the existing Community Justice arrangements, which have been subject to multiple changes over the last decade and where the most recent changes are still being bedded in, should be retained.

East Renfrewshire has had an integrated health and care partnership since around 2006, when a Community Health and Care Partnership was created, rather than a CHP. Our CHCP Committee had a very similar composition to the IJB which was established in 2014. East Renfrewshire's current model is an example of exactly the type of successful, devolved IJB that the IRASC refers to. East Renfrewshire's IJB has always had and continues to benefit from strong cross-party local democratic leadership from Elected Members, a longstanding partnership between the Council and Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board, excellent relationships with third and private sector partners and community representatives. The Health and Social Care Partnership – the delivery body for the IJB, has a vibrant and distinct organisational culture and identity that straddles the Council, NHS and CPP; and a diverse and multidisciplinary staff who work together with all their partners to deliver the best outcomes.

We believe that HSCP services should be locally-led because local authorities are best placed to identify the specific needs of people and communities in their area and to ensure that workforces have the knowledge, skills and resources to respond to these needs.

Whilst we welcome the consultation's focus on the carer and service user voice, the voice of the experienced professional should also be considered - in particular, the experience and insights of those fully-integrated HSCPs.



### 3. Governance

In the proposed NCS, Scottish Ministers would be responsible for the delivery of social care support. There would be reformed Integration Joint Boards: Community Health and Social Boards, who would be accountable to Scottish Ministers. The implementation of this governance structure would have a significant impact on the Council's remits, legal obligations and governance arrangements anticipated – with there being a lack of clarity on the operational element in the consultation.

As already mentioned, a key focus of the Local Governance Review has been localism and we have aimed to ensure that decisions affecting individuals and communities are taken at the closest level to those affected. The proposals outlined in this consultation contradict this with responsibility and decision making becoming centralised.

We are supportive of change that focusses on improving services and outcomes for our residents. While this is mentioned as the core ambition of the consultation it is not followed through within the proposals. It is not clear how the proposed governance arrangements would improve outcomes where there are already strong local integration structures in place. Instead, we believe a strong national framework with local flexibility is the best approach moving forward.

The consultation proposes a commitment to increase investment in social care by 25%, however it does not offer clear proposals on the financial implications of the NCS. There are significant financial risks for the Council that risk undermining other essential local public services arising from:

- Commissioned services – competition
- Diseconomies of scale on remaining services, particularly back office
- Funding allocations for remaining local authority services
- Fairness in budget/accounting disaggregation

The capital investment approach is also unclear. The IRASC report gave options to pay for investment and the consultation document provides no information on modelling of volume or costs of demand for the various options presented nor indicates how the additional investment will be funded on a recurring basis.

It is not clear if any assessment of the loss of social work and a social care budget contribution to central administration service costs within the local authority budget has been carried out. Approximately 30% of corporate overhead will be recharged to social work and we would question how this will be compensated.

The consultation offers no detail in relation to other governance and financial considerations:

- A medium to longer term financial strategy to ensure that the required budgetary provision maintains pace with demand for the new service offers, also identified by SOLACE in earlier discussions.
- The relationship with the local government grant settlement – noting that social care is not fully funded through the settlement indicators and that local authorities, reflecting local prioritisation decisions, have taken spend decisions to subsidise this area of service. There is no reference to modelling the scale of this subsidy or clarity on how the subsidy is incorporated into the financial modelling for the overall proposals.
- The balance between local and national commissioning and what 'overseeing' local commissioning would mean in practice. Too much focus on national commissioning would impact negatively on local flexibility in procuring services with impacts on local

employability and third sector local provision. This undermines one of the key levers available to local authorities to influence and support local economies through targeted procurement spend.

- Interaction with the standardised Model Complaints Handling Procedure operated by all local authorities/HSCPs with escalation to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.
- Equality, socioeconomic and environmental impact assessments of the current proposals. As such there is little reference to the delivery of services to communities with different needs – including different ethnic or religious groups; gypsy/traveller communities; patients, service users and carers identifying with other protected characteristics; and people with intersectional identities with compounding experiences of inequality.
- Local, regional and national resilience arrangements. In the event of civil emergencies, generally the central presence is the local authority to support the immediate response and to lead on the recovery phases which very often includes the care for people services. Reducing the capacity of local government exposes civil contingencies arrangements to new and significant risks.
- The purchase or lease of local authority assets used for the delivery of services by an NCS. This extends to buildings; fleet; ICT; equipment; and other assets, or recognition that local authorities will have debt that needs to be serviced in respect of those assets.
- Specific statutory roles such as the Chief Social Work Officer and how the transfer of accountabilities will impact on the critical professional leadership, independent challenge and assurance of this function.

We believe that funding should not be taken away from local authorities to deliver local services. If the additional funding planned for the NCS was given to local authorities, then they would be best placed to improve and deliver services locally – within set national parameters – rather than through a standardised national system. We believe that the current system and its limitations have been created through the underfunding of the sector over decades which has led to application of increasingly stricter needs assessments used to ration access to care to meet with available resources.

While the Council welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to increase investment in social care, supported by investment in early intervention/prevention, it is important that these funds are not diverted or lost to transition costs such as IT systems, procurement, budget/accounting disaggregation instead of being focussed on building on current successes to deliver the most efficient and effective changes to front line services and service users.

#### 4. Workforce

The Council understands and supports many of the workforce proposals put forward in the consultation, such as the establishment of a National Social Work Agency. There is universal support for these proposals across the Council as we value people who work in health, social work and social care and recognise the important contribution these workers make. We also support the implementation of nationalised Fair Work practices, rights to breaks from caring, workforce planning and training and development for Personal Assistants.

The Council firmly supports the Fair Work commitment and Local Government is considered to be a Fair Work employer. The Council sees accreditation for Fair Work as a positive move however it should be recognised that this is unlikely to improve terms and conditions across the board unless this is enforceable with some form of monitoring. There would need to be a requirement for providers to have minimum terms and conditions in place before being able to access contracts/work for this to have an impact. It should also be recognised that the terms and conditions for social care in councils is higher than the minimum standards referenced in the consultation.

In principle, we do not object to a national pay framework for social care staff, however it should not undermine the national joint committees responsible for agreeing pay which currently exist within local authorities and it should not introduce the risk of equal pay challenges by treating groups differently as this could have significant financial and workforce implications.

It is worth highlighting that the introduction of minimum pay and terms and conditions across social care may result in less movement of employees across social care employers, which could assist with retention, however it would not necessarily result in increased capacity within social care.

We also note several implications for the Council and current council staff below.

The consultation puts forward that CHSCBs will be accountable to Scottish Ministers, however most staffing arrangements remain unclear:

- The application of TUPE is not explained and it would be useful to have clarity and assurance on what is actually proposed. Moreover the consultation document is unclear on which parts of the workforce would be covered by TUPE and would transfer in to the CHSCBs. It seems to imply this would be the case for Chief Officers and Strategic Planning staff, with the front-line social care workforce remaining employed by their current employer. If this is the case it would mean local government as the employer would assume all of the employment risks but would have limited ability to provide direction on what is needed locally. We would also query how staff can remain local authority staff if they are directly funded and are accountable to Ministers.
- Clarity is required on the role of the proposed Community Health & Social Care Boards in the commissioning of services. Through the current partnerships, the HSCPs work with local government to deliver services through the local government (and health) workforce. The consultation appears to suggest that the Boards will 'commission' this work in the future, and the assumption would be that local government will be required to 'bid' for work. This would be very unsettling for the local government workforce.
- Clarity is required on which support roles are envisaged to be in both the Community Health & Social Care Boards as well as within the National Care Service as a whole. Is it possible that local government posts which currently support the HSCPs such as

Finance, HR, IT etc. will no longer support the delivery of social care, and such functions will be delivered either through the Boards or the National Care Service? If this is the case, consideration needs to be given to the impact on jobs and individuals employed within these roles within local government.

- There are concerns around potential harmonising of Terms & Conditions of Service, Contracts and Pensions. It is unclear if there are plans for transfers from the NHS and councils into a new organisation. It is likely that there will be a cost to both carry out and support this work and it is unclear how this will be funded.
- There are issues regarding the national job evaluation framework. If the function is uprated in comparison to other local government roles then a full review of all local government grades is required due to equal value/pay comparisons. This will require significant funding and will take a significant amount of time to complete.
- From the information provided, the establishment of a national forum with workforce representation would not be supported. A Forum for the purposes suggested would be difficult to manage given the wide range of stakeholders and providers, and the context within which they work. It would be difficult to ensure fair representation across all employers and this would duplicate the work already undertaken within existing forums which deal with matters such as terms and conditions and collective bargaining for the employers.
- There is a need to ensure there is no duplication between the work undertaken by the National Social Work Agency and what employers currently do in relation to their workforce, including those areas that employers are legally required to do. There also requires to be an assessment of the work currently undertaken by the numerous other social work linked bodies. A National Social Work Agency, whatever its remit and purpose, will bring additional costs into the social work system. The remit and purpose must therefore be clear, including the ways in which it will add value for our communities as well as the workforce.

The consultation puts forward proposals around workforce planning, practice and standards however there are additional points we wish to highlight:

- It is difficult to see how a workforce plan dedicated to social workers alone would add value to our communities. If this were done locally, it can instead be linked to the wider context of all care services, as well as linkages to other services such as education and housing, understanding of local workforce, local demographics, employability issues, available talent pool, links with employability services and colleges, local turnover levels and likely movement across council services. It is recognised however, that the information from local workforce plans may be of assistance in ensuring appropriate ongoing availability of university courses to ensure there is sufficient social work capacity in the medium to long term.
- Benefits could come from more publicity and visibility on social care and the value of the profession, with the focus on social care as a career, with appropriate career progression. Any training and development could be linked to this to ensure open access to courses which support good career pathways.
- Support for the work on national standards and best practice would be helpful. Promotion of social work as a career, including communications, PR, educational events, support for modern apprenticeship programmes etc. would also be of assistance.
- There are concerns over enhanced powers for regulating care workers and professional standards. It would be helpful to better understand what this proposed change is aiming to achieve. Codes of Practice already exist through the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). These could, as an alternative, depending on the

purpose of this suggestion, be strengthened without creating new regulations. It may be helpful to have further discussions with employers on the options available, and the issues this proposal is intending to address, in order to find an effective solution within the context of employment legislation.

Overall, the scale of the changes being proposed may bring significant disruption to the delivery of services for some of the most vulnerable in our communities. It would be helpful to know what consideration has been given and what support would be provided over any period of change to help manage the delivery of services, mitigate adverse impact and indeed add value for our communities.

DRAFT

## 5. Scrutiny and Regulation

The consultation proposes to review the role of the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council, with the Care Inspectorate proposed to have a Care Home market oversight role.

The Council shares a similar view to SOLACE who support the principles of the scrutiny and regulation elements of the proposal and that these should be part of the overarching governance of risk. The consequences for a provider going into administration or taking a decision to withdraw from the market can be as significant as the maintenance of poor care standards and requires the same level of consideration. Often the two issues go hand in hand and each can act as a signal of the other.

It would be appropriate for the market oversight function to be exercised through collaboration with partners and stakeholders who can provide appropriate local knowledge and expertise, such as local authorities and Scotland Excel. This collaboration would extend to market research and analysis as well as local monitoring and intelligence.

The oversight at a national level can also help share insight and intelligence of chain operators where similar issues are arising within the company and again can act as a signal to prompt consideration at other registered sites. Single site inspections may not provide that overview or support early intervention.

We take the view that the role of providing guidance and documentation to support local commissioning should be undertaken by an organisation with direct skills and experience in undertaking social care commissioning and procurement. Scotland Excel has extensive experience in undertaking market research and analysis at the national level, meaning they are uniquely positioned to build upon this experience and continue to work collaboratively with partners to identify appropriate standards and processes which help drive improvements and support local decision making.

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL****27 October 2021****Report by Director of Environment****LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2 (LDP2)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Council in relation to the Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) Examination Report, the modifications promoted by Reporters from the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) and to seek approval to proceed to adopt the Modified Plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that the Council:
- (a) Agrees the summary of Reporters' recommendations to the Local Development Plan 2;
  - (b) Approves the East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan 2 in the form intended for Adoption and the accompanying revised Strategic Environmental Assessment;
  - (c) Authorises the Director of Environment to undertake the required statutory requirements including notifications and advertisements and submission to Scottish Ministers; and
  - (d) Delegates to the Director of Environment to approve any minor inconsequential changes to the Local Development Plan 2, in line with Council policy, prior to submission to Scottish Ministers.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Local Development Plan is the Council's key strategic land use planning document. The current Local Development Plan (LDP1) was adopted in June 2015.

4. The Council commenced a review of LDP1 and started the preparation of LDP2 in October 2016 with the publication of the Main Issues Report (MIR) for consultation. The results of this public consultation fed into preparation of the Proposed LDP2. The Proposed LDP2 set out a refreshed development strategy up to 2031 and beyond and was agreed by the Council for an 8 week consultation on 26 June 2019.

5. The Council at its meeting on 24 June 2020 approved the responses and recommendations to representations received to the Proposed LDP2, and agreed that these be submitted to the Scottish Government for formal Examination. Comments were received on a wide range of matters and all representations were grouped into a total of 36 issues. The Proposed LDP2, representations and all supporting information were submitted to Scottish Ministers on 18 August 2020 for Examination.

## REPORT

6. Scottish Ministers appointed 4 Reporters to examine the Proposed LDP2 and the representations. The Examination was conducted with very few requests for additional/further information by the Reporters and there was no requirement for a Hearing session on any of the 36 issues under Examination.

7. The LDP2 Examination Report was received from the Scottish Government Reporters on 13 August 2021, taking approximately 12 months from submission to conclude. The Council has 3 months from receipt of the Examination Report to submit the modified Plan to Scottish Ministers for Adoption.

8. The full Examination Report ([Appendix A](#)) and a schedule of proposed modifications ([Appendix B](#)) have been made available to view on the Council's website at: [www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/ldp2](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/ldp2)

9. The first stage of the Examination was an assessment of the Council's consultation process to ensure that appropriate publicity and consultation had been undertaken in accordance with the "Participation Statement" as set out in the Development Plan Scheme (May 2019). The Reporter concluded that the Council had conformed with its participation statement and had met its statutory obligations.

10. In the majority of Issues, the Reporters have agreed with the approach taken by the Council in preparing the Proposed LDP2. Overall, the Reporters have made only minor modifications to the Plan, involving mainly changes to text, graphics and policies to assist with clarity and understanding. This can largely be attributed to the robust evidence and justification that was prepared to support the Proposed LDP2 and the Council's case at Examination.

11. The Reporters have agreed with the Plan's development strategy and have not identified any new housing sites. Importantly the Reporters also accepted the Council's approach to meeting education needs. The Education and Environment Departments will continue to work in close collaboration to agree a strategy that will fully address future education needs and residential requirements in a long term, coordinated and planned way through LDP3.

12. The main Reporters' recommendations can be summarised as follows:

- Agreement with the Proposed LDP's development strategy of consolidation and regeneration which the Reporters conclude as reasonable and appropriate.
- Agreement that there is sufficient housing supply to meet the housing land requirement and that this can be met from existing housing allocations.
- Agreement that there is no need to release further land for housing or to modify the Proposed LDP2's position in relation to education constraints. None of the 31 alternative housing proposals submitted by interested parties were recommended for inclusion in the Proposed LDP2.
- Agreement that the Council's education estate is sufficient to meet continued education demands arising from the allocated housing sites.
- Strengthening of the Proposed LDP2's approach towards meeting net zero objectives through amendments to the spatial objectives and 'Policy E1: Sustainable Design' and to reflect the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.



- Site specific proposals:
  - Retention of master plan approach including a remediation strategy at Braidbar Quarry, Giffnock (Policy M4) cognisant of the requirement for appropriate solutions to meet education needs and address other constraints.
  - Retention of residential proposal SG1.23 (as modified SG1.21) at Broompark Drive, Newton Mearns with a capacity of 5 units and amendment to the Proposals Map to clarify that housing, urban greenspace and green network allocations apply to the whole site.
  - Retention of residential proposal SG1.15 at Robslee Drive, Giffnock. Adjustment to the site boundary to align with the site shown in the site evaluation report. Inclusion of further text regarding the requirement for a flood risk assessment which may limit the future capacity of the site.
  - Deletion of residential proposal SG1.16 (Crofthead Mill, Neilston) from Schedule 15. Continued recognition within LDP2 of the potential for a mixed use development of employment and community use and that housing may also be acceptable as part of a mixed use development, subject to the submission of a flood risk assessment.
  - Deletion of residential proposal SG1.17 (Neilston Juniors, Neilston) from schedule 15 and linked proposal D12.8 (Kingston Playing Field, Neilston) from schedule 8 (community facilities) in accordance with the Council's recommendation.
- Inclusion of an additional requirement within 'Policy D3: Green Belt and Countryside around Towns' to cross refer to 'Policy SG1: Housing Supply, Delivery and Phasing' to acknowledge that where there is a shortfall in the 5 year effective housing land supply, release of green belt or countryside for housing may be appropriate.
- Requirement for flexibility in 'Policy D11: Electric Charging infrastructure' to provide active and passive provision to allow for the circumstances of each site, changes in levels of electric vehicle ownership and possible changes in technology.
- Inclusion of references to unstable land within Policy E10 as follows: 'Policy E10: Vacant, Derelict, Contaminated and Unstable Land'.

13. The Council is required to accept the Reporters' recommendations except in exceptional circumstances where there are specific reasons for not doing so, as set out in Section 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). The circumstances where authorities may depart from recommendations are where the recommendation(s):

- a) Would have the effect of making the Local Development Plan inconsistent with the National Planning Framework, or with any Strategic Development Plan or national park plan for the same area;
- b) Is incompatible with Part IVA of the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994;
- c) Would not be acceptable having regard to an environmental assessment carried out by the planning authority on the plan following modification in response to recommendations;
- d) Are based on conclusions that could not reasonably have been reached based on the evidence considered at the Examination.
  - Criterion (d) addresses the possibility of clear errors (including factual errors) having been made by the Reporter. It does not relate to circumstances where the planning authority disagrees with the planning judgement reached by the Reporter.

14. The Reporters' conclusions and recommendations have been carefully considered and Officers are content with the modifications proposed.

15. If the Council was minded not to accept all or some of the proposed modifications, then the Council would need to report any departures to Scottish Ministers. Any departure from the recommendations could delay Adoption of the LDP2 by a minimum of 6 months, be expensive in terms of potential future legal fees and would not bring any guarantee over the potential outcome. Furthermore, in adopting this approach the current 2015 Adopted Local Development Plan (which is increasingly out of date), would be the Plan that planning applications would need to continue to be assessed against. The Council would therefore not have an up-to-date development strategy and Plan for the area which could lead to potential planning by appeal.

16. Taking account of all this, it is proposed that the Council approves in full the Proposed Modifications as per the Examination Report. The LDP2 in the form intended for Adoption is set out in [Appendix C](#) to this report. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has also been updated to reflect the Reporters' modifications ([Appendix D](#)).

17. If the Council agrees the proposed modifications, the next step will be to publish a Notice of Intention to Adopt the Plan.

18. 28 days after the Plan has been submitted to Scottish Ministers, the Council may Adopt the Plan unless directed by Ministers not to do so.

19. There is a statutory right of appeal to the Court of Session, within 6 weeks of adopting the Plan.

20. Assuming therefore that Scottish Ministers allow the Council to adopt the LDP2 and that no legal challenge is received, it is proposed that the Director of Environment proceeds to adopt the LDP2, and in doing so undertakes the necessary adoption and post adoption arrangements (notifications and advertisements).

### **Next Stages**

21. The Planning System in Scotland is undergoing a substantial transformation and the context for preparing our next Local Development Plan (LDP3) has changed significantly. LDP3 will now be prepared under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 which has introduced a new statutory process for Local Authorities in preparing local development plans. Future LDPs will now be required to be reviewed every 10 years rather than 5 under the current system. LDP3 will establish a new long-term vision and strategy for East Renfrewshire alongside the delivery of new infrastructure.

22. A draft National Planning framework 4 (NPF4) is scheduled for publication and public consultation in autumn 2021 which will be one of the key documents that will inform the next LDP, in particular setting our future housing requirements, and with an increased focus upon climate change, improving health and well-being, and securing positive effects for biodiversity. It is anticipated that the regulations and guidance relating to local development plans will come into force in spring/summer 2022.

23. Following adoption of LDP2 planning staff will commence the preparatory work for LDP3 with the preparation of an Evidence Report that will be assessed at an early gate check stage. A revised Development Plan Scheme will also be prepared setting out timescales and stages for stakeholder involvement for LDP3 following publication of the secondary guidance and progress with NPF4.

## **FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY**

24. The Examination process was undertaken under the legislative context provided by the 2006 Planning etc (Scotland) Act and the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008. The administration of the Examination process was undertaken by the DPEA with the costs being recharged back to the Council. The final total payment made to DPEA for undertaking the Examination was £56,634 (excl. VAT) and this has been met from within existing budgets.

## **CONSULTATION**

25. As detailed in previous reports, the preparation of the Local Development Plan 2 has been the subject of considerable consultation and public engagement. If the Council accepts the recommendations contained within this report, Officers will advertise the Intention to Adopt the Plan and also notify anyone who made representations that the LDP2 has been published in the form the Council wish to adopt it. All documents will be made available in local libraries and online.

## **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

26. During the course of preparation of the Local Development Plan 2 and throughout the Examination process, considerable stakeholder consultation and engagement has taken place.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS**

27. It is a statutory requirement that the Council has an up-to-date Local Development Plan. As discussed in paragraph 18 above, the Council's decision to adopt the LDP2 can be challenged by appeal. If required, further legal advice will be sought.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

28. This report seeks Council approval to proceed towards the formal adoption of the East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan 2 incorporating the Proposed Examination Modifications. Adoption of the LDP2 which will provide the Council with an up-to-date and refreshed LDP that will guide the future sustainable growth of East Renfrewshire up to 2031 and beyond and provide the appropriate basis for determining future planning applications.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

29. It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) Agrees the summary of Reporters' recommendations to the Local Development Plan 2;
- (b) Approves the East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan 2 in the form intended for Adoption and the accompanying revised Strategic Environmental Assessment;
- (c) Authorises the Director of Environment to undertake the required statutory requirements including notifications and advertisements and submission to Scottish Ministers; and

- (d) Delegates to the Director of Environment to approve any minor inconsequential changes to the Local Development Plan 2, in line with Council policy, prior to submission to Scottish Ministers.

Director of Environment

October 2021

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix A: Report of Examination of proposed East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan 2;

Appendix B: Summary of Reporters Recommendations;

Appendix C: East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan 2 in the form intended for Adoption; and

Appendix D: Strategic Environmental Assessment

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL****27 October 2021****Report by Audit and Scrutiny Committee****ANNUAL STATEMENT ON ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE,  
RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To provide a statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control systems operating within the Council during 2020/21.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. It is recommended that the Council note the internal audit annual statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control systems of the Council for the year ending 31 March 2021.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference include a requirement for it to review the control environment and make an annual statement to the Council on its evaluation of internal controls. To assist with the evaluation, Internal Audit is required to provide the Committee with an annual statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control systems operating within the Council. The statement for the year ending 31 March 2021 was submitted to the Committee on 23 September 2021 as an Appendix to the Internal Audit Annual Report 2020/21.

**INTERNAL CONTROL FRAMEWORK**

4. As highlighted in the report submitted to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee by the Chief Auditor, in order to ensure the proper conduct of its business, the Council has a responsibility to develop and implement systems of internal control. The presence of an effective internal audit function contributes towards, but is not a substitute for, effective controls and it remains primarily the responsibility of line management to ensure that internal controls are in place and are operating effectively. A sound control system will help safeguard assets, ensure records are reliable, promote operational efficiency and ensure adherence to Council policy and procedures. Such systems of internal control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against loss.

5. As part of its Standing Orders and in order for the business of the Council to be dealt with in an efficient manner, the Council has in place both a Scheme of Administration and Scheme of Delegated Functions. The former indicates the business to be dealt with by the various bodies of the Council, whilst the latter gives details of the authority delegated to officers by the Council. In addition to this, a comprehensive set of approved Financial Regulations is in place, which ensure that the financial administration of the Council is dealt with in a proper manner. The Council's Financial Regulations incorporate the requirement to present to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee each year an Annual Audit Report showing the

activity of the Internal Audit service and progress achieved against the Internal Audit Plan. An assurance statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control systems operating within the Council must form part of that report.

6. As commented on by the Chief Auditor in the report she submitted to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 23 September, governance, risk management and internal control systems need to be monitored so that management and Members may be sure that they continue to be effective. Monitoring of controls is done at a number of levels, for example, assessment by line management; internal audit and external audit review and subsequent reporting to management of identified weaknesses and recommendations; and monitoring by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. If monitoring of control is to be effective, then senior management must foster an environment where internal control is the responsibility of all staff.

### **INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE FOR 2020/21**

7. As explained in the Annual Statement of Assurance for 2020/21, the Chief Auditor's evaluation of the control environment was informed by a number of sources:-

- The audit work undertaken by Internal Audit during the year to 31 March 2021 and material findings since the year end
- The audit work undertaken by Internal Audit in previous years and follow up work to assess implementation of agreed actions
- The assessment of risk completed during the preparation of the strategic audit plan
- Assessments of the general control environment within individual departments as completed by each director
- Reports issued by the Council's external auditors and other review and inspection agencies
- Knowledge of the Council's governance, risk management and performance monitoring arrangements
- Any other items brought to the attention of internal audit staff by whatever means which may warrant further investigation.

8. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee has received regular progress reports from the Chief Auditor on the work of Internal Audit.

### **OPINION**

9. The attached Annual Statement of Assurance for 2020/21 (see Appendix A) confirms that the 2020/21 audit year was challenging for Internal Audit as the audit plan was substantially reduced, there were reduced staffing levels due to an internal secondment and long term illness, and COVID-19 restrictions impacted on the ability to carry out audits. Despite this, sufficient audits were able to be completed to allow an opinion to be given in the annual statement of assurance. External audit continue to place reliance on the work of the service. The level of performance achieved against the indicator targets set given the restrictions that were in place were largely outwith the control of the service.

10. The Statement concludes that it is the opinion of the Chief Auditor that reasonable assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control for the year ended 31 March 2021 except for an area concerning an alleged fraud, which is still under investigation by Police Scotland, on which no further information can therefore be provided at this time.

11. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the internal audit annual statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control for the year ended 31 March 2021 on 23 September 2021.

**RECOMMENDATION**

12 It is recommended that the Council note the internal audit annual statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control systems of the Council for the year ending 31 March 2021.

Report Author: Linda Hutchison, Clerk to Committee 577 8388

[linda.hutchison@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:linda.hutchison@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

Background Papers: Internal Audit Annual Report 2020/21

BLANK PAGE



**INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE FOR 2020/21**

As Chief Auditor of East Renfrewshire Council, and in line with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), I am pleased to present my annual statement on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and control systems of the Council for the year ended 31 March 2021.

**Respective Responsibilities of Management and Internal Audit in relation to Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control**

It is the responsibility of the Council's senior management to establish appropriate and sound systems of governance, risk management and internal control and to monitor the continuing effectiveness of these systems. It is the responsibility of the Chief Auditor to provide an annual overall assessment of the robustness of governance, risk management and internal control.

**The Council's Framework of Governance, Risk Management and Internal Controls**

The main objectives of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control are:

- To ensure adherence to management policies and directives in order to achieve the organisation's objectives;
- To safeguard assets;
- To ensure the relevance, reliability and integrity of information, so ensuring as far as possible the completeness and accuracy of records; and
- To ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Any system of control can only ever provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that control weaknesses or irregularities do not exist or that there is no risk of material errors, losses, fraud, or breaches of laws or regulations. Accordingly, the Council is continually seeking to improve the effectiveness of its systems of governance, risk management and internal control.

**The work of Internal Audit**

Internal Audit is an independent appraisal function established by the Council for the review of the internal control system as a service to the organisation. It objectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of internal control in all service areas as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of the Council's resources.

During 2020/21, the internal audit service operated in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). In particular, the service operated free from interference in determining the scope of internal audit, performing work and communicating results. A self-assessment was carried out and submitted to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. This review concluded that the internal audit service continues to operate in compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. A quality assurance improvement plan has been developed to further enhance compliance and is included within the appendices. External audit have also considered the work of internal audit and did not raise any issues.

The service undertakes an annual programme of work approved by the Audit Committee based on a five year strategic plan. The strategic plan is based on a formal risk based audit needs assessment which is revised on an ongoing basis to reflect evolving risks and changes within the Council.

All internal audit reports identifying system weaknesses and/or non-compliance with expected controls are brought to the attention of management and include appropriate recommendations. It is management's responsibility to ensure that proper consideration is given to internal audit reports and that an appropriate action plan is provided in response to audit recommendations. Internal Audit is required to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to determine whether action has been taken on internal audit recommendations or that management has understood and assumed the risk of not taking action. Significant matters arising from internal audit work are reported to the Chief Executive and the Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Follow up work is carried out by Internal Audit to ensure that recommendations previously accepted by management have been implemented. Copies of these reports are circulated to members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Basis of Opinion**

My evaluation of the control environment is informed by a number of sources:

- The audit work undertaken by Internal Audit during the year to 31 March 2021 and material findings since the year end
- The audit work undertaken by Internal Audit in previous years and follow up work to assess implementation of agreed actions
- The assessment of risk completed during the preparation of the strategic audit plan
- Assessments of the general control environment within individual departments as completed by each director
- Reports issued by the Council's external auditors and other review and inspection agencies
- Knowledge of the Council's governance, risk management and performance monitoring arrangements
- Any other items brought to the attention of internal audit staff by whatever means which may warrant further investigation.

### **Opinion**

Owing to Covid19 and the resultant enforced remote working from March 2020 onwards, completing audits from the 2020/21 audit plan became particularly challenging for the audit team and the plan had to be revised twice during the year. All revised planned 2020/21 audits have been completed with the exception of two audits for which the work has been completed but the final report has yet to be issued. It is therefore my opinion that reasonable assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control for the year ended 31 March 2021 except for the area still under investigation by Police Scotland.

Michelle Blair FCA  
Chief Auditor

13 September 2021

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL****27 October 2021****Report by Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer)****REVIEW OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND POLICY STATEMENT****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To advise the Council of a review of the Treasury Management Practices and Policy Statement.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that the Council :-
- (a) Consider the content of the revised Treasury Management Practices (Appendix 1) and Treasury Management Policy Statement (Appendix 2).
  - (b) Approve the revised Treasury Management Practices (Appendix 1) and Treasury Management Policy Statement (Appendix 2).

**BACKGROUND**

3. In line with good practice, the Chief Financial Officer periodically reviews the Treasury Management Practices and Policy Statement, setting out the treasury procedures to be followed, and updates these to take account of changes to Council structures, processes and risks.

4. Minor changes have been made to the documents in addition to 3 new sections within the Treasury Management Practices relating to:-

- (a) Para 1.5.5 – listing of the financial arrangements with organisations that the Council works in partnership with
- (b) Para 4.2.1 – Implementation of the MIFID II requirements which the Council adheres to
- (c) Appendix – Management Practices for Non-treasury investments including a schedule setting out a summary of existing material investments, subsidiaries, associates and joint ventures

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

5. It is recommended that the Council:-
- (a) Consider the content of the revised Treasury Management Practices (Appendix 1) and Treasury Management Policy Statement (Appendix 2).
  - (b) Approve the revised Treasury Management Practices (Appendix 1) and Treasury Management Policy Statement (Appendix 2).

**Report Author**

Chief Financial Officer: Margaret McCrossan  
Chief Accountant: Barbara Clark  
Tel: 0141 577 3068  
E-mail: [barbara.clark@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:barbara.clark@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

Report Date: 22 September 2021



**East Renfrewshire Council**  
**Treasury Management Practices**

October 2021

BLANK PAGE

## Contents

		<b>Page</b>
<b>TMP 1</b>	Treasury risk management	.....3
<b>TMP 2</b>	Performance measurement	.....14
<b>TMP 3</b>	Decision-making and analysis	.....16
<b>TMP 4</b>	Approved instruments, methods and techniques	.....17
<b>TMP 5</b>	Organisation, clarity and segregation of responsibilities, and dealing arrangements	.....19
<b>TMP 6</b>	Reporting requirements and management information arrangements	.....23
<b>TMP 7</b>	Budgeting, accounting and audit arrangements	.....26
<b>TMP 8</b>	Cash and cash flow management	.....27
<b>TMP 9</b>	Money laundering	.....28
<b>TMP 10</b>	Training and qualifications	.....30
<b>TMP 11</b>	Use of external service providers	.....31
<b>TMP 12</b>	Corporate governance	.....33
Annex	Management practices for non-treasury investments	.....35

BLANK PAGE



## Treasury Management Practices 1: Risk Management

The responsible officer will design, implement and monitor all arrangements for the identification, management and control of treasury management risk, will report at least annually on the adequacy/suitability thereof, and will report, as a matter of urgency, the circumstances of any actual or likely difficulty in achieving the organisation's objectives in this respect, all in accordance with the procedures set out in TMP6 Reporting requirements and management information arrangements.

### 1.1 Credit and Counterparty Risk Management

Credit and counterparty risk is the risk of failure by a counterparty to meet its contractual obligations to the organisation under an investment, borrowing, capital project or partnership financing, particularly as a result of the counterparty's diminished creditworthiness, and the resulting detrimental effect on the organisation's capital or current (revenue) resources.

East Renfrewshire Council regards a key objective of its treasury management activities to be the security of the principal sums it invests. Accordingly, it will ensure that its counterparty lists and limits reflect a prudent attitude towards organisations with which funds may be deposited, and will limit its investment activities to the instruments, methods and techniques referred to in TMP4 Approved Instruments Methods and Techniques. It also recognises the need to have, and will therefore maintain, a formal counterparty policy in respect of those organisations from which it may borrow, or with whom it may enter into other financing arrangements.

#### 1.1.1 Policy on the use of credit risk analysis techniques

The Council will use credit criteria in order to select creditworthy counterparties for placing investments with.

Credit ratings will be used as supplied from all three rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's.

Treasury Management Consultants will provide regular updates of changes to all ratings relevant to the council.

The responsible officer will formulate suitable criteria for assessing and monitoring the credit risk of investment counterparties and shall construct a lending list comprising maturity periods, type, group, sector, country and counterparty limits.

Minimum ratings	Fitch	Moody's	Standard & Poor's
Short term	F1	P-1/P-2	A-1/A-2
Long term	A-	A3	A

At present the Council restricts all deposits to a maximum term of 6 months apart from with Bank of Scotland to 12 months, if this was to change the Link Asset Services creditworthiness facility based on using colours determined by minimum combinations of ratings to derive maturity limits as follows would be adopted: -

- Purple            2 years
- Blue             1 year (only applies to nationalised or semi nationalised UK Banks)
- Orange          1 year
- Red              6 months
- Green           100 days
- No Colour      not to be used

In addition a credit default swap overlay is used as a further safeguard to give early warning of potential creditworthiness problems which may only belatedly lead to actual changes in credit ratings.

As this methodology is complex, readers are referred to the document produced by Sector (now known as Link Asset Services) "Sector Suggested credit Policy 2018" –

LAS Credit Policy Guide - <http://intranet.erc.insider/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=14056&p=0> for a full explanation.

Credit ratings for individual counterparties can change at any time. The Head of Accountancy Service is responsible for applying approved credit rating criteria for selecting approved counterparties. Treasury management staff will add or delete counterparties to/from the approved counterparty list in line with the policy on criteria for selection of counterparties.

East Renfrewshire Council will not rely solely on credit ratings in order to select and monitor the creditworthiness of counterparties. In addition to credit ratings it will therefore use other sources of information including: -

- The quality financial press.
- Market data.
- Information on government support for banks and building societies.
- The credit ratings of that government support.

Maximum maturity periods and amounts to be placed in different types of investment instrument are set out by the Head of Accountancy Service.

Diversification: East Renfrewshire Council will avoid concentrations of lending and borrowing by adopting a policy of diversification. It will therefore use the following: -

- Maximum amount to be placed with any one institution - £5m (except where otherwise stated in annex F to the Annual Investment Strategy or otherwise specifically approved by the Head of Accountancy Service).
- Group limits where a number of institutions are under one ownership – maximum of £5m (except where otherwise stated in annex F to the Annual Investment Strategy or otherwise when specifically approved by the Head of Accountancy Service).
- Country limits – at present the Council has restricted its lending to UK only. If this was to change the minimum sovereign rating of Fitch AAA, Moody's Aaa and S&P AAA being required for an institution to be placed on our approved lending list.
- Investments will not be made with counterparties that do not have a credit rating in their own right.

- Full Individual Listings of Counterparties and Counterparty Limits maintained on a daily basis with the Head of Accountancy Service's approval of any changes to current position.

## **1.2 Liquidity Risk Management**

This is the risk that cash will not be available when it is needed, that ineffective management of liquidity creates additional unbudgeted costs, and that the organisation's business/service objectives will be thereby compromised.

East Renfrewshire Council will ensure it has adequate though not excessive cash resources, borrowing arrangements, overdraft or standby facilities to enable it at all times to have the level of funds available to it which are necessary for the achievement of its business/service objectives. East Renfrewshire Council will only borrow in advance of need where there is a clear business case for doing so and will only do so for the current capital programme or to finance future debt maturities.

### **1.2.1. Amounts of approved minimum cash balances and short-term investments**

The Treasury Management section shall seek to minimise the balance held in the Council's main bank accounts at the close of each working day. Borrowing or lending shall be arranged in order to achieve this aim.

### **1.2.2. Details of:**

- Standby facilities**  
At the end of each financial day any unexpected surplus funds are transferred to the investment account which is available from the Council's main bank. The balance on this account is instantly accessible if the group bank account becomes overdrawn.
- Bank overdraft arrangements**  
A £100k overdraft has been agreed as part of the banking services contract. The overdraft is assessed on a group basis for the Council's accounts.
- Short-term borrowing facilities**  
The Council accesses temporary loans through approved brokers on the London money market.
- Insurance/guarantee facilities**  
There are no specific insurance or guarantee facilities as the above arrangements are regarded as being adequate to cover all unforeseen occurrences.

## **1.3 Interest Rate Risk Management**

The risk that fluctuations in the levels of interest rates create an unexpected or unbudgeted burden on the organisation's finances, against which the organisation has failed to protect itself adequately.

East Renfrewshire Council will manage its exposure to fluctuations in interest rates with a view to containing its interest costs, or securing its interest revenues, in accordance with the amounts provided in its budgetary arrangements as amended in accordance with TMP6 Reporting requirements and management information arrangements.

It will achieve this by the prudent use of its approved financing and investment instruments, methods and techniques, primarily to create stability and certainty of costs and revenues, but at the same time retaining a sufficient degree of flexibility to take advantage of unexpected, potentially advantageous changes in the level or structure of interest rates. This should be the subject to the consideration and, if required, approval of any policy or budgetary implications.

### 1.3.1 Details of approved interest rate exposure limits

The amount of borrowing of a short-term nature is restricted to limits as stated in the current treasury strategy.

### 1.3.2 Trigger points and other guidelines for managing changes to interest rate levels

In conjunction with Link Asset Services, interest rates are monitored on an ongoing basis. When interest rates are expected to increase, the Council will draw long-term borrowing. When interest rates are expected to remain low, the Council defer borrowing to later in the financial year. Consideration will be given to drawing long term borrowing early in the financial year when interest rates are perceived to be low and long-term borrowing costs lower than temporary borrowing. When variable interest rates are perceived to be rising above fixed rates then consideration should be given to locking into equivalent fixed rate loans.

The treasury strategy will outline the view for the forthcoming year, with regards to interest rates and forecasts for interest rates.

### 1.3.3 Upper limit for fixed interest rate exposure

The maximum proportion of interest on borrowing which is subject to fixed rate interest  
100%

The minimum proportion of interest on borrowing which is subject to fixed rate interest  
70%

### 1.3.4 Upper limit for variable interest rate exposure

The maximum proportion of interest on borrowing which is subject to variable rate interest  
30%

The minimum proportion of interest on borrowing which is subject to variable rate interest  
0%

### 1.3.5 Policies concerning the use of instruments for interest rate management.

#### a. forward dealing

Consideration will be given to dealing from forward period's dependent upon market conditions. When forward dealing is more than 3 months forward then the approval of the Head of Accountancy Service is required.

#### b. LOBOS (borrowing under lender's option/borrower's option)

Use of LOBOs are considered as part of the annual borrowing strategy. All borrowing for periods in excess of 364 days must be approved by the Head of Accountancy Service.

## 1.4 Exchange Rate Risk Management

The risk that fluctuations in foreign exchange rates create an unexpected or unbudgeted burden on the organisation's finances, against which the organisation has failed to protect itself adequately.

The Council has a minimal exposure to this risk as it has no powers to enter into loans or investments in foreign currency for treasury management purposes.

It will manage its exposure to fluctuations in exchange rates so as to minimise any detrimental impact on its budgeted income/expenditure levels.

### 1.4.1 Approved criteria for managing changes in exchange rate levels

As a result of the nature of the Council's business, the Council may have an exposure to exchange rate risk from time to time. This will mainly arise from the receipt of income or the incurring of expenditure in a currency other than sterling. The Council will adopt a full hedging strategy to control and add certainty to the sterling value of these transactions. This will mean

that the Council will eliminate all foreign exchange exposures as soon as they are identified.

### **1.5 Refinancing Risk Management**

The risk that maturing borrowings, capital, project or partnership financings cannot be refinanced on terms that reflect the provisions made by the organisation and/or that the terms are inconsistent with prevailing market conditions at the time.

East Renfrewshire Council will ensure that its borrowing, private financing and partnership arrangements are negotiated, structured and documented, and the maturity profile of the monies so raised are managed, with a view to obtaining offer terms for renewal or refinancing, if required, which are competitive and as favourable to the organisation as can reasonably be achieved in the light of market conditions prevailing at the time.

It will actively manage its relationships with its counterparties in these transactions in such a manner as to secure this objective, and will avoid over reliance on any one source of funding if this might jeopardise achievement of the above.

#### **1.5.1. Debt/Other Capital Financing, Maturity Profiling, Policies and Practices**

The Council will establish through its Prudential and Treasury Indicators the amount of debt maturing in any year/period.

Any debt rescheduling will be considered when the difference between the refinancing rate and the redemption rate is most advantageous and the situation will be continually monitored in order to take advantage of any perceived anomalies in the yield curve. The reasons for any rescheduling to take place will include:

- a) The generation of cash savings at minimum risk.
- b) To reduce the average interest rate.
- c) To amend the maturity profile and /or the balance of volatility of the debt portfolio.

*Rescheduling will be reported to the Council at the meeting immediately following its action in the annual Review or Interim Treasury Report.*

#### **1.5.2 Projected Capital Investment Requirements**

The responsible officer will prepare a ten year plan for capital expenditure for the Council. The capital plan will be used to prepare a three year revenue budget for all forms of financing charges.

The use of accounting practices to define capital expenditure is contained in Section 12 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

#### **1.5.3 Policy Concerning Limits on Affordability and Revenue Consequences of Capital Financing**

In considering the affordability of its capital plans, the Council will consider all the resources currently available/estimated for the future together with the totality of its capital plans, revenue income and revenue expenditure forecasts for the forthcoming year and the two following years and the impact these will have on council tax and housing rent levels. It will also take into account affordability in the longer term beyond this three year period.

The Council will use the definitions provided in the Prudential Code for borrowing, capital expenditure, capital financing requirement, debt, financing costs, investments, net borrowing, net revenue stream, other long term liabilities.

#### **1.5.4 Policy on Borrowing in Advance of Need**

The Council will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely in order to profit from the

investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be considered carefully to ensure value for money can be demonstrated and that the Council can ensure the security of such funds.

In determining whether borrowing will be undertaken in advance of need the Council will: -

- Ensure that there is a clear link between the capital programme and maturity profile of the existing debt portfolio which supports the need to take funding in advance of need.
- Ensure the ongoing revenue liabilities created, and the implications for the future plans and budgets have been considered.
- evaluate the economic and market factors that might influence the manner and timing of any decision to borrow
- Consider the merits and demerits of alternative forms of funding.
- Consider the alternative interest rate bases available, the most appropriate periods to fund and repayment profiles to use.
- consider the impact of borrowing in advance on temporarily (until required to finance capital expenditure) increasing investment cash balances and the consequent increase in exposure to counterparty risk, and other risks, and the level of such risks given the controls in place to minimise them.

Decisions taken to borrow in advance will form part of the next treasury management report submitted to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The report will justify the decision to borrow in advance, reflecting the strategy and original assumptions provide details of the borrowing and interest rates achieved, and include the estimated value of any anticipated savings due to the decision.

As a minimum, justification for any borrowing in advance will include the following: -

- Details of the borrowing in advance undertaken.
- The borrowing within the context of the overall requirement of the authority over the medium term (covering both capital programme needs and the existing debt maturity profile).
- The anticipated timing (date or financial year) as to when those funds are expected to be required.
- The prudential indicator which demonstrates that, in the medium term, borrowing will only be for capital purposes.
- The anticipated rate/s of interest expected to apply if the borrowing is deferred until the time the funds are required.
- The anticipated rate/s of interest expected to be achieved by investing the sums borrowed in advance.
- Details of how interest rates have been forecast and an explanation of the reasonableness of such forecasts should be provided.
- Any third party information or advice used or sought in this regard.
- The risks associated with borrowing in advance and what controls are in place to manage that risk.
- A discounted cash flow including borrowing cost savings and investment income discounted back to present values, with discount rates disclosed and justified.

### **1.5.5 PFI, Partnerships, ALMOs, Guarantees, Associates and Joint Committees**

List all arrangements of the above which the Council has entered into.

- East Renfrewshire Schools PFI Contract, signed 20 April 2000
- East Renfrewshire Roads GSO PFI Contract, signed 30 April 2003
- East Renfrewshire Schools PPP Project, signed 10 December 2004
- Scotland's Schools for the Future NPD Project – Barrhead HS, signed 21 March 2016

- Clyde Valley Waste Recycling Plant Contract, signed January 2020
- East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Trust – incorporated 2 July 2015
- East Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board – established 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
- Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee
- Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board
- Common Good and Charitable Trusts
- Scotland Excel – 1 April 2008
- Clydeplan
- Continuing Education Gateway – formed April 2000
- West of Scotland Archaeology Service – set up 1997
- West of Scotland European Forum – set up 2007
- Glasgow and Clyde Valley Cabinet – established 20 January 2015
- Seemis Group LLP – incorporated 11 May 2009

PFI/PPP/NPD schemes are not subject to set refinancing or review dates.

## 1.6 Legal and Regulatory Risk Management

The risk that the organisation itself, or an organisation with which it is dealing in its treasury management activities, fails to act in accordance with its legal powers or regulatory requirements, and that the organisation suffers losses accordingly.

East Renfrewshire Council will ensure that all of its treasury management activities comply with its statutory powers and regulatory requirements. It will demonstrate such compliance, if required to do so, to all parties with whom it deals in such activities. In framing its credit and counterparty policy under TMP1[1] credit and counterparty risk management, it will ensure that there is evidence of counterparties' powers, authority and compliance in respect of the transactions they may effect with the organisation, particularly with regard to duty of care and fees charged.

East Renfrewshire Council recognises that future legislative or regulatory changes may impact on its treasury management activities and, so far as it is reasonably able to do so, will seek to minimise the risk of these impacting adversely on the organisation.

### 1.6.1 References to Relevant Statutes and Regulations

The treasury management activities of the Council shall comply fully with legal statute, guidance, Codes of Practice and the regulations of the Council. These are:

- Part VII Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973
- Schedule III Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975
- The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 Part 7 section 36
- SSI. 2003 No.134 (C.7) The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 (Commencement No.1) Order 2003
- SSI. 2004 No.28 (C.1) The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 (Commencement No.2) Order 2004
- SSI. 2004 No.29 The Local Government Capital Expenditure Limits (Scotland) Regulations 2004
- Finance Circular 4/2007 Guidance on proper accounting practices March 2007
- Finance Circular 5/2010 Investment of Money by Scottish local authorities 1.4.10
- SSI. 2010 No.122 Local Authority Investments (Scotland) Regulations 2010 (these regulations disapply the Trustee Investments Act 1961 (b) to the extent to which it applies to local authority investment of money, except in so far as that Act (or any provision of it) is applied by or under any other enactment)

- SSI. 2016 No. 123 The Local Government Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Scotland) Regulations 2016
- Finance circular 7/2016 (new arrangements for loans fund advances and repayments)
- Requirement to set a balanced budget - Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 108(2) and Local Government Finance Act 1992 section 93(3)
- Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 95 – duty on the CFO to ensure proper financial administration.
- Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975 – power to maintain a loans fund.
- Scottish Office Circular 29/1975 – prescribes annual repayments of principal to the loans fund.
- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 – requirement to maintain an HRA; schedule 15 sets out income and expenditure to be charged to it.
- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 section 203(1) - definition of HRA capital expenditure.
- CIPFA Treasury Management Codes of Practice and Guidance Notes 2017,
- CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities revised 2017
- CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities – Guidance Notes for practitioners 2018
- CIPFA Local Authority Capital Accounting – a reference manual for practitioners 2014 Edition
- CIPFA Guide for Chief Financial Officers on Treasury Management in Local Authorities 1996
- CIPFA Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management 2002
- CIPFA Standard of Professional Practice on Continuous Professional Development 2005
- CIPFA Standard of Professional Practice on Ethics 2011
- CIPFA The Good Governance Standard for Public Services 2004
- LAAP Bulletins
- Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom: A Statement of recommended Practice
- PWLB circulars on Lending Policy
- Financial Services Authority's Code of Market Conduct
- Bank of England – The UK Money Markets Code 2021
- The Council's Standing Orders relating to Contracts
- The Council's Financial Regulations
- The Council's Scheme of Delegated Functions
- CIPFA Financial Management Code 2019

## **1.6.2 Procedures for Evidencing the Council's Powers/Authorities to Counterparties**

### **The Council's powers to borrow and invest are contained in legislation.**

Investing: Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, section 40

Borrowing: Schedule III Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975

In addition: -

- a. The Head of Accountancy Service has delegated authority for the treasury management activities, further delegation of duties are as detailed in section 5 of this document.
- b. For treasury management activities the following are the officers who are noted as the authorised signatories:-
  - Head of Accountancy Service;
  - Chief Accountant;
  - Principal Accountant (Revenues).



### **Required Information on Counterparties**

Lending shall only be made to counterparties on the Approved Lending list. This list has been compiled using advice from the Council's treasury advisers based upon credit ratings supplied by Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's.

### **1.6.3 Statement on the Council's Political Risks and Management of Same**

The responsible officer shall take appropriate action with the Council, the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to respond to and manage appropriately political risks such as change of majority group, leadership in the Council, change of Government etc.

### **1.6.4 Monitoring Officer**

The monitoring officer is the Deputy Chief Executive; the duty of this officer includes ensuring that the treasury management activities of the Council are lawful.

### **1.6.5. Chief Financial Officer**

The Chief Financial Officer is the Head of Accountancy Service; the duty of this officer is to ensure that the financial affairs of the Council are conducted in a prudent manner and to make a report to the Council if she has concerns as to the financial prudence of its actions or its expected financial position.

### **1.7 Fraud, Error and Corruption, and Contingency Management**

The risk that an organisation fails to identify the circumstances in which it may be exposed to the risk of loss through fraud, error, corruption or other eventualities in its treasury management dealings, and fails to employ suitable systems and procedures and maintain effective contingency management arrangements to these ends. It includes the area of risk commonly referred to as operational risk.

East Renfrewshire Council will ensure that it has identified the circumstances which may expose it to the risk of loss through fraud, error, corruption or other eventualities in its treasury management dealings. Accordingly, it will employ suitable systems and procedures, and will maintain effective contingency management arrangements, to these ends.

The Council will therefore:-

- a. Seek to ensure an adequate division of responsibilities and maintenance at all times of an adequate level of internal check which minimises such risks.
- b. Fully document all its treasury management activities so that there can be no possible confusion as to what proper procedures are.
- c. Staff will not be allowed to take up treasury management activities until they have had proper training in procedures and are then subject to an adequate and appropriate level of supervision.
- d. Records will be maintained of all treasury management transactions so that there is a full audit trail and evidence of the appropriate checks being carried out.

#### **1.7.1. Details of Systems and Procedures to be Followed, Including Internet Services**

##### **Authority**

- . The Scheme of Delegation to Officers sets out the delegation of duties to officers.
- . All loans and investments are negotiated by the responsible officer or authorised persons.
- . Loan procedures are defined in the Council's Financial Regulations.

##### **Procedures**

- . All CHAPS payments will be appropriately authorised and processed in line with banking procedures.

### **Investment and borrowing transactions**

- A detailed register of all loans and investments is maintained in the Logotech Public Sector Treasury Management system.
- Written confirmation is received and checked against the dealer's records for the transaction.
- Any discrepancies are immediately reported to the Chief Accountant for resolution.
- All transactions placed through brokers are confirmed by a broker note showing details of the loan arranged. Written confirmation is received and checked against the dealer's records for the transaction. Any discrepancies are immediately reported to the Chief Accountant for resolution.

### **Regularity and security**

- Lending is only made to institutions on the Approved List of Counterparties.
- The Logotech Public Sector Treasury Management system prompts the Senior Treasury Officer that money borrowed or lent is due to be repaid.
- All loans raised and repayments made go directly to and from the bank account of approved counterparties.
- Counterparty limits are set for every institution that the Council invests with.
- Brokers have a list of named officials authorised to agree deals.
- There is a separation of duties in the section between dealers and the checking and authorisation of all deals.
- The Council's bank holds a list of Council officials who are authorised signatories for treasury management transactions.
- The authorised signatories for treasury management signatories are specified in section 1.6.2.b of this document above.
- Payments can only be authorised by an authorised signatory, the list of signatories having previously been agreed with the current provider of our banking services.
- The Logotech Public Sector Treasury Management system can only be accessed by a password.
- There is adequate insurance cover for employees involved in loans management and accounting.

### **Checks**

- The bank reconciliation is carried out monthly from the bank statement to the financial ledger.
- The Logotech Public Sector Treasury Management system balances are proved to the balance sheet ledger codes at the end of each month and at the financial year end.
- We have complied with the requirements of SORP (pre 1st April 2010 FRS 26) and IFRS Code (post 1st April 2010 IAS 39) and will account for the fund as Fair Value through Profit or Loss. As a result, all gains and losses and interest (accrued and received) will be taken to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

### **Calculations**

- The calculation of repayment of principal and interest notified by the lender or borrower is checked for accuracy against the amount calculated by the Logotech Public Sector Treasury Management system.
- The Logotech Public Sector Treasury Management system automatically calculates periodic interest payments of PWLB and other long term loans. This is used to check the amount paid to lenders.
- Interest and expense rates are used to calculate the principal, interest and debt management expense charges to the Loans Fund and the Housing Revenue Account recharge.

### **1.7.2. Emergency and Contingency Planning Arrangements Disaster Recovery Plan.**

All members of the treasury management team are familiar with this plan and new members will be briefed on it.

All computer files are backed up on the server to enable files to be accessed from remote sites.

### **1.7.3. Insurance Cover Details**

#### **Fidelity Insurance**

East Renfrewshire Council has 'Fidelity' insurance cover with Zurich insurance. This covers the loss of cash by fraud or dishonesty of employees.

This cover is limited to £5m for any one event with an excess of £5,000 for any one event.

#### **Professional Indemnity Insurance**

The Council also has a 'Professional Indemnity' insurance policy with Zurich Municipal which covers loss to the Council from the actions and advice of its officers which are negligent and without due care. This cover is limited to £5m for any one event with an excess of £5,000 for any one event.

#### **Business Interruption**

The Council also has a 'Business Interruption' cover as part of its property insurance with Zurich Insurance.

### **1.8 Market Risk Management**

The risk that, through adverse market fluctuations in the value of the principal sums an organisation borrows and invests, its stated treasury management policies and objectives are compromised, against which effects it has failed to protect itself adequately.

East Renfrewshire Council will seek to ensure that its stated treasury management policies and objectives will not be compromised by adverse market fluctuations in the value of the principal sums it invests, and will accordingly seek to protect itself from the effects of such fluctuations.

#### **1.8.1. Details of Approved Procedures and Limits for Controlling Exposure to Investments Whose Capital Value May Fluctuate (Gilts, CDs, Etc.)**

These are controlled through setting limits on investment instruments where the principal value can fluctuate. The limits are determined and set through the Annual Investment Strategy.

## Treasury Management Practices 2 : Performance Measurement

### 2.1 Evaluation and Review of Treasury Management Decisions

The Council has a number of approaches to evaluating treasury management decisions: -

- a. Periodic reviews carried out by the treasury management team.
- b. Reviews with our treasury management consultants.
- c. Annual review after the end of the year as reported to Council.
- d. Half yearly monitoring reports to Council.
- e. Comparative reviews.
- f. Strategic, scrutiny and efficiency value for money reviews.

#### 2.1.1 Reviews with our treasury management consultants

The treasury management team holds reviews with our consultants every 6 months to review the performance of the investment and debt portfolios.

#### 2.1.2 Annual Treasury Management Review Report after the end of the financial year

An Annual Treasury Report, including the Annual Investment Report, is submitted to Council each year after the close of the financial year which reviews the performance of the debt / investment portfolios. This report will be produced within six months after the financial year end and will contain the following: -

- a. Total external debt (gross external borrowing plus other long term liabilities such as finance leases) and average interest rates at the beginning and close of the financial year compared to the Capital Financing Requirement.
- b. Borrowing strategy for the year compared to actual strategy.
- c. Whether or not a decision was made to defer borrowing or to borrow in advance.
- d. Comment on the level of internal borrowing and how it has changed during the year
- e. Assumptions made about interest rates.
- f. Investment strategy for the year compared to actual strategy.
- g. Explanations for variance between original borrowing and investment strategies and actual.
- h. Debt rescheduling done in the year.
- i. Actual borrowing and investment rates incurred through the year.
- j. The Report shall identify investments where any specific risks have materialised during the year and report on any financial consequences of that risk; together with details of any remedial action taken. This includes reporting any short term borrowing costs incurred to remediate any liquidity problem.
- k. The Report shall include details of any review of long term investments, held by the authority, which was undertaken in the year in accordance with the Annual Investment Strategy.
- l. Compliance with Prudential and Treasury Indicators.

#### 2.1.3 Comparative reviews

When data becomes available, comparative reviews are undertaken to see how the performance of the authority on debt and investments compares to other authorities with similar size portfolios (but allowing for the fact that Prudential and Treasury Indicators are locally set). Data used will be sourced from: -

- CIPFA Treasury Management statistics published each year for the last complete financial year.

## 2.2 Benchmarks and Calculation Methodology:

### 2.2.1 Debt management

- Average rate on all external debt.
- Average rate on external debt borrowed in previous financial year.
- Average rate on internal borrowing.

- Average period to maturity of external debt.
- Average period to maturity of new loans in previous year.

### **2.2.2 Investment.**

Performance will also be measured against other local authority funds with similar benchmark and parameters managed by other fund managers.

## **2.3 Policy Concerning Methods for Testing Value for money in Treasury Management**

### **2.3.1 Frequency and processes for tendering**

Tenders are normally awarded on a 5 years basis. The process for advertising and awarding contracts will be in line with the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

### **2.3.2 Banking services**

The Council's banking arrangements are to be subject to competitive tender every 5 years unless it is considered that there will be changes in the volume of transactions in the foreseeable future which renders a shorter period appropriate.

### **2.3.3 Money-broking services**

The Council will use money broking services in order to make deposits or to borrow, and will establish charges for all services prior to using them.

An approved list of brokers will be established which takes account of both prices and quality of services.

### **2.3.4 Consultants'/advisers' services**

This Council's policy is to appoint professional treasury management consultants and separate leasing advisory consultants when required.

### **2.3.5 Policy on External Managers (Other than relating to Superannuation Funds)**

The Council's policy is not to appoint external investment fund managers.

## Treasury Management Practices 3: Decision – Making and Analysis

### 3.1 Funding, Borrowing, Lending, and New Instruments/Techniques:

#### 3.1.1 Records to be kept

The Treasury section has a computerised Logotech Public Sector Treasury Management system in which all investment and loan transactions are recorded. Full details of the system are covered in the user manual. The following records will be retained: -

1. Daily cash balance forecasts.
2. Brokers' confirmations for investment and temporary borrowing transactions.
3. Confirmations from borrowing /lending institutions where deals are done directly.
4. PWLB loan confirmations.
5. PWLB debt portfolio schedules.
6. Certificates for market loans, local bonds and other loans.

#### 3.1.2 Processes to be pursued

- Cash flow analysis.
- Debt and investment maturity analysis.
- Ledger reconciliation.
- Review of opportunities for debt restructuring.
- Review of borrowing requirement to finance capital expenditure (and other forms of financing where those offer value for money).
- Performance information (e.g. monitoring of actuals against budget for debt charges, interest earned, debt management; also monitoring of average pool rate, investment returns, etc).

#### 3.1.3 Issues to be addressed.

##### 3.1.3.1. In respect of every treasury management decision made the Council will:

- a. Above all be clear about the nature and extent of the risks to which the Council may become exposed.
- b. Be certain about the legality of the decision reached and the nature of the transaction, and that all authorities to proceed have been obtained.
- c. Be content that the documentation is adequate both to deliver the Council's objectives and protect the Council's interests, and to deliver good housekeeping.
- d. Ensure that third parties are judged satisfactory in the context of the Council's creditworthiness policies, and that limits have not been exceeded.
- e. Be content that the terms of any transactions have been fully checked against the market, and have been found to be competitive.

##### 3.1.3.2 In respect of borrowing and other funding decisions, the Council will:

- a. Consider the ongoing revenue liabilities created, and the implications for the organisation's future plans and budgets.
- b. Evaluate the economic and market factors that might influence the manner and timing of any decision to fund.
- a. Consider the merits and demerits of alternative forms of funding, including funding from revenue, leasing and private partnerships.
- b. Consider the alternative interest rate bases available, the most appropriate periods to fund and repayment profiles to use and, if relevant, the opportunities for foreign currency funding.

##### 3.1.3.3 In respect of investment decisions, the Council will:

- a. Consider the optimum period, in the light of cash flow availability and prevailing market conditions.
- b. Consider the alternative investment products and techniques available, especially the implications of using any which may expose the Council to changes in the value of its capital.

## Treasury Management Practices 4: Approved Instruments, Methods and Techniques

### 4.1 Approved Activities of the Treasury Management Operation

- Borrowing.
- Lending.
- Debt repayment and rescheduling.
- Consideration, approval and use of new financial instruments and treasury management techniques.
- Managing the underlying risk associated with the Council's capital financing and surplus funds activities.
- Managing cash flow.
- Banking activities.
- The use of external fund managers (other than Pension Fund).
- Leasing.

### 4.2 Approved Instruments for Investments

Refer to the Annual Investment Strategy.

[https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/4759/Council-Item-03-iii-15-March-2021/pdf/Council\\_Item\\_03iii\\_-\\_15\\_March\\_2021.pdf?m=637510756149100000](https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/4759/Council-Item-03-iii-15-March-2021/pdf/Council_Item_03iii_-_15_March_2021.pdf?m=637510756149100000)

#### 4.2.1 Implementation of MIFID II requirements

Since 3 January 2018, UK public sector bodies have been defaulted to “retail” status under the requirements of MiFID II. However, for each counterparty it is looking to transact with, (e.g. financial institution, fund management operator, broker), there remains the option to opt up to “professional” status, subject to meeting certain requirements specified by MiFID II and that it has the appropriate level of knowledge and experience and decision making processes in place in order to use regulated investment products.

MiFID II does not cover term deposits so local authorities should not be required to opt up to professional status. However, some non-UK banks do not have the necessary regulatory permissions to deal with retail clients, so opting up to professional status would be required.

For investing in negotiable investment instruments, (e.g. certificates of deposit, gilts, corporate bonds), money market funds and other types of investment funds, which are covered by MiFID II, a schedule is maintained of all counterparties that the treasury management team are authorised to place investments with.

For the money market funds the council has approved to invest funds with and the approved money brokers in section 11.1.2 of this document, the council has opted up to professional status.

### 4.3 Approved Techniques

- Forward dealing
- LOBOs – lenders option, borrower’s option borrowing instrument

### 4.4 Approved Methods and Sources of Raising Capital Finance

Finance will only be raised in accordance with the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, and within this limit the Council has a number of approved methods and sources of raising capital finance. These are:

<b>On Balance Sheet</b>	<b>Fixed</b>	<b>Variable</b>
PWLB	●	●
Market (long-term)	●	●
Market (temporary)	●	●
Market (LOBOs)	●	●
Local temporary	●	●
Local Bonds	●	
Local Authority Bills	●	●
Bank Loan	●	●
Overdraft		●
PFI / PPP / NPD / hub	●	●
Internal (capital receipts & revenue balances)	●	●
Leasing (not operating leases)	●	●
<b>Other Methods of Financing</b>		
Government and EC Capital Grants		
Lottery monies		
Operating leases		

Borrowing will only be done in Sterling. All forms of funding will be considered dependent on the prevailing economic climate, regulations and local considerations. The responsible officer has delegated powers in accordance with Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, the Scheme of Delegation to Officers Policy and the Treasury Management Strategy to take the most appropriate form of borrowing from the approved sources.

#### **4.5 Investment Limits**

The Annual Investment Strategy sets out the limits and the guidelines for use of each type of investment instrument.

#### **4.6 Borrowing Limits**

See the Treasury Management Strategy Statement including the Prudential and Treasury Indicators.



## Treasury Management Practices 5: Organisations, Clarity and Segregation of Responsibilities, and Dealing Arrangements

### 5.1 Allocation of responsibilities

#### (i) Council

- Approval of annual strategy.
- Approval of amendments to the organisation's, treasury management policy statement and treasury management practices.
- Budget consideration and approval.
- Approval of the division of responsibilities.
- Receiving and reviewing monitoring reports and acting on recommendations.

#### (ii) Audit and Scrutiny Committee

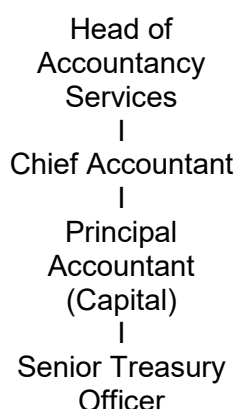
- Receiving and reviewing monitoring reports.

### 5.2 Principles and Practices Concerning Segregation of Duties

5.2.1 Where practical the following duties must be undertaken by separate officers: -

Dealing	Negotiation and approval of deal. Receipt and checking of brokers' confirmation note against loans diary. Reconciliation of cash control account. Bank reconciliation
Accounting Entry	Production of transfer note. Processing of accounting entry
Authorisation/Payment of Deal	Entry onto system. Approval and payment.

### 5.3 Treasury Management Organisation Chart



### 5.4 Statement of the treasury management duties/responsibilities of each treasury post

#### 5.4.1. The responsible officer

The responsible officer is the person charged with professional responsibility for the treasury management function and in this Council is the Head of Accountancy Service. This person will carry out the following duties: -

- a. Recommending clauses, treasury management policy/practices for approval, reviewing the same regularly, and monitoring compliance.
- b. Submitting regular treasury management policy reports.
- c. Submitting budgets and budget variations.
- d. Receiving and reviewing management information reports.
- e. Reviewing the performance of the treasury management function.
- f. Ensuring the adequacy of treasury management resources and skills, and the effective division of responsibilities within the treasury management function.
- g. Liaising with external audit on the treasury management function.
- h. Recommending the appointment of external service providers.
- i. The responsible officer has delegated powers through this policy to take the most appropriate form of borrowing from the approved sources, and to make the most appropriate form of investments in approved instruments.
- j. The responsible officer may delegate their power to borrow and invest to members of her staff. The Senior Treasury Officer must conduct all dealing transactions, or staff authorised by the responsible officer to act as temporary cover for leave/sickness. All transactions must be authorised by at least one of the following: Head of Accountancy Service, Chief Accountant or Principal Accountant (Revenues).
- k. The responsible officer will ensure that Treasury Management Policy is adhered to, and if not will bring the matter to the attention of elected members as soon as possible.
- l. Prior to entering into any capital financing, lending or investment transaction, it is the responsibility of the responsible officer to be satisfied, by reference to the Council's legal department and external advisors as appropriate, that the proposed transaction does not breach any statute, external regulation or the Council's Financial Regulations.
- m. It is also the responsibility of the responsible officer to ensure that the Council complies with the requirements of Bank of England 'The UK Money Markets Code April 2021' for principals and broking firms in the wholesale markets. - <http://intranet.erc.insider/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=14055&p=0>

#### 5.4.2. Senior Treasury Officer

The responsibilities of this post will be: -

- a. Execution of transactions.
- b. Adherence to agreed policies and practices on a day-to-day basis.

- c. Maintaining relationships with counterparties and external service providers.
- d. Monitoring performance on a day-to-day basis.
- e. Submitting management information reports to the responsible officer.
- f. Identifying and recommending opportunities for improved practices.

#### **5.4.3. The Chief Executive**

The responsibilities of this post will be: -

- a. Ensuring that the system is specified and implemented.
- b. Ensuring that the responsible officer reports regularly to Council on treasury policy, activity and performance.

#### **5.4.4. The Monitoring Officer – Deputy Chief Executive**

The responsibilities of this post will be: -

- a. Ensuring compliance by the responsible officer with the treasury management policy statement and treasury management practices and that they comply with the law.
- b. Being satisfied that any proposal to vary treasury policy or practice complies with law or any code of practice.
- c. Giving advice to the responsible officer when advice is sought.

#### **5.4.5. Internal Audit**

The responsibilities of Internal Audit will be: -

- a. Reviewing compliance with approved policy and treasury management practices.
- b. Reviewing division of duties and operational practice.
- c. Assessing value for money from treasury activities.
- d. Undertaking probity audit of treasury function.

#### **5.5 Absence Cover Arrangements**

- If the Senior Treasury Officer is absent then cover will be provided by the Principal Accountant (Capital) or the Finance Business Partner (Chief Executive's Office) or Resources Officer.

#### **5.6 Dealing Limits**

The following posts are authorised to deal: -

- Senior Treasury Officer
- Principal Accountant (Capital)
- Finance Business Partner (Chief Executive's Office)
- Resources Officer

There are no dealing limits for individual posts, just restricted to the individual limits for each counterparty.

#### **5.7 List of Approved Brokers**

A list of approved brokers is maintained within the Treasury Team and a record of all transactions recorded against them. See TMP 11.1.2.

#### **5.8 Policy on Brokers' Services**

It is this Council's policy to rotate business between brokers.

#### **5.9 Policy on Taping of Conversations**

It is not this Council's policy to record brokers' conversations.

#### **5.10 Direct Dealing Practices**

The Council will consider dealing direct with counterparties if it is appropriate and the Council believes that better terms will be available. There are certain types of accounts and facilities, however, where direct dealing is required, as follows;

- Business Reserve Accounts.
- Call Accounts.
- Money Market Funds.

## **5.11 Settlement Transmission Procedures**

For payments a transfer will be made through the Banking Online system with transactions to be completed by 2.00 pm on the same day.

For payments out-with the online banking system a formal letter signed by an agreed authorised signatory setting out each transaction must be sent to the local authority's bankers where preliminary instructions have been given by telephone.

## **5.12 Documentation Requirements**

For each deal undertaken a record should be prepared giving details of dealer, amount, period, counterparty, interest rate, dealing date, payment date(s), broker.

## **5.13 Arrangements Concerning the Management of Third-Party Funds.**

The Council holds a number of trust funds. The cash in respect of these funds is held in the Council's bank account and recorded separately in the financial ledger. In addition the council manages the treasury operations for East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust. Interest is given on credit balances for all third party funds at the average rate for internal balances for the year.

## Treasury Management Practices 6: Reporting Requirements and Management Information Arrangements

### 6.1 Annual programme of reporting

Annual reporting requirements before the start of the year: -

Review of the organisation's approved clauses, treasury management policy statement and practices.

Strategy report on proposed treasury management activities for the year comprising of the Treasury management strategy statement and Annual Investment Strategy.

Capital Strategy to cover the following: -

- i. give a long term view of the capital programme and treasury management implications thereof beyond the three year time horizon for detailed planning.
- ii. an overview of treasury and non-treasury investments to highlight the risks and returns involved in each and the balance, (proportionality), between both types of investments.
- iii. The authorities risk appetite and specific policies and arrangements for non-treasury investments
- iv. Schedule of non-treasury investments

Interim report

Annual review report after the end of the year

### 6.2 Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement sets out the specific expected treasury activities for the forthcoming financial year. This strategy will be submitted to Council for approval before the commencement of each financial year.

The formulation of the annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement involves determining the appropriate borrowing and investment decisions in the light of the anticipated movement in both fixed and shorter-term variable interest rates. For instance, this Council may decide to postpone borrowing if fixed interest rates are expected to fall, or borrow early if fixed interest rates are expected to rise.

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement is concerned with the following elements:

- a. Prudential and Treasury Indicators
- b. current Treasury portfolio position
- c. borrowing requirement
- d. prospects for interest rates
- e. borrowing strategy
- f. policy on borrowing in advance of need
- g. debt rescheduling
- h. investment strategy
- i. creditworthiness policy
- j. policy on the use of external service providers
- k. any extraordinary treasury issue

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement will establish the expected move in interest rates against alternatives (using all available information such as published interest rate forecasts where applicable), and highlight sensitivities to different scenarios.

### 6.3 The Annual Investment Strategy

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement incorporates the Annual Investment Strategy and is submitted for approval to Council. This report will set out the following: -

- a. Whether the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and the CIPFA Prudential Code have been adopted in full, or if not, provide an explanation.
- b. The Council's risk appetite in respect of security, liquidity and optimum performance.
- c. The definition of high credit worthiness.
- d. Which instruments the Council will use (permitted investments).
- e. Limits (by sum of money) for each permitted investment.
- f. The objectives of each type of investment.
- g. The different type of risks that each permitted investment is exposed to.
- h. The controls in place for limiting those risks.
- i. Whether they will be used by the in house team, external managers or both (if applicable).
- j. The Council's policy on the use of credit ratings and other credit risk analysis techniques to determine creditworthy counterparties for its approved lending list.
- k. Which credit rating agencies the Council will use.
- l. How the Council will deal with changes in ratings, rating watches and rating outlooks.
- m. Limits for individual counterparties and group limits.
- n. Country limits.
- o. Maximum value and maximum periods for which funds may be prudently invested.
- p. Interest rate outlook.
- q. Procedures for reviewing the holding of longer term investments.
- r. Details of how policies and practices will be scrutinised before being accepted and how they will be monitored and changed.
- s. Policy on the use of external service providers.
- t. Details as to where policies referred to in the Strategy may be obtained.

### 6.4 Policy on Prudential and Treasury Indicators

The Council approves before the beginning of each financial year a number of treasury limits which are set through Prudential and Treasury Indicators.

The responsible officer is responsible for incorporating these limits into the Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement, and for ensuring compliance with the limits. Should it prove necessary to amend these limits, the responsible officer shall submit the changes to Council for approval.

### 6.5 Interim Report

The Council will review its treasury management activities and strategy on a six monthly basis. This review will consider the following: -

- a. Activities undertaken.
- b. Variations (if any) from agreed policies/practices.
- c. Interim performance report.
- d. Regular monitoring.
- e. Monitoring of treasury management indicators for local authorities.

### 6.6 Annual Review Report on Treasury Management Activity

An annual report will be presented to the Council at the earliest practicable meeting after the end of the financial year, but in any case by the end of September. This report will include the following: -

- a. Performance report – see TMP2.1.3.
- b. Compliance report on agreed policies and practices, and on statutory/regulatory requirements.
- c. Report on compliance with CIPFA Code recommendations.

## **Treasury Management Practices 7: Budgeting, Accounting and Audit Arrangements**

### **7.1 Statutory/Regulatory Requirements**

The accounts are drawn up in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in Great Britain that is recognised by statute as representing proper accounting practices. The Council has also adopted in full the principles set out in CIPFA's 'Treasury Management in the Public Services - Code of Practice' (the 'CIPFA Code'), together with those of its specific recommendations that are relevant to the Council's treasury management activities.

### **7.2 Accounting Practices and Standards**

Due regard is given to the Statements of Recommended Practice and Accounting Standards as they apply to Local Authorities in Great Britain.

### **7.3 Sample Budgets / Accounts / Prudential and Treasury Indicators**

The Principal Accountant (Capital) will prepare a five year medium term financial plan with Prudential and Treasury Indicators for treasury management which will incorporate the budget for the forthcoming year and provisional estimates for the following four years. This will bring together all the costs involved in running the function, together with associated income. The Senior Treasury Officer will exercise effective controls over this budget and monitoring of performance against Prudential and Treasury Indicators, and will report upon and recommend any changes required in accordance with TMP6.

### **7.4 List of Information Requirements of External Auditors.**

- Reconciliation of loans outstanding in the financial ledger to Treasury Management records.
- Maturity analysis of loans outstanding.
- Certificates for new long term loans taken out in the year.
- Reconciliation of loan interest, discounts received and premiums paid to financial ledger by loan type.
- Calculation of loans fund interest and debt management expenses.
- Details of interest rates applied to internal investments.
- Calculation of interest on working balances.
- Interest accrual calculation.
- Principal and interest charges reports from the Logotech system.
- Calculation of loans fund creditors and debtors.
- Annual Treasury Report.
- Treasury Management Strategy Statement including the Prudential and Treasury Indicators.
- Review of observance of limits set by Prudential and Treasury Indicators.
- External fund manager(s) valuations including investment income schedules and movement in capital values.



## **Treasury Management Practices 8: Cash and Cash Flow Management**

### **8.1 Arrangements for Preparing/Submitting Cash Flow Statements**

Cash flow projections are prepared annually, monthly and daily. The annual and monthly cash flow projections are prepared from the previous years' cash flow records, adjusted for known changes in levels of income and expenditure and also changes in payments and receipts dates. These details are supplemented on an ongoing basis by information received of new or revised amounts to be paid or received as and when they are known.

### **8.2 Bank Statements Procedures**

The Council receives daily bank statements and a daily download of data from its bank. All amounts on the statement are checked to source data from Payroll, Creditors etc. Formal bank reconciliation is undertaken on a monthly basis.

### **8.3 Procedures for Banking of Funds**

All money received by an officer on behalf of the Council will without unreasonable delay be passed to Customer First to deposit in the Council's banking accounts.

### **8.4 Practices Concerning Prepayments to Obtain Benefits**

The Council has no formal arrangement in place. Where such opportunities arise, the prepayment would be sought and authorised by the responsible officer.

## Treasury Management Practices 9: Money Laundering

### 9.1 Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

Money laundering has the objective of concealing the origin of money generated through criminal activity. Legislation has given a higher profile to the need to report suspicions of money laundering. The Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) 2002 established the main offences relating to money laundering. In summary, these are:

- Concealing, disguising, converting, transferring or removing criminal property from England and Wales, from Scotland or from Northern Ireland.
- Being concerned in an arrangement which a person knows or suspects facilitates the acquisition, retention, use or control of criminal property.
- Acquiring, using or possessing criminal property.

These apply to all persons in the UK in a personal and professional capacity. Any person involved in any known or suspected money-laundering activity in the UK risks a criminal conviction. Other offences under the POCA include:

- Failure to disclose money-laundering offences.
- Tipping off a suspect, either directly or indirectly.
- Doing something that might prejudice an investigation – for example, falsifying a document.

### 9.2 The Terrorism Act 2000

This act made it an offence of money laundering to become concerned in an arrangement relating to the retention or control of property likely to be used for the purposes of terrorism, or resulting from acts of terrorism. All individuals and businesses in the UK have an obligation to report knowledge, reasonable grounds for belief or suspicion about the proceeds from, or finance likely to be used for, terrorism or its laundering, where it relates to information that comes to them in the course of their business or employment

### 9.3 The Money Laundering Regulations 2017

Organisations pursuing relevant business (especially those in the financial services industry regulated by the FSA) are required to appoint a nominated officer and implement internal reporting procedures; train relevant staff in the subject; establish internal procedures with respect to money laundering; obtain, verify and maintain evidence and records of the identity of new clients and transactions undertaken and report their suspicions. In June 2017 the UK Government published the Money Laundering Regulations 2017, which replaced the Money Laundering Regulations 2003 and 2007.

### 9.4 Local authorities

Public service organisations and their staff are subject to the full provisions of the Terrorism Act 2000 and may commit most of the principal offences under the POCA, but are not legally obliged to apply the provisions of the Money Laundering Regulations 2017. However, as responsible public bodies, they should employ policies and procedures which reflect the essence of the UK's anti-terrorist financing, and anti-money laundering, regimes. Accordingly this Council will do the following: -

- a. Evaluate the prospect of laundered monies being handled by them.
- b. Determine the appropriate safeguards to be put in place.
- c. Require every person engaged in treasury management to make themselves aware of their personal and legal responsibilities for money laundering awareness.
- d. Make all staff aware of their responsibilities under POCA.
- e. Appoint a member of staff to whom they can report any suspicions. This person is Head of Accountancy Services.
- f. In order to ensure compliance is appropriately managed, this Council will require senior management to give appropriate oversight, analysis and assessment of the risks of clients

and work/product types, systems for monitoring compliance with procedures and methods of communicating procedures and other information to personnel.

- g. The officer responsible for the creation and monitoring the implementation of a corporate anti money laundering policy and procedures is Head of Accountancy Services and it shall be a requirement that all services and departments implement this corporate policy and procedures.

## **9.5 Procedures for Establishing Identity / Authenticity of Lenders**

It is not a requirement under POCA for local authorities to require identification from every person or organisation it deals with. However, in respect of treasury management transactions, there is a need for due diligence and this will be effected by following the procedures below.

The Council does not accept loans from individuals.

All loans are obtained from the PWLB, other local authorities or from authorised institutions under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. This register can be accessed through the FSA website on [www.fsa.gov.uk](http://www.fsa.gov.uk).

When repaying loans, the procedures in 9.6 will be followed to check the bank details of the recipient.

## **9.6 Methodologies for Identifying Deposit Takers**

In the course of its Treasury activities, the Council will only lend money to or invest with those counterparties that are on its approved lending list. These will be local authorities, Bank of England and authorised deposit takers under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. The FSA register can be accessed through their website on [www.fsa.gov.uk](http://www.fsa.gov.uk).

All transactions will be carried out by CHAPS for making deposits or repaying loans.

## **Treasury Management Practices 10: Training and Qualifications**

The Council recognises that relevant individuals will need appropriate levels of training in treasury management due to its increasing complexity. There are two categories of relevant individuals: -

- a. Treasury management staff employed by the Council
- b. Members charged with governance of the treasury management function

All treasury management staff should receive appropriate training relevant to the requirements of their duties at the appropriate time. The Council operates a Quality Conversation process which identifies the training requirements of individual members of staff engaged on treasury related activities.

Additionally, training may also be provided on the job and it will be the responsibility of the Principal Accountant (Capital) to ensure that all staff under their authority receives the level of training appropriate to their duties. This will also apply to those staff that from time to time cover for absences from the treasury management team.

### **10.1 Details of Approved Training Courses**

Treasury management staff and members may go on courses provided by our treasury management consultants, CIPFA, money brokers etc., as appropriate.

### **10.2 Records of Training Received by Treasury Staff**

The senior treasury officer will maintain records on all staff and the training they receive.

### **10.3 Record of Secondment of Senior Management**

Records will be kept of senior management who are seconded into the treasury management section in order to gain first hand experience of treasury management operations.

### **10.4 Statement of Professional Practice (SOPP)**

- a. Where the Chief Financial Officer is a member of CIPFA, there is a professional need for the CFO to be seen to be committed to professional responsibilities through both personal compliance and by ensuring that relevant staff are appropriately trained.
- b. Other staff involved in treasury management activities who are members of CIPFA must also comply with the SOPP.

### **10.5 Member training records**

Records will be kept of all training in treasury management provided to members.

### **10.6 Members charged with governance**

Members charged with diligence also have a personal responsibility to ensure that they have the appropriate skills and training for their role.

## Treasury Management Practices 11: Use of External Service Providers

### 11.1 Details of Contracts with Service Providers, Including Bankers, Brokers, Consultants, Advisers

This Council will employ the services of other organisations to assist it in the field of treasury management. In particular, it will use external consultants to provide specialist advice in this ever more complex area. However, it will ensure that it fully understands what services are being provided and that they meet the needs of East Renfrewshire Council, especially in terms of being objective and free from conflicts of interest.

It will also ensure that the skills of the in house treasury management team are maintained to a high enough level whereby they can provide appropriate challenge to external advice and can avoid undue reliance on such advice.

Treasury management staff and their senior management will therefore be required to allocate appropriate levels of time to using the following sources of information so that they are able to develop suitable levels of understanding to carry out their duties, especially in challenge and avoiding undue reliance.

- The quality financial press
- Market data
- Information on government support for banks and building societies
- The credit ratings of that government support

#### 11.1.1 Banking Services

- a. Name of supplier of service is the Clydesdale Bank part of Virgin Money.
- b. Regulatory status – banking institution authorised to undertake banking activities by the FSA
- c. The branch address is: 21 Kilmarnock Road, Glasgow, G41 3YW.

#### 11.1.2 Money-Broking Services

East Renfrewshire Council will use money brokers for temporary borrowing and investment and long term borrowing. It will seek to give an even spread of business amongst the approved brokers. The performance of brokers is reviewed by the Senior Treasury Officer every day to see if any should be taken off the approved list and replaced by another choice and will make appropriate recommendations to change the approved brokers list to the Head of Accountancy Service.

- BGC Martins Brokers Ltd.
- BGC Sterling Brokers Ltd.
- Tradition Brokers Ltd.
- King & Shaxson Ltd
- Tullet Prebon
- Imperial Treasury Services Ltd
- Agency Treasury Services (part of Link Asset Services).

#### 11.1.3 Consultants'/Advisers' Services

##### Treasury Consultancy Services

The Council will seek to take expert advice on interest rate forecasts, annual treasury management strategy, timing for borrowing and lending, debt rescheduling, use of various borrowing and investment instruments, how to select credit worthy counterparties to put on its approved lending list etc.

The performance of consultants will be reviewed by the senior treasury officer every 6 months to check whether performance has met expectations.

- a. Name of supplier of service is Link Asset Services. Their address is 65 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7NQ
- b. Regulatory status: investment adviser authorised by the FSA
- c. Contract commenced 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and runs for 5 years.
- d. Payments due on 14<sup>th</sup> April and 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Other Consultancy services may be employed on short term contracts as and when required.

#### **11.1.4 Credit Rating Agency**

The Council receives a credit rating service through its treasury management consultants, the costs of which is included in the consultant's annual fee.

#### **11.2 Procedures and Frequency for Tendering Services**

See TMP2

## Treasury Management Practices 12: Corporate Governance

### 12.1.1 List of Documents to be Made Available for Public Inspection

- a. The Council is committed to the principle of openness and transparency in its treasury management function and in all of its functions.
- b. It has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury management and implemented key recommendations on developing Treasury Management Practices, formulating a Treasury Management Policy Statement and implementing the other principles of the Code.
- c. The following documents are available for public inspection: -

Treasury Management Policy Statement

Treasury Management Strategy Statement including the Annual Investment Strategy  
Annual Treasury Management Review Report including the Annual Investment Report  
Treasury Management monitoring reports (half yearly)

Annual accounts and financial instruments disclosure notes

Annual budget

10 Year Capital Plan

Minutes of Council / Cabinet / committee meetings

Schedule of all external funds managed by the Council on behalf of others and the basis of attributing interest earned and costs of these investments.

**Annex: Management practices for non-treasury investments**



## Management practices for non-treasury investments

East Renfrewshire Council recognises that investment in other financial assets and property primarily for financial return, taken for non-treasury management purposes, requires careful investment management. Such activity includes loans supporting service outcomes, investments in subsidiaries, and investment property portfolios.

East Renfrewshire Council will ensure that all the organisation's investments are covered in the capital strategy, investment strategy, and will set out, where relevant, the organisation's risk appetite and specific policies and arrangements for non-treasury investments. It will be recognised that the risk appetite for these activities may differ from that for treasury management.

East Renfrewshire Council will maintain a schedule setting out a summary of existing material investments, subsidiaries, joint ventures and liabilities including financial guarantees and the organisation's risk exposure.

### **Schools PFI Contract**

The Council signed a contract on 20 April 2000 with East Ren Schools Services Ltd to procure the provision of services for the Council under the government's Private Finance Initiative. The services are the provision of a new Mearns Primary School and an extension to St Ninian's High School. The contract is for a period of 25 years commencing August 2001 and the assets will revert to the Council at the end of the contract period.

### **Roads PFI Contract**

The Council finalised a PFI agreement in conjunction with South Lanarkshire Council and the Scottish Executive to construct the Glasgow Southern Orbital Road and the M77 extension. Some 26.67% of the asset relates to East Renfrewshire Council.

The contract was signed on 30 April 2003 with Connect to construct and thereafter maintain the new roads for a period of 30 years commencing April 2005. At the end of the contract period the roads will revert to the respective authorities.

### **Schools PPP Project**

On 10 December 2004 the Council signed a further schools PPP contract for the provision of a new Williamwood High School, a new Primary School/Community Inclusive Education Campus for Carlibar and extensions to Mearns Castle High School and Woodfarm High School. The extensions were handed over to the Council in December 2005 and the new schools were handed over on target in July 2006.

The contract for services at the new schools is for 25 years commencing in July 2006. Services at the extensions commenced in December 2005 but will have the same end date as for the new schools. At the end of the contract period the assets will revert to the Council.

### **Barrhead High School - Scotland's Schools for the Future NPD Project**

On 21 March 2016 the Council signed a contract for the construction and maintenance of a replacement Barrhead High School to be delivered under the Scotland's Schools for the Future programme non-profit distributing (NPD) model. The new facility was handed over to the Council in August 2017.

The contract is for 25 years from August 2017 and the asset will revert to the Council at the end of the contract period.

### **Investments in Hub Schemes**

In conjunction with this scheme the Council made investments in the Hub West of Scotland scheme for Company 1 (Barrhead High School) September 2014 and Company 3 (Barrhead Health Centre) March 2016

**Clyde Valley Waste Recycling Plant**

In January 2020 the Council entered into a 25 year contract for waste recycling which utilises residual waste to obtain thermal gain. North Lanarkshire is the lead authority, with an additional four councils taking part in the project through an Inter Authority Agreement.

**Subsidiaries:**

**East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust**

East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust was incorporated on 2 July 2015 as a company limited by guarantee. The company is also a registered charity, with East Renfrewshire Council being the sole member. The Council provides funding to the Trust based on an agreed service plan; however, the limit of the council's liability if the company was wound up is £1. Under accounting standards, the council has a controlling interest in this company.

**Common Good and Charitable Trusts**

Barrhead Common Good along with the Council's Charitable Trust Funds are administered by East Renfrewshire Council (as sole trustee)

**Joint Venture:**

**East Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board**

The East Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board was formed under the terms of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 and is a Joint Venture between East Renfrewshire Council and the Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board, established 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015

**The Council also exercises a significant influence over a number of entities, details of which are listed below.**

- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
- Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee
- Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

**The Council has non material interest in the following Joint Committees listed below:**

- Scotland Excel – 1 April 2008
- Clydeplan
- Continuing Education Gateway – formed April 2000
- West of Scotland Archaeology Service – set up 1997
- West of Scotland European Forum – set up 2007
- Glasgow and Clyde Valley Cabinet – established 20 January 2015
- Seemis Group LLP – incorporated 11 May 2009



**East Renfrewshire Council**  
**Treasury Management Policy Statement**

BLANK PAGE

## East Renfrewshire Council

# Treasury Management Policy Statement

## Background

The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses. On occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

## Definition

Treasury Management is defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as the management of the Council's cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

The Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their implications for the Council.

Effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of business and service objectives. The Council is therefore committed to the principles of achieving best value in treasury management, and to employing suitable performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

## Approved Activities

The approved activities of the treasury management function are: -

- (i) Management of the Council's cash flow and preparation of monthly cash flow statements.
- (ii) Short-term borrowing and lending for periods up to 364 days in accordance with cash flow requirements.
- (iii) Long term borrowing to fund capital expenditure;
- (iv) Management of the Council's loans fund and utilisation of internal funds;
- (v) Maintaining contact with the Council's bankers, the PWLB and brokers in the market;
- (vi) Organisation of the Council's debt with particular regard to interest rates, a balance between long and short term debt and the profile of maturity dates;
- (vii) Debt repayment and rescheduling;
- (viii) Evaluation of factors which influence funding decisions and consideration of alternatives to long term borrowing;

- (ix) Consideration, approval and use of new financial instruments and treasury management techniques;
- (x) Managing the underlying risk associated with the Council's capital financing and surplus funds activities;

### **Delegated Powers**

The Council has approved the delegation of powers to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to monitor Treasury policy. Executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing are delegated to the Head of Accountancy Service and through to staff who are all required to act in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services.

In exercising of the delegated powers the Head of Accountancy Service requires staff to observe the following procedures: -

- (i) Funds in hand are to be placed in a high interest investment account with the Council's bankers until repayment of temporary borrowings or placing as a temporary deposit can be effected.
- (ii) If temporary borrowings have been repaid in full, placement of funds shall be restricted to recognised clearing banks, money market funds and local authorities as per the authorised counter-party list. The deposits in any one institution must not exceed £5million without the written consent of the Head of Accountancy Service. This limit of £5million has the following exceptions:
  - (a) The Council's bankers, as the bank currently falls below the minimum criteria set, for practical and transactional reasons, any balances will be minimised in size and time.
  - (b) The deposit limit with Bank of Scotland is £12.5million;
  - (c) The deposit limit with Royal Bank of Scotland is £5million, included as long as it continues to be part nationalised, if it does not meet minimum criteria set;
  - (d) Deposits with all MMFs must not be greater than £60m and not greater than £10million in any one MMF;
  - (e) Deposits with DMO £30m;
  - (f) Deposits with Santander £7.5m.
- (iii) The Head of Accountancy Service must be specifically consulted prior to long term borrowing transactions taking place and must authorise these transactions in writing.

### **Approved Methods of Raising Finance**

Borrowing can be for temporary short-term periods of up to one year to maturity or long-term over one year to maturity. Normally, approved short-term borrowing is arranged through brokers dealing on the London Money Market and will be repayable after a fixed term or after an agreed period of notice. Competitive market quotations are obtained for longer term borrowing although in practice loans are normally with the Public Works Loan Board. No methods of raising finance other than those listed below will be used without the approval of the Council.

- (i) Approved Sources - Short-term
  - London Money Market
  - Bank Overdraft
  - Bank Loan
  - Internal Balances
- (ii) Approved Sources - Long-term

PWLB Fixed Maturity Loans  
PWLB Fixed Annuity Loans  
PWLB Fixed EIP Loans  
PWLB Variable Rate Loans  
Bank Fixed Rate Loans  
Bank Variable Rate Loans  
Market Fixed & Variable Rate Loans (Lobo's)  
Internal Balances  
Local temporary  
Local Bonds  
Local Authority Bonds  
Government Sources  
Lottery monies

- (iii) Leasing – Operating, Finance and Hire Purchase  
PFI / PPP / NPD / hub

### **Approved Organisations for Investment**

Lending is in the form of short-term sterling deposits with organisations approved as per the authorised counter-party list, which is regularly reviewed.

Only investments approved by the Council are permitted to be used and these are detailed in the Annual Treasury Strategy report.

### **External Managers**

External Treasury managers will only be appointed with the approval of the Council. No such appointment is envisaged at present.

The Head of Accountancy Service will however continue to use brokers and advisers in connection with Treasury Management.

### **Interest Rate Exposure**

Long-term borrowing is normally at fixed rates of interest as this leads to greater stability in overall borrowing costs. However some exposure to variable rate loans can also be appropriate particularly when there are interest rate fluctuations.

Exposure to longer-term variable rates loans (excluding PWLB) and temporary short –term loans taken together will not exceed 30% of the total debt outstanding, at the time of borrowing. A strategy for responding to interest rate volatility is incorporated in the Annual Treasury Strategy Report submitted to the Council for approval.

### **Reporting Procedures**

The Head of Accountancy Service shall report every six months to Council on the activities of the Treasury Management operation and on the exercise of the powers delegated. One of these reports will cover the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March and will be presented by 30<sup>th</sup> September of the

succeeding financial year.

Prior to the start of a financial year the Head of Accountancy Service shall also report to the Council on the strategy it is proposed to adopt with regard Treasury Management in the forthcoming financial year.

All reports will be presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee for review prior to being recommended to Council for Approval.



**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL****27 October 2021****Report by Chief Executive****COVID-19 RECOVERY - UPDATE****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To provide Elected Members with a further update on response, recovery and renewal work taking place across the Council and the Trust since the previous update in September.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. That the Council note and comment on the report.

**BACKGROUND**

3. Details of the levels system introduced by the Scottish Government; the ongoing vaccination programme; and the subsequent move out of the levels system with the associated effects on case numbers have all been reported at length in previous update reports considered by the Council.

4. In addition, in the report considered by the Council on 8 September, further information was provided on how continuing to respond to the effects of the pandemic was impacting on the ability of departments to deliver “normal” services and had contributed to significant backlogs across all departments. The report also referred to challenges still ahead not least of which was managing public expectation that services should all be back to normal,

**REPORT**

5. The purpose of this report is to provide a further update to Members on work being carried out across the Council since the previous report, and should be read in the context of the previous update reports presented to the [Emergencies Committee in May](#) the [Council in June](#) the [Council in October](#), the [Council in December](#), the [Council in June 2021](#) and most recently [the Council on 8 September 2021](#).

**Mass Vaccination Clinics**

6. Barrhead Health and Care Centre opened as a vaccination clinic on 26 September 2021, having moved from the Foundry. Carmichael Hall (Giffnock) remains in use as vaccination centre. Both buildings will provide ongoing COVID-19 vaccinations, as well as seasonal flu vaccines.

7. The operation of these vaccination centres represents a significant commitment from both the Trust and the HSCP. To ensure that the vaccination centres work efficiently and safely, staff support the non-clinical day-to-day operation through facilities management of the buildings, queue management and daily liaison with clinical staff. Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire has been providing additional help with support roles, allowing Trust and HSCP staff to return to their substantial roles. Voluntary Action is also supporting residents who may need transport assistance to attend their appointment.

### COVID-19 Testing

8. Testing remains a key aspect of the Scottish Government's response to the pandemic. The Mobile Testing Unit for symptomatic persons has continued to be located at the Greenlaw Works (Business Centre). This site operates on a Monday to Friday basis, with bookings made through the Government portal. Greenlaw remains a well-utilised site, reflected in its consistent usage since September 2020.

9. An Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) has been operational at the Cowan Park Pavilion (Barrhead) since 22 February 2021. It is open on a drop-in basis, to serve those living and working in the area. The site is staffed by NHS bank staff and will remain operational until the end of October 2021. In addition, a Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) will remain operational at the rear of the Spiersbridge Offices until the end of October, which is bookable and walk-in, and offers PCR testing.

10. The Council has recently taken delivery of a second Mobile Testing Bus, and these buses will be the main Community Testing offer going forward. They will be managed by Council officers and clinically staffed by the NHS bank staff who have been working at the ATS in Barrhead.

11. Should the need arise, the Council can request additional Scottish Ambulance Service operated MTUs similar to the one currently operating at Spiersbridge, as a supplement to the outlined testing arrangements. This allows targeting of specific communities where spikes of the virus have occurred, as well as enhancement of the testing offer where case rates are high.

12. All major Council buildings have been supplied with LFD test kits for staff members who wish to test themselves. LFD kits are also available online and at some local pharmacies.

### Annual leave

13. A number of services have also continued to be affected by staffing issues due to self-isolation requirements balanced with annual leave requirements. There was a high level of annual leave carried over from 2020 to ensure service delivery during the height of the pandemic and it is important that managers support employees who have worked throughout to take appropriate breaks away from the workplace which can impact capacity within some of the services.

### Environment Department

14. As is the case with other departments and as outlined previously, the Environment Department is certainly not in any way "back to normal". The Environment Department has dedicated considerable resources into supporting COVID response elements such as mass testing, mass vaccination and mobile testing. This has come through directing resources from other areas of work and as such has created a natural backlog. This will continue to build/exist while resources are so heavily devoted to key public health protective measures.

### Economic Development

15. Economic Development continues to carry out the majority of their duties from home. The Council's employability team, Work EastRen, are bringing back face-to-face meetings with clients from their office. This change has been introduced following discussions with Health and Safety colleagues, to ensure the continued safety of staff and customers. Telephone meetings are still offered, where this is the preferred option by the customer.

16. All Economic Development staff have taken on additional responsibilities in relation to the processing and paying of COVID business grants. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the team have paid out just over £21m in grants to a wide range of local businesses and taxi drivers.

17. The service is returning to prioritising key elements of the service plan, to be delivered in the remainder of 2021/22. They will also continue to process the next tranche of Covid business support grants.

#### Corporate Health and Safety Unit

18. Corporate Health and Safety Unit officers continue to devote significant resource to COVID related issues. There was an exponential growth in demand for risk assessment reviews for service tasks and buildings following the removal of many restrictions on 9 August. A significant amount of this work has completed, and approximately 50% of the Service is now dedicated to recovery and business as usual activity.

19. As per the previous report, there remains concern that the Council is at risk of not meeting legal compliance requirements, due to COVID issues. The issues are partially that the service is not permitted to address these under remaining restrictions but primarily due to the demand placed on the service for updated risk assessments. The following are of particular concern:

- Fire risk assessments for council buildings, housing property and leased property.
- Health and Safety training – primarily in relation to face-to-face delivery limitations.
- Occupational health screening.
- Risk assessments.
- Face fit testing.
- HAVS measurements have been unable to be conducted.
- Lone worker system.

20. When able to return to normal working, the Corporate Health and Safety Unit will have a backlog of work, which will make new work difficult to fulfil. Additionally, there will be a need to ensure relevant Health & Safety policies and information are updated, particularly those that have not been progressed in light of the pandemic response. It is imperative that the focus of the Corporate Health & Safety Unit (beyond COVID-19 work) is on areas of legal compliance. As such, there is no capacity for other subjects, and there will not be for some time to come.

#### Neighbourhood Services

21. There remains a requirement to retain “work bubbles” to contain any possible spread of COVID-19 amongst essential frontline personnel, if positive cases are identified. Neighbourhood Services will continue this approach with the aim of avoiding large numbers of key frontline officers being required to isolate, protecting our staff and essential services.

22. Neighbourhood Services are regularly utilising additional agency staff to fill gaps and deliver priority frontline services. This necessitates a hiring and retention of additional fleet beyond the normal establishment.

23. In addition to self-isolation requirements, staff accumulated high levels of annual leave in 2020 – Service Managers are supporting employees using any carry over and 2021 allowances. Employees were unable to use allocated leave as they were ensuring continued service delivery when colleagues were shielding.

24. There remains concern in relation to the available pool of HGV drivers. A consequence of the widely publicised national shortage of drivers is that external employers are offering

improved terms to the available pool of HGV drivers. Additionally there remains delays to the DVLA renewal process for any employees who hold a licence. These factors may leave the Council in a position where it does not have the required HGV employee numbers to facilitate essential services, primarily the collection of residential and trade waste.

25. Driver shortages have been experienced by our contractors, particularly affecting our Household Waste and Recycling Centre at Barrhead, resulting in some build-up of waste. Neighbourhood Services are working in partnership with contractors to resolve this.

26. Refuse and recycling collections are in the main prioritised over other frontline services, which may consequently suffer backlogs. This may include grass cutting, weed spraying, street cleaning and ad-hoc cleansing complaints.

27. Should work bubbles continue to be required longer term, next season's grass cutting schedules could be considerably hampered.

### Trading Standards

28. Trading Standards played a significant and leading role in enforcing and advising business on the Regulations restricting trading activities during COVID-19. This led to a significant shift in resources away from our core service plans for 2019/20 and 2020/21. The service is prioritising key elements of the service plan to be delivered in the remainder of 2020/21 while continuing to monitor and advise traders related to COVID-19. Key priority delivery has been supported through creative risk assessments and new ways of working.

29. The fuel shortage concerns of late September 2021 saw Trading Standards deployed. Officers were in regular liaison with local filling stations, understanding supply levels and any action undertaken by forecourts. While national emergency plans were not invoked, Trading Standards responded to the concerns by maintaining relationships with stations across East Renfrewshire, offering advice where required.

### Environmental Health

30. All Environmental Health staff have undertaken additional COVID responsibilities, which have been unpredictable in complexity and often unique and very time consuming. The Service will continue to prioritise Coronavirus related enquiries, Test & Protect notifications, clusters, outbreaks, Community Testing forums, internal enquiries from other Services and supporting Asymptomatic Testing and Vaccination Centres. There are also additional enforcement duties arising from the recent vaccination certification legislation. The result is that the ability to perform the full range of functions in an effective manner has been compromised.

31. Compared to pre-pandemic levels, the significant rise in service requests, particularly related to public health, remains extremely high. The restarting of the food law interventions means that resources previously directed to Coronavirus compliance will be impacted. These interventions were paused in March 2020 by Food Standards Scotland, to enable environmental health officers to support the response to and enforcement of Covid emergency legislation.

32. Concurrently, there has been new legislation enacted, which will place additional burdens on the Service. These include new requirements arising from EU exit; changed regulations to interlinked heat, fire & carbon monoxide detectors in residential properties; new requirements from the Drinking Water Quality Regulator (DWQR); and forthcoming changes to the animal welfare licensing regime.

33. The workload of Environmental Health continues to increase in line with the number of other Council Services working through their own backlogs. Areas such as planning applications, which require an Environmental Health input, have begun to increase.

#### Housing

34. Homeless and Housing Advice services have reintroduced face-to-face meetings in homes and in Council buildings. Telephone interviews are still offered, where the customer prefers this. The reintroduction took place following discussions with colleagues in Health and Safety, with a view to ensuring the continued safety for customers and staff. Housing Officers have also reintroduced face-to-face visits in tenants' homes to provide support and assistance.

35. While allocations of housing remains relatively unaffected by Coronavirus restrictions, there remains a significant pressure on homelessness. There continues to be a backlog of homeless households awaiting a permanent offer of accommodation and in temporary accommodation. Within the allocations waiting list, approximately 100 are homeless group A.

36. Rent arrears have continued to rise through 2021/22, in light of the negative impact the pandemic has had on family incomes. The return of home visits means that officers are able to discuss issues in the tenant's home to address arrears. Additionally, Housing are taking advantage of the Tenants Grant Fund provided by the Scottish Government. This fund will be used to prevent both social and private tenants losing their homes due to the financial impacts of COVID-19. While formal recovery actions, such as notice of proceedings and the courts, have resumed; these actions will only be taken where all other options to prevent arrears and recovery actions have been exhausted.

37. There remains potential for delays to non-essential repairs if trades staff are required to self-isolate.

38. Planned improvement works such as kitchens are expected to commence in the autumn, commencing with the 2019-20 backlog. Housing Services are currently undertaking the required procurement works to have appropriate contracts in place. However, the construction industry is experiencing a shortage of some materials, as well as changeable pricing. This may cause delays to the planned works.

#### Property and Technical Services

39. The construction industry continues to face supply chain issues, which drives up prices and can delay completion. Additionally, some contractors are facing staff shortages or have not fully recovered. Both Property and Technical Services continue to work with other services and with Procurement to mitigate both cost and time impacts to projects.

40. Technical Services continue to support services to realise their agreed capital plan aspirations as well as the challenges faced by planned capital works. Technical Services are working with partners in essentially seeking to deliver two years' worth of project ambitions into a compressed period.

41. Ventilation in schools remains a primary focus for the Property Services Team. Ventilation has been identified as a key factor in reducing the risks of Coronavirus and will be crucial in protecting our staff, pupils and the public. Staffing resources require to be allocated to ensure that vital compliance maintenance works are undertaken particularly as more buildings reopen or increase occupancy.

42. As part of the ventilation programme, Property Services are liaising with engineers to assess properties. This will include undertaking any minor works identified to comply with Government Guidance. Technical Services will progress the procurement of works specified

by completed designs agreed with the ventilation engineers. Similar to other works, progress in the ventilation programme will be dependent on the availability of contractors, materials and access to buildings.

43. The Scottish Government have additionally announced that Carbon Dioxide monitoring works will be required within classrooms, with £10m funding made available nationally, which is coupled with a requirement for fortnightly returns on progress. The timescales and reporting involved in this project will represent a significant undertaking for Property Services and as a result, affect their ability to undertake other tasks.

#### Development Management and Building Standards

44. Development Management and Building Standards are able to carry out their statutory duties, with protective measures in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19. Site visits are kept to a minimum, and are either pre-arranged or have limited officer attendance. Both services continue with limited public interaction, with officers primarily working from home. Intermittent IT and equipment issues have provided some constraints in the ability of officers to offer the same level of service as pre-Coronavirus.

45. Developers are asked to provide Building Standards with photographs or videos as evidence, to supplement site visits. This approach has increased workload, requiring extra communications for most submissions. There has also been an increase in completion certificate refusals where satisfactory evidence of the work undertaken has not been produced resulting in extra work for the officers.

46. One of the unforeseen consequences of COVID-19 and increased home working of people has been increased householder applications, particularly for extensions and garden rooms. The additional workload has resulted in a backlog in processing planning applications, which the Development Management Service is currently working to clear. This has been exacerbated by staff shortages and additional online demand from members of the public seeking advice, reporting unauthorised work and complaining about service problems/delays.

47. Public and business demand on Development Management continues to be very high, likely because of the requirement for lifestyle / employment changes across society, arising from COVID-19. There remains a substantial backlog caused by new and existing applications to be processed.

48. In addition, the demands on internal and external stakeholders arising from COVID has affected their ability to provide consultation responses to Development Management. Consequently, the determination of some planning applications, particularly large and complex applications have been unavoidably delayed.

#### Strategy/Local Development Plan

49. As referenced in the previous report, there had been delay in the receipt of the Examination Report of the Proposed LDP2, by approximately three months. The Council has now received the Examination Report and this will allow the progression of the Proposed LDP2 to adoption and future development of LDP3. Timescales for the preparation of the annual Housing Land audit, Vacant and Derelict land and employment monitoring have also been impacted by COVID restrictions.

#### Roads & Transportation

50. Roads and Transportation are continuing to recover with road inspections almost back on track. Roads are also continuing with their revenue and capital programme without any significant issues at present.

51. Significant concerns remain in relation to issues surrounding HGV drivers and their potential to present issues with delivering winter maintenance. This concern is only exacerbated if we were to face any outbreak of cases or significant levels of self-isolation. The service currently experiences absences of staff who have tested positive or who are isolating, and this scenario is likely to continue; with impacts on service delivery.

52. The Road Service also relies on Neighbourhood Services to deliver Winter Maintenance. Given they will face the same issues outlined above, this could further adversely affect the delivery of the Winter Maintenance programme.

## **Education Department**

### **Response & Recovery**

53. The Education Department continues to experience relatively high levels of disruption resulting from the ongoing impacts of Covid. Schools and nurseries across the authority are continuing to deal with Covid on an ongoing basis, balancing their response with their approaches to recovery following an unprecedented period of disruption over the last 18 months, including two extended periods of closure.

54. Whilst schools and nurseries have operated as a 'near normal' service for a number of months since early spring and have been recovering well, Covid continues to present a number of significant challenges across the whole Education Department.

### **Response to Covid within Schools and Nurseries**

55. In September, updated guidance was published by the Scottish Government, refining the approach to contact tracing and self-isolation requirements for pupils and staff within education establishments. Importantly, the guidance reiterated that contact tracing was to be undertaken by Test & Protect and would not be the responsibility for school staff, apart from in very specific exceptional cases. Whilst this support has been welcome, school staff continue to face significant additional workload pressures as an ongoing impact of Covid.

56. With the new approaches to self-isolation, whereby individuals can end isolation following a negative PCR test, schools and nurseries have continued to experience significant levels of pupil and staff absence. Whilst this can often be short term, with individuals able to return to work or education following a negative test, it continues to place an additional burden on establishments requiring to provide cover and being unable to fully benefit from the additional staffing resources being deployed, including the deployment of staff to target children and young people to address learning loss.

57. In addition, whilst the new approach has been beneficial in reducing the requirement for whole class isolation in the event of a positive case being identified, this has placed an additional impact on staff to support the provision for remote learning. Given high rates of individual pupil absence, teachers are facing additional pressures in ensuring appropriate levels of remote learning provision whilst also providing in-person learning within the classroom. Again, head teachers are utilising additional recovery staff to provide this support.

58. Whilst absence rates have been significantly higher than average, due to the ongoing impacts of Covid and the support of families and staff to adhere to the testing requirements, the rates of cases within schools and nurseries appear to have been decreasing in recent weeks. This is in line with the general decrease in Covid rates across East Renfrewshire over recent weeks following the initial spike in late summer.

59. All of our schools and nurseries remain vigilant to the risks of Covid transmission and continue to review their risk assessments, with the support of health and safety, to ensure they can remain as safe as possible for our staff and pupils. The Scottish Government continues to review the national guidance to ensure that all appropriate mitigations remain in place and a further review is anticipated in the coming weeks.

### Recovery

60. Given the significant disruption to education throughout the pandemic, detailed work has been undertaken, in line with the department's annual performance monitoring, to understand the impact on children and young people to ensure that we take the most appropriate and supportive approach to recovery across all of our schools and nurseries. This work has included ongoing performance monitoring of attainment in addition to wider consultation exercises with all of the department's stakeholders, including children and young people, staff and families.

61. In September, a report to Education Committee ([link](#)) provided further detail on the scale of the impact of the pandemic on children and young people in school and nursery. The report outlined that progress made towards the four national priorities as set out in the National Improvement Framework has been negatively impacted by the periods of closure and disruption, with decreases in attainment levels for pupils at certain stages. Most notably, the efforts to close the attainment gap had been negatively impacted, with attainment amongst those in the lowest SIMD being most affected. In addition, the report recognised the ongoing, longer term impacts of the disruption on specific children and young people. There will be a need to have a continued focus on the support offered to this group of learners to prevent any longer term legacy of the pandemic.

62. The department has produced the *Building Back Better and Fairer* framework, establishing key priorities to support schools and nurseries as they recover from the pandemic, and complementing the existing activities outlined in the Local Improvement Plan (LIP). This framework is being implemented within schools throughout the current school session and the department will be continuing to report on progress alongside the LIP throughout the year.

### Staff & Pupil Wellbeing

63. Healthier Minds, the multi-stakeholder recovery team, has continued to provide vital support in the areas of mental wellbeing. The number of children and young people accessing this service continues to increase and as a result, there are plans in place to increase the capacity of the team through additional staffing. From November 2020 to October 2021, the hub received 339 referrals with the main reasons for referrals anxiety and low mood.

64. The Healthier Minds website continues to provide information, guidance, resources and signposts to further resources in order to support children and young people, parents and carers and school staff. The website is updated on a continual basis as a result of feedback from staff, children, young people and their families. All schools took time to refresh their knowledge of the resource during the August In-service Day. The Educational Psychology Department created a [short video](#) to support staff navigate the resource.

65. Specific support has been offered to staff in schools in recognition of how challenging the past 18 months have been. This has included the development of a Mindfulness Course for senior leaders, re-convening the Education Recovery Group, Pastoral Heads of Service meeting with Cluster Management Groups and Educational Psychologists supporting staff during collegiate time.



66. There continues to be an increase in the impact of the wellbeing of children and young people and how they are communicating their anxieties. Close partnership working with partners such as HSCP and Children1st has enabled the department to continue to support children and young people, families and staff but there remains a pressure on the department and our partners.

67. Due to the success of the Get into Summer programme and we were able to use the remaining funding to enable a further 80 places for vulnerable children and young people in the October holiday camps. These were delivered by the ERCL Trust and the primary focus was on supporting care experienced children and young people to participate. The success of the summer programme was built on the very strong working relationships that already exist across East Renfrewshire's children's services. These relationships and the level of partnership working, have only strengthened further during the pandemic.

68. The Education Department is continuing to work closely with CHSU to ensure that lets within school buildings are able to resume as quickly as possible to further support the wellbeing of children and young people. With many out of school activities having been unable to operate for the entirety of the pandemic, and with the poorer weather, the department is committed to ensuring that these facilities will be available, through the Trust, to clubs and groups as soon as possible.

69. The department has taken a 3 phased approach to the resumption of activities in school buildings:

- a. Phase 1 – ERC and Trust lets – this has included activities such as after school clubs, out of school care provision, community sports activities and HSCP lets. These are all currently underway.
- b. Phase 2 – children and young people sports clubs and activities – this includes sports clubs and other groups (such as Scouts, Guides, etc). It is intended that these groups will resume as quickly as possible in October.
- c. Phase 3 – adult sports clubs and activities – this includes all remaining lets. The timing for this will be dependent on the timescales for phase 2.

70. All of the above activities remain subject to ongoing risk assessments and the department will continue to ensure that the safety of staff and pupils, as well as those attending such clubs, is considered fully ahead of these plans being put in place.

### Education Support Services

71. The wider Education Department has continued to recover well over recent months, in spite of the continuing challenges the department faces as a result of Covid. Throughout the pandemic, staff have primarily been working from home, with all staff across our support services having been set up to work remotely. With schools and nurseries having now returned to a 'near normal' service, staff across some specific teams have begun a limited, phased return to the office with the primary purpose of being able to offer a higher level of support to both education establishments and the departmental leadership team.

72. Given the legislative requirements of the work undertaken in support of schools and nurseries, it has not been possible for this to have been postponed or delayed throughout the pandemic disruption. Staff across all teams have been working to support schools and nurseries across the last 18 months, with no significant backlogs in essential work having occurred throughout this period.

73. Following the return of schools and nurseries in August, demand for services, primarily from external customers, has continued to be very high, with an expectation of normal service

having now resumed. Teams are continuing to experience a significantly increased workload which has resulted in lower priority activity now having to be delayed. The department's leadership team continue to monitor the situation and work with managers to ensure support is available where required.

## HSCP

74. The HSCP, in common with health and social care services across Scotland is under considerable pressure. A combination of increased demand across all services and staff absence is creating significant problems with capacity. This is particularly acute in care at home, but is evident in all services. We continue to experience higher rates of referrals and more complex presentations as a result of the pandemic.

### HSCP Vaccination Programme

75. In October 2021 the HSCP commenced the COVID-19 booster and flu vaccination programme for care homes. Mirroring the vaccination programme in December 2020 the majority of care home residents are to be vaccinated over a two week period, by staff volunteering from nursing teams across the HSCP. At the time of writing, the nursing team have attended five care homes with 284 flu vaccinations and 275 Covid booster vaccinations administered.

76. District nurses supported by other HSCP staff are also now underway with the COVID-19 booster and flu vaccination programme for residents in their own homes. These residents are unable to attend the vaccinations centres due to frailty or other health issues. The housebound vaccination programme will see over 1500 residents vaccinated at home. This is in addition to the 3,500 visits they undertake to deliver care to people in their own homes each month.

### PPE

77. The HSCP continues to run the PPE hub set up and run by HSCP staff. Distribution of essential protective supplies to HSCP staff, partner providers, carers and personal assistants. To date we have issued 916,662 gloves, 81,000 aprons and over 1 million masks.

78. HSCP district nursing and care home liaison nursing staff continue to support COVID testing for those unable to access testing centres, mostly our care home and housebound populations. They supported care home staff to undertake a range of testing including PCR and lateral flow testing. HSCP admin staff have linked with laboratories, pharmacy, and NHS transport to put in place easy access to testing including running out of hours on call arrangements for many months.

### Support to Care Homes

79. In addition to testing and vaccination, a multi-disciplinary Care Home Oversight Group continues to meet twice weekly to provide co-ordinated support to care homes. Care homes have been caring for some of our most vulnerable residents over the course of the pandemic. Care home liaison staff have supported homes to manage residents' care, with advice on pressure area care, food, fluids and nutrition and individual nursing issues. Along with NHSGGC colleagues, they have offered infection prevention control advice and supportive visits. Commissioning and contracts staff have supported homes with daily welfare calls, and arranged virtual meetings and workshops for managers, updating them on changes to guidance and providing a forum for peer support. The HSCP adult support and protection team has worked closely with homes advising and investigating to keep the most vulnerable individuals safe from harm. Bespoke support has been offered to care homes particularly affected by the pandemic and the wellbeing of staff and residents continues to be a high HSCP priority.

### Supporting people at home

80. Whilst the HSCP had to close our day services our learning disability staff have worked with our provider partners throughout the pandemic period to establish outreach and wraparound support for individuals and their families and our older people's Kirkton service staff were redeployed to support care at home.

81. Care at home has seen additional pressures due to a desire from more people to be supported at home and with more complex discharges. At the start of the pandemic some families wanted to limit the number of people coming into their homes and asked for their services to be suspended but as more people have been vaccinated the majority have reinstated services. In the current phase of the pandemic the service has been experiencing capacity pressures with higher than expected levels of staff absence and increased waiting times to access support. As a result of pressures and resource issues, in the last week of September there were: 11 people in hospital awaiting a package of care to facilitate a safe discharge; 18 people in the community awaiting services or an increase in support; and 5 people who have chosen to accept an intermediate care bed whilst awaiting services. External market provision has played a significant role in East Renfrewshire HSCP's previous track record and timely provision of care and support services. However the volume of referrals accepted by partner providers has reduced by circa 50%.

82. Our Hospital to Home team work to support timely and appropriate discharges from hospital. During the pandemic we have experienced significant issues around supporting 'adults with incapacity' and establishing appropriate guardianship/Power of Attorney arrangements. We are currently seeing an increase in delayed discharges. This is being driven by the pressure on care at home services which is restricting access. A majority of care at home provision in East Renfrewshire is delivered by partner providers and we are seeing limited capacity internally. We continue to work with partner providers to encourage and assist them to take on complex cases as people are discharged from hospital.

83. Our community rehabilitation teams continue to experience increased pressures due to the impact on the older population of reduced physical activity and deconditioning secondary to lockdown, with an increase in frailty and frailty related falls. The Rehabilitation Teams were one of the few services operating almost as 'normal' undertaking face to face visits throughout, and have seen a significant increase in additional caseload in the absence of a number of other specialist and community based services. There are continued increased numbers of urgent/prevention of admission to hospital referrals from GPs and an increase in out of hours/A&E referrals to the teams. Individuals are being discharged home earlier from hospital which results in more complex intensive rehabilitation goals to be achieved over a prolonged time within the community setting. The average of 40–50 referrals per week in 2019 / early 2020 has risen to and been sustained at 70-80 per week over the past 18 months.

84. Across all mental health and recovery services, work is continuing to provide person-centred care throughout the challenges that COVID-19 has presented. The Primary Care Mental Health Team continues to offer psychological interventions remotely, working through the backlog and marginally keeping within the national target. The Older Adult Mental Health Team continues to offer in person support meeting the needs of our most vulnerable population, despite COVID-19 challenges that have affected the workforce. The team implemented a split workforce system of team A and team B to reduce the risk of spread. The Community Mental Health Team continues to see our most vulnerable population with a diagnosis of severe and enduring mental illness. We are currently experiencing challenges with staffing medical clinics, and planning work is underway to review our current model of care and practices. Peer support workers are continuing to prove value, assisting people to make a plan that helps maintain their mental health and wellbeing. The Community Addictions Team continues to see clients through a hybrid model of office, community and virtual appointments. They are offering additional groups to facilitate peer support and enhance

recovery. The Mental Health Officer (MHO) team have filled some vacant positions recently, increasing the capacity to support the most vulnerable individuals who require statutory measures for their care and treatment. There are challenges in relation to covering the MHO duty rota, however, this has been alleviated with support from the hospital to home team who have offered to collaborate to fill some slots.

85. Our locality social work teams are seeing a growing backlog of overdue community care reviews (currently 217). This has resulted from a combination of additional support being required in the community and from the requirement for teams to focus on our pandemic response and most urgent need. As we progress our recovery and adapt to changing need we need to recognise this additional work pressure on our teams. We are currently looking at options to replicate the model used to undertake outstanding reviews of our residents within care homes, and take on additional staff to undertake these reviews.

#### Support to Children and Families

86. Over the course of the pandemic HSCP Children's Services have maintained high rates of contact with children. (Childs Plan contacts averaged 72%/week; Child Protection averaged 100%/week; Throughcare/aftercare averaged 90%/week.), and have successfully managed to support the highest number of looked after children in school (57%). Within Youth intensive services contact levels with young people remained very high, averaging at 81% of young people having contact at least once per fortnight

87. Our teams are seeing increasing complexity particularly for children with diagnosed neurodevelopmental disorders and a higher prevalence of families in crisis leading to more of these children coming under child protection and an associated increase in numbers coming into care. Despite this, 95% of children under child protection are supported in our local communities. Intensive Family Support packages of support and intervention have been designed to prevent breakdown and will be a focus for 2021/22. Our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team (CAMHS) is under considerable pressure and having to prioritise those young people with the most urgent need. The creation of the multi-agency Healthier Minds Team is helping to support young people with less urgent, but no less distressing, need for support with their mental health.

88. As a result of the pandemic there has been a significant increase in the number of children with complex and additional support needs who have become looked after. Currently 17% of looked after children have a disability evidencing that the pandemic has significantly affected families with children who have additional support needs.

#### Support to Carers

89. Working with ER Carers, we have been ensuring carers have access to guidance and PPE. Check-in calls to carers were introduced by ER Carers, and carers have been offered support to set up and manage a peer support Facebook Group. The Mental Health Carers group continues to run virtually. The pandemic has impacted on carers, with the lack of resources and stimulation for the cared for person impacting on the health and wellbeing of all individuals. We have worked with the Care Collective to refresh our Carers Strategy. East Renfrewshire's Short Breaks Statement has also been updated to ensure all advice and information is current and includes the development of creative, COVID-19-safe online breaks that meet the outcomes of the Carer and the cared for person.

#### Corporate and Community Services Department

90. As is the case in other parts of the Council, the Corporate and Community Services department is not back to business as usual in any sense. Covid related requirements combined with major line of business system changes to Council Tax and benefits, HR and

Payroll and customer management systems during the last year while staff were working from home has taken considerable amount of staff resource and created backlogs. Priority is being given the working through these whilst continuing to meet the new and increasing demand coming in to services.

## HR

91. Reductions in the number of employees absent as a result of COVID-19 including those employees reporting sick, isolating, and unable to work from home had been seen by the end of August however numbers sharply increased again and a peak was seen mid-September with 94 employees unable to work and a further 74 employees affected however able to work from home. Numbers are now declining in line with the national picture.

92. During 2020 there was a decrease in sickness absence which was attributed to covid absence being reported separately and a proportion of the workforce working from home so more likely to be able to attend the workplace remotely and less likely to be affected by cold/flu-type illnesses due to less mixing with other people. Sickness absences are again increasing. Stress (non-work related) continues to be the top absence reason and there has been an increase in the number of employees accessing counselling services in the past 12 months. It is important we continue to support the health and wellbeing of our employees during this time and a number of measures are in place to continue to provide this support.

93. Recruitment volumes remain high as a result of additional COVID funding received specifically in Education and HSCP, natural turnover and services now returning to recruit roles and undertake organisational change.

## Customer First

94. In Customer First customer contact continues to be high across all contact channels. As part of the recovery Contact Centre staff returned to the office on 29 April which provided improved call management. Initially our call handling rate was lower than normal due to a number of factors including an extremely high call rate, longer than normal call times and staff absences. Call times are taking longer with customers often contacting about multiple and more complex issues.

95. During the summer period there was a high volume of enquires in relation to cleansing and council tax e-mail enquiries and support was given from these services to help the customer service team achieve better call handling rates and response times for customers overall.

96. Call volumes are now at more manageable levels and our call answer rate has improved and recently returned to pre-covid levels. Staff absence rates have improved and whilst there has been some self-isolation cases this has not significantly impacted service delivery.

97. The number of death registrations has increased and at the covid peak in September we recorded 181% more deaths compared to last year (165 September 2021, 91 September 2020). Death registration continues to be carried out remotely, which takes longer compared to face to face and there has been a significant increase in email enquiries from undertakers and families related to death registrations and also follow-up calls compared to pre-covid. There continues to be a high volume of enquires about arranging wedding dates. There has also been a high demand for copy certificates as a result of Glasgow City Council closing this service to focus on their high volume of death registrations. The timescales for copy certificates has been extended to support this and we continue to monitor this closely to allow the team to focus on our statutory registration services.

98. MART continue to see an increase in Income Maximisation referrals and enquires, these continue to be time consuming and intensive. The Team have supported residents through the application process for the Low Income Pandemic Payment and have provided support processing Self Isolation Support Grants.

#### Community Safety

99. The Community Wardens have returned to normal working practices with staff being able to go into households when required, subject to Covid screening questions and windows being opened. Parking enforcement resumed during in August 2021 and vehicles can now be double crewed in line with mitigating factors within the H&S Risk Assessment. Two members of the Community Warden team are still seconded to the isolation support calls team for assessments for support grants.

#### ICT

100. The ICT Service continues to operate a blended approach with continued increasing levels of support calls and service requests. A new safe screened-off support area has been created at Barrhead with a new Safe System of Work in place. If support is required our users will be invited to attend. This will further enhance the ability to provide face to face support in a safe and comfortable manner. The Service Desk team remains under significant pressure. The service is still unable to accommodate low priority service requests due to the current working conditions and service pressures.

#### Democratic Services

101. With the continuing relaxation of restrictions and to ensure the service is ready to respond to increasing numbers of Elected Members returning to the office more regularly, the vacant Leaders Secretary/Members Services Officer has now been filled. In relation to hybrid meetings, the company carrying out the upgrade works have been inundated with orders leading to long delays in installation. Negotiations for as early an installation date as possible are ongoing.

#### Isolation Support

102. Via Community Safety, the Council continues to provide an Isolation Support service for those asked to isolate by Public Health Scotland. This includes text messages to all who have consented to have their details passed to the Council and follow-up outbound phonecalls to each household. The team also deals with inbound COVID contacts via the National Assistance Helpline. After a spike in recent months, the volume of isolation support contacts has now stabilised. This service will remain in place until at least the end of December 2021. It is expected that the Scottish Government will require this to be carried on into 2022, but this has not yet been confirmed. Self-Isolation Support Grants (SISG) are also continuing, with initial assessment and evidence gathering by the Isolation Support team and final assessment by the Benefits/Scottish Welfare Fund team. Discussions are also ongoing with Greater Glasgow councils and the Scottish Government about the provision of isolation support during COP26, particularly in the event that isolation accommodation is required when the city's hotels are at capacity. East Renfrewshire Council has made some contingency provision for isolation accommodation or homelessness needs during the COP 26 period.

#### Pandemic Payments

103. The Council is currently administering Low Income Pandemic Payments (i.e. payments of £130 per household to those on Council Tax Reduction) to c.5000 households during October. In addition, payments are being processed for October Family Pandemic Payments paid on a 'per child' basis to those entitled to Free School Meals as a result of Low Income, c.1800 children. Further payments to this group will also be made in December and then

quarterly in 2022. New business grants are also being worked on and we are currently awaiting details of the requirements on councils following the UK government's announcement of a Household Support Fund to support those on low incomes in the context of rising prices, the end of furlough, and the end of the £20 Universal Credit uplift.

#### Humanitarian Support Research & Funding

104. Humanitarian support research and engagement is continuing to inform the Council's approach to recovery and renewal. Early findings suggest that it may be too early for groups to engage with the community bid process for humanitarian funding that is available on a one-off basis. Timescales for the community process are currently being reviewed.

#### Chief Executive's

##### Accountancy Services

105. Most Accountancy services staff are still working from home and are managing to cover all of their usual duties. We are, however, continuing to experience increased workloads due to the demands for COVID related financial information, returns and grant monitoring and staff are struggling to keep up with all demands. This has also affected progress in developing the new financial system, introduced in 2019, with a view to maximising efficiencies and so the anticipated benefits for staff across the Council have not yet been achieved. Despite these challenges, work on the 2022/23 budget preparation is now back on schedule.

106. Our external auditors have recently confirmed that, due to the continuation of remote working, the external audit of the Council's 2020/21 accounts will take longer than usual with the statutory deadline for accounts sign off being once again extended to 30 November rather than 30 September. As a result of this, the sign off of the Council's 2020/21 accounts has been delayed until 25 November 2021.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

107. That the Council note and comment on the report.

Report Co-ordinator  
Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager  
577 3023

BLANK PAGE