

To: Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

On: 28 November 2016

Report by: Peter Macleod, Director of Children's Services

Heading: Audit Scotland Report, 'Social Work in Scotland'

1. Summary

- 1.1. Audit Scotland's latest report on, 'Social Work in Scotland' highlights the risks to high quality sustainable social work services within the context of continuing financial constraint, well documented demographic challenges and changes to structures and governance within social care and social work.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board:
- Notes the contents of this report.

3. Background

3.1 Audit Scotland

- 3.1 In September 2016, Audit Scotland published a report on, 'Social Work in Scotland'. The full report can be accessed via the following web link:

<http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/social-work-in-scotland>

The report stated that the Social Work profession was at a watershed, and made several key recommendations on the following issues:

- Social Work Strategy and Service Planning;
- Governance and Scrutiny Arrangements;
- Workforce; and
- Service Efficiency and Effectiveness

- 3.2 The purpose of the audit was to examine the effectiveness of approaches to address the financial and demographic pressures on Social Work Services; and also to consider the impact on service users and carers. Auditors found that current approaches to the delivery of Social Work services by local authorities are not sustainable. The findings reflect key messages which have emerged from focused change programmes such as Reshaping Care for Older People. In addition to this, the report highlights the need for investment in preventative approaches, improved partnership working and the value of community capacity building. The importance of long term planning based on an understanding of current and future needs, as well as the availability of resources on a whole systems basis – strategic commissioning – is stressed by the auditors. The current financial climate makes it more challenging to fund long-term preventative approaches which may not generate benefits in the short or medium term.

4. Social Work Expenditure

- 4.1 Social Work and social care in Scotland accounts for over £3billion of public expenditure and employs more than 200,000 people. Expenditure in the sector has been protected during the past few years of shrinking resource – since 2010/11 spending on social work has increased by 3% despite revenue funding for councils reducing by 11% in the same period. Recruitment and retention is a long-standing challenge in the sector.

5. Legislative context

- 5.1 Almost all activities undertaken by Social Work are on a statutory footing, and legislation relating to Social Work is a devolved matter. There is a considerable body of legislation in the Social Work sector and Audit Scotland have highlighted the additional costs arising from recent legislation including the Social Care (Self Directed Support)(Scotland) Act 2013 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 3.5 In terms of governance, the most significant piece of legislation in recent years is the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 which established integrated health and social care services in Scotland. That legislation established Integration Joint Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships, and changed the democratic scrutiny of social work services which fall within their remit. Democratic scrutiny rests with a small number of elected members and an equal number of non-executive Health Board members. Audit Scotland raise this as a potential risk, although it is acknowledged that it is too early in the process to establish the impact of this. The challenges of the joint accountability of HSCP Chief Officers are also noted.

6. Challenges and Pressures

- 6.1 Audit Scotland highlight the range of particular pressures on Social Work services, including an ageing population (and the consequent continued growth in demand for services such as care at home and Mental Health Officer services), the new legal duties

relating to support for carers, the impact of increased personalization on existing services and on budgets, and the ongoing challenges relating to recruitment and retention of staff.

- 6.2 The report finds that there is a need for a cultural shift amongst the public as to their expectations on how they access and use services, and elected members have a key role in engaging their communities in a wider dialogue about local government priorities.

7. Governance Risks

- 7.1 The report also outlines the potential risks in relation to governance:

- Firstly, where social work services are split between two statutory organisations (for example, Children's Services and an HSCP), Audit Scotland believe there is a potential risk that no single body has a strategic overview and that gaps or duplication in scrutiny may arise. Conversely, where all social care services have been integrated with health, they believe there is a potential risk that the relative size of social work services will mean that adult social care dominates the agenda reducing the time available for consideration of Children and Families services and Criminal Justice Social Work;
- Secondly, Audit Scotland found that elected members face a different challenge in relation to leadership and scrutiny since Health and Social Care Partnerships are responsible for delivery of social work services but local authorities retain the statutory duties. The limited number of elected members involved in Integration Joint Boards (IJBs) means that scrutiny resides with a very small group;
- Thirdly, health boards and local authorities work to different budget setting cycles, making it difficult to plan on a joint basis; and
- Finally, there is a risk of Chief Social Work Officers (CSWOs) having too many roles or being of insufficient status within an organisation to allow them to carry out their statutory responsibilities. It is considered good practice that the CSWO has the strategic and professional responsibility for social work services across the range of functions.

8. Future Audit Reporting

- 8.1 Audit Scotland planned three audits relating to the integration of health and social care. The first audit was conducted during the transition year, and its findings were published in December 2015. This was presented to Renfrewshire Council's, Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board on 25 January, 2016. It outlined the progress that had been made by integration authorities, but also the risks and challenges that still remained at the time.

- 8.2 Audit Scotland plan subsequent audits on health and social care integration, particularly after the first full year of integration and thereafter on the longer term impact integration, which will expect to see the shifting of resources towards community-based services and preventative interventions which will improve the outcomes for people who use services.
- 8.3 Future reports by Audit Scotland on Health and Social Care Integration will continue to be reviewed by the Integrated Joint Board (IJB), Renfrewshire Council through their Corporate Management Team (CMT), the Education and Children's Policy Board as well as the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board.

Implications of this report

1. **Financial Implications – none.**
2. **HR and Organisational Development Implications – none.**
3. **Community Plan/Council Plan Implications – none.**
4. **Legal implications – none.**
5. **Property and Assets implications – none.**
6. **Information Technology implications – none.**
7. **Equal & Human Rights implications –** The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health and Safety implications – none.**
9. **Procurement implications – none.**
10. **Risk implications –** Risks related to the management and delivery of social work services within Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership are closely monitored and are included within both the RHSCP Risk Register which follows the same format as the Children's Services Risk Register which includes Children's Social Work and Criminal Justice – the latter is reported into Renfrewshire Council's Corporate Risk Register.
11. **Privacy impact – none.**

List of background papers

None

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