

Notice of Meeting and Agenda Council

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 30 September 2021	09:30	Teams Meeting,

KENNETH GRAHAM
Head of Corporate Governance

Membership

Councillor Jennifer Marion Adam-McGregor: Councillor Tom Begg: Councillor Derek Bibby: Councillor Bill Binks: Councillor Bill Brown: Councillor Stephen Burns: Councillor Jacqueline Cameron: Councillor Michelle Campbell: Councillor Carolann Davidson: Councillor Eddie Devine: Councillor Karen Devine-Kennedy: Councillor Andy Doig: Councillor Audrey Doig: Councillor Natalie Don: Councillor Alison Jean Dowling: Councillor Edward Grady: Councillor Neill Graham: Councillor Jim Harte: Councillor John Hood: Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes: Councillor Scott Kerr: Councillor Alistair Mackay: Councillor James MacLaren: Councillor Kenny MacLaren: Councillor Mags MacLaren: Councillor Eileen McCartin: Councillor Colin McCulloch: Councillor Marie McGurk: Councillor John McIntyre: Councillor John McNaughtan: Councillor Kevin Montgomery: Councillor Will Mylet: Councillor Emma Rodden: Councillor Jim Sharkey: Councillor John Shaw: Councillor James Sheridan: Councillor Andy Steel: Councillor Jane Strang:

Provost Lorraine Cameron (Convener): Councillor Cathy McEwan (Depute Convener):
Councillor Iain Nicolson (Leader): Councillor Jim Paterson (Depute Leader)

Apologies

Apologies from members.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare an interest in any item(s) on the agenda and to provide a brief explanation of the nature of the interest.

Webcasting of Meeting

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<http://renfrewshire.cmis.uk.com/renfrewshire/meetings.aspx>

Items of business

1 **Minutes of Meetings of Council, Boards and Panels**

(attached separately)

Council, 24 June 2021, pages 1-18

Placing Requests & Exclusions Appeals Panel, 16 August 2021, pages 19-20

Communities, Housing & Planning Policy Board, 17 August 2021, pages, 21-38

Regulatory Functions Board, 18 August 2021, pages 39-50

Education & Children's Services Policy Board, 19 August 2021, pages 51-54

Placing Requests & Exclusions Appeals Panel, 20 August 2021, pages 55-56

Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board, 23 August 2021, pages 57-62

Infrastructure, Land & Environment Policy Board, 25 August 2021, pages 63-70

Petitions Board, 30 August 2021, pages 71-72

Finance, Resources & Customer Services Policy Board, 1 September 2021, pages 73-88

Regulatory Functions Board, 2 September 2021, pages 89-94

Appointment Board, 7 September 2021, pages 95-96

Appointment Board, 8 September 2021, pages 97-98

Regulatory Functions Board, 10 September 2021, pages 99-102

Leadership Board, 15 September 2021, pages 103-112

Appointment Board, 28 September 2021 (Copy to follow)

Appointment Board, 29 September 2021 (Copy to follow)

2 **Water Safety in Renfrewshire** **11 - 16**

Report by Director of Communities and Housing

3 **Renfrewshire Libraries Update** **17 - 24**

Report by Chief Executive

4 **Update on Audited Annual Accounts 2020/21** **25 - 28**

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6 **Governance Arrangements** **47 - 56**

Report by Director of Finance and Resources

7 **Annual Report of Chief Social Work Officer** **57 - 78**

Report by Chief Social Work Officer

8 Renfrewshire Community Protection Chief Officers Group 79 - 112
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Report by Chief Executive

9 National Care Service Consultation 113 - 130

Report by Chief Executive

**10 Notice of Motion 1 by Councillors Andy Doig and
McCartin**

"Banning Glyphosates in Renfrewshire Council

Council notes the risk to small children and pets from the continual use of the pesticide, Glyphosate, who may inadvertently come in contact with sprayed areas. Council notes the increasing number of local authorities across the UK which have banned Glyphosate in favour of other safer alternatives for weed control, and is concerned at independent academic research highlighting how glyphosate harms humans, animals, and the wider environment.

Council therefore calls for a ban on the use of Glyphosate within Renfrewshire Council in favour of safer alternatives."

**11 Notice of Motion 2 by Councillors Andy Doig and
McCartin**

"Review of waste services for town centres and rural areas

Council notes with increasing concern the unresolved problems with the current waste management strategy of Renfrewshire Council, particularly with regard to its inability to professionally service our town centres and rural communities alike.

This has led to Councillors receiving repeated long standing complaints on the vexed problem of non collection, or partial collection, on a constant basis in rural areas, and the additional problem of bins being almost permanently present outwith town centre businesses which struggle to adhere to the current regime.

Council calls for an urgent review of the waste management strategy with regard to town centres and rural communities, and recommends examination of the merits of fixed waste crews rather than rotational crews."

**12 Notice of Motion 3 by Councillors McCartin and Andy
Doig**

"20mph streets

Council has previously written to the Scottish Government regarding the potential to allow councils to bring in 20 mph areas where and when it

sees fit, rather than have to wait for permission from the Traffic Commissioner. These letters have resulted in nothing being done by the Government.

With the recent “non-coalition” between the SNP and the Green party establishing a policy of 20mph as standard, can the council once again write to the Scottish Government asking them to focus on this policy as a priority, to give local councils the responsibility of assessing where and when to bring this legislation into force, and in so doing give councils the right to make local judgements on local matters.”

13 Notice of Motion 4 by Councillors McCartin and Andy

Doig

"Blue Badge qualifications

Council recognises that Blue Badge permits have in recent years become much more restrictive than before, ensuring that there is no abuse of this system. However the restrictions seem to focus only on whether or not someone can physically walk any distance.

Some residents have what is often referred to as “unseen” illness or affliction so that, while they have the appearance of being able bodied, they in fact have illnesses which demand an ability to park as close as possible to, for example, toilet facilities if they are to have any quality of life. Our on-line application automatically refuses any such application.

Council requires to re-examine its eligibility criteria and ensure that those sufferers who require a Blue Badge can have access to a simple system of application, and have to go through a very unwieldy and sometimes unsuccessful application process with staff who then have to make individual judgements on these applications.”

14 Notice of Motion 5 by Councillors Hood and Devine

"Tree Specialist Officer

Council notes the appointment of an officer who can specialise in trees and looks forward to an imminent policy discussion on tree and woodland management. Council agrees that Scotland, and the UK, need to vastly increase the number of trees across the country. However, in the urban setting tree felling in appropriate places will always be necessary where the trees have an adverse effect on quality-of-life issues, such as access to light or where they are at risk of causing harm to our residents. Council instructs officers to include in any future tree felling policy an authority to take action where the effect on quality-of-life issues warrants it and also to allow the elected members the opportunity to hold officers to account when action is not taken.”

15 Notice of Motion 6 by Councillors Andy Doig and McCartin

"Public Entertainment Licenses and Community Halls

Council commends the organisers of the Lochwinnoch Arts Festival, the largest community arts festival in Renfrewshire, which over years have brought international acts of the calibre of folk musicians, Karen Mathieson and Dougie McLean, to the village for the benefit of all Renfrewshire residents.

Council further approves of the strong stance of the Scottish Government in promoting arts and culture in the community, and to facilitate and continue this trend calls on Renfrewshire Council to underwrite the cost of public entertainment licences for events in community halls across Renfrewshire."

16 Notice of Motion 7 by Councillors Andy Doig and McCartin

"Investment in rail and terms and conditions for Rail Workers

Renfrewshire Council believes that public ownership of Scotland's rail network will deliver significant benefits for Scotland's rail workers, passengers and taxpayers and help enable the creation of an affordable, accessible and sustainable rail network that contributes to Scotland's decarbonisation targets, and be able to better deliver crucial investment in aging rail infrastructure.

Council further supports comprehensive discussion and dialogue between the RMT and the Scottish Government to ensure that all ScotRail workers' jobs, pay and conditions, are protected throughout the transitional period and once they transfer to the new operator."

17 Notice of Motion 8 by Councillors Sharkey and Devine

"Universal Credit Payment Cut

Council condemns the cut £20 per week from Universal Credit (UC) payments and demands the Tory Government retain the £20 uplift payments on a permanent basis. Failure to do so will show that this government has, in the memorable phrase of Teresa May, gone "back to being the nasty party"."

18 Notice of Motion 9 by Councillors Sharkey and Hood

"Police Scotland – Protection of Workers

That the council writes to the Police as follows:

Dear Police Divisional Commander,

As you may be aware the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Act 2021 came into force on 24 August 2021.

Council is sure that you and your officers share our concern that nobody should face violence, threats and abuse at their place of work.

Retail workers in the Scotland have raised concerns about the way they are treated and the fact that they are regularly subject to abuse, threats of violence and even violence at their place of work. Often this is when they are enforcing the law on age-related goods.

We are writing to you to ask for a briefing on how the local police will be using these new powers and to find out Police Scotland will be working to protect retail workers many of whom worked through the pandemic and ensured that the country was supplied.

We also want to thank you and your officers for all the work you do locally. Keeping the community safe throughout the pandemic has been appreciated by us all."

19 Notice of Motion 10 by Councillor Sharkey and Devine

"Rail Network – State Ownership

Council welcomes proposals to move the rail network into state ownership from March 2022. Council believes that an effective and efficient transport system relies on democratic control and a responsive administration that allows both employees and passengers to have a meaningful contribution to the planning of services."

20 Notice of Motion 11 by Councillors Brown and Sharkey

"Flooding Events Across Renfrewshire

Council notes the recent flooding events across Renfrewshire and restates its decision about the climate emergency, taken on 27 June 2019. Council calls on the next Infrastructure and Environmental Board to detail the work undertaken and the plans drawn up since the council's decision."

21 Notice of Motion 12 by Councillors McNaughtan and K

MacLaren

"1820 Radical Rising Martyrs Memorial

Council agrees to request Historic Environment Scotland to review the designation of the category C listed 1820 Radical Martyrs Memorial, Woodside Cemetery, Paisley.

With the bicentenary of the 1820 radical rising, much research has been undertaken on this important period of Renfrewshire's history. Several new books have been published on the subject which highlight Renfrewshire's key role in organising the uprising which sought the vote and regular elections against a backdrop of severe poverty and exploitation. Led largely by weavers, Paisley, Johnstone, Kilbarchan and wider Renfrewshire played a central role in organising an armed uprising to fight for those rights. Given the new research on the significance of this period in Renfrewshire's development, the Martyrs Memorial represents historical events of national importance which should be reflected in the listing by Historic Environment Scotland."

22 Notice of Motion 13 by Councillors K MacLaren and M

MacLaren

"Council condemns the Conservative Government at Westminster for abandoning the Pensions Triple Lock. Council notes that the triple lock guarantees that pensions grow in line with whichever is the highest out of earnings, inflation or 2.5%. This is yet another manifesto promise broken by the Conservative Government and a betrayal of Scotland's pensioners who already receive the lowest state pension compared to our European neighbours.

Council will contact both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to request they reverse their position and maintain the Pensions Triple Lock."

23 Notice of Motion 14 by Councillors McCartin and Andy

Doig

"Dumped cars

Council recognises that it's not presently its direct responsibility to remove abandoned cars from our streets. At present it is the DVLA which has sole responsibility for this, unless the car is in such a state as to be a danger to the public.

However, Council recognises that this allows abandoned cars to be left on our streets for many months while the DVLA "processes" this, and this can lead to the cars being wrecked, set on fire or otherwise so damaged which can bring them into the category of "dangerous" and can then be removed.

Council will write to both the Scottish Government and the DVLA asking that this process be examined and upgraded to give a finite time for a car to be removed, and to identify whose responsibility it will be to remove."

24 Notice of Motion 15 by Councillors Graham and McIntyre

"Ralston Community Sports Centre

Council notes that Ralston Community Sports Centre is a well-used public facility for everyone in the community. Council must ensure that going forward this facility remains in council ownership and operated by Renfrewshire Leisure."

25 Notice of Motion 16 by Councillors K MacLaren and Mylet

"Council condemns the recent decision by the Conservative Government in Westminster to increase National Insurance – yet again breaking

another manifesto promise. This move will see NI increasing by over 10%, impacting on those on lower wages while protecting the most well-off in society.

Council also notes that the Prime Minister has 'directed' how any income from this increase is to be spent in Scotland, clearly breaching the key principles of devolution. It is not for any Prime Minister or politician in Westminster to determine how the Scottish Government and Parliament decides to spend its block grant. By doing so the Conservative Government has put the future of devolution in doubt.

Council will contact both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to request that they scrap this increase in the National Insurance, and if it continues to go ahead, remove any conditions attached to this funding so that the Scottish Government and Parliament are free to use the funds as they see fit."

26 Notice of Motion 17 by Councillors Graham and McIntyre

"A737 in Renfrewshire

Council agrees to write to the Minister for Transport, Graeme Day MSP, to prepare a feasibility study for upgrading and dualling the remaining single carriageway sections of the A737 in Renfrewshire.

Council also agrees to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Kate Forbes MSP, to allocate funding for the project in the upcoming budget."

27 Notice of Motion 18 by Councillors Devine-Kennedy and Grady

"STUC Women's Committee – Universal Free School Meals for All

Council supports the STUC Women's Committee campaign to expand Universal Free School Meals for all.

Council instructs officers, to bring to the next council meeting a program of diligent planning to ensure everything is in place to deliver a healthy and nutritious free meal to every child whose family wants them to have one. It is important to improve the current capabilities of existing school kitchens and dining settings and identify where these need to be upgraded that they may accommodate the anticipated increase in uptake. The program must also take account of the training and staffing implications of the expansion.

Council is concerned that without such a program the quality both, of the food and the experience, will suffer if the only priority is headlining total numbers. The subsequent malnutrition will only thwart the very real advantages of the STUC campaign."



To: Council

On: 30 September 2021

Report by: Director of Communities and Housing Services

Heading: Water Safety in Renfrewshire

1. Summary

1.1 Water Safety in Renfrewshire is and has been a priority for Renfrewshire Council. At the Council meeting on 24 June 2021, following a tragic drowning incident at the River Gryffe, Councillor Alison Dowling presented the following motion which received the unanimous support of Council.

“Council notes with sadness the recent drowning accident in the river Gryffe and notes that a number of incidents have taken place along the Gryffe.

The council undertakes to work with local community stakeholders including Houston, Linwood and Bridge of Weir Community Councils to boost safety in and around the river Gryffe and to investigate contributing to community efforts for the provision and maintenance of safety measures such as pole mounted buoys and throw-lines. Officers will report back to members at the next scheduled meeting of the Council on 30th September”

1.2 As detailed at the meeting by the Communities and Regulatory Manager, work had been undertaken for a number of years in relation to water safety, however, following the decision of the Council in June, further steps have been undertaken to formalise this work.

1.3 This paper outlines the progress to date and also advises of proposals moving forward including the development of a draft Renfrewshire Water Safety Policy that will be presented to the Communities Housing and Planning Policy Board at the meeting on 26 October 2021.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council:
- (i) notes the content of this report and the work undertaken to ensure water safety across Renfrewshire, including assisting communities with life-saving equipment where appropriate.
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3. Background and actions

- 3.1 Water Safety within Renfrewshire Council is led on by Communities and Public Protection with assistance from other colleagues including Environment and Infrastructure Services and the Civil Contingencies Service. The Council inspects and maintains life-saving equipment on Council owned land on a weekly basis. Following the tragic incident in the River Gryffe in June 2021, work has been undertaken to formalise this work and to consider short, medium and long term actions to improve water safety across Renfrewshire.
- 3.2 A formal Renfrewshire Water Safety Working Group has been established with the following membership:

Renfrewshire Council – Communities and Regulatory Manager (Chair)	Police Scotland
Renfrewshire Council – Community Safety	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Renfrewshire Council – Environment and Infrastructure (Roads)	Scottish Ambulance Service
Civil Contingencies Service (CCS)	Open Water Rescue
Renfrewshire Leisure	

- 3.3 In addition to the above, Children’s Services, Glasgow Humane Society and Scottish Water have been contacted to facilitate the discussion of actions with each organisation. This is due to their different roles with regards to Water Safety.
- 3.4 The Group has now met several times in the short term to allow it to be established, but more importantly, to identify short term measures to assist the community at the location where the young man died – known locally as the ‘Clay Pits’.
- 3.5 The community approached the owners of the land, Elderslie Estates who allowed and agreed for life-saving equipment to be placed on their land.
- 3.6 With assistance from the Glasgow Humane Society, temporary life belts, poles and throw ropes have been located on the riverbanks along the River Gryffe at the Clay Pits. Whilst there has been some damage/vandalism to these temporary poles and ropes, the poles and ropes were regularly being checked by the community and then replaced by Glasgow Humane Society when issues noted.

- 3.7 The Communities and Regulatory Manager has liaised with the family of the young man, and the local community activists who raised issues, and recently walked the riverbanks with 2 angling clubs to identify dangerous areas predominantly where youths continue to congregate and swim. In addition, and as requested by the Council Motion, contact has been made with the 3 Community Councils to update them of the actions to date.
- 3.8 There have been 6 areas along the River Gryffe that have been highlighted as potentially dangerous areas, both due to the depth but also the fact that youths are known to swim at these areas. As a result, work is underway to erect 2m yellow poles that will hold a life belt and throw rope that will be supplied by the Council. There will be signage e.g. "Danger – Deep Water/No Swimming" but more importantly, GPS signage that will be located at each site that will identify to emergency services, exactly where the call has been made from. There will also be throw ropes located, in a unique colour and only used for water safety, therefore, if it is used for other uses, it can be tracked back to one of the locations.
- 3.9 This is the same system used by Glasgow City Council along the River Clyde (and created by Glasgow Humane Society) and Renfrewshire will be the second Council to adopt this. The signage will give a specific code e.g. R4N1 which will allow Police STORM Control to identify the location quickly and dispatch officers. Police Scotland colleagues on the Renfrewshire Water Safety Group have had this confirmed with the Command and Control Centre at Police Scotland.
- 3.10 With regards to the 6 locations, 4 of these, including the Clay Pits are on private land, therefore it needs to be stressed that Renfrewshire Council cannot and do not accept liability or responsibility for this land or the safety equipment placed on it. This responsibility technically lies with the landowner. Renfrewshire Council will work with the community to assist if it is damaged or requires to be replaced, however, the community (or landowner) will require to ensure that it remains in place – this has been discussed and agreed by members of the community who will monitor the equipment.
- 3.11 It should also be noted that it is not intended that Renfrewshire Council will install life-saving equipment routinely across all waterways - areas will be risk assessed and reported incidents considered, however, the Council does not own or maintain many of the riverbanks/waterways across the Council area.
- 3.12 One of the key actions facing the Renfrewshire Water Safety Working Group is the education of youths with regards to the dangers of water and in particular 'cold water shock'. Partners currently undertake regular water safety talks (undertaken by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Scottish Ambulance Service) in addition to the Safe Kids event, attended by all primary 6 pupils across Renfrewshire. Renfrewshire Leisure are also looking at swimming activities, including looking at the impacts of Open Water swimming as part of the Active Schools activities.

- 3.13 Work is underway to coordinate this approach and target schools and discussions have taken place with Children's Services to assess how this can be maximised. However, in addition to formal education, some informal education is required and has been undertaken. Both Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Renfrewshire Wardens have visited rivers and spoken to youths about the dangers of swimming in these locations. There are, however, no powers to prevent them doing this, therefore education is critical.
- 3.14 As mentioned above, in addition to looking at rivers across Renfrewshire, contact has been made with Scottish Water who own or are responsible for inland waterways e.g. reservoirs. Whilst they will not formally sit on the Group, a key contact has been established who can facilitate discussion as and when required.
- 3.15 A Renfrewshire Water Safety Policy is currently being prepared and a draft will be presented to the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 26 October 2021. This will cover plans, including the above, to try and ensure the safety of waterways across Renfrewshire.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – There is a financial implication to assist communities in assessing land and erecting poles, signage and life-saving equipment.
2. **HR & Organisational Development- None**
3. **Community/Council Planning –**
 - *Our Renfrewshire is safe – by reviewing areas where youths swim or there is danger, life saving equipment will hopefully assist in keeping people safe should they get into trouble.*
4. **Legal - None**
5. **Property/Assets - None**
6. **Information Technology - None**
7. **Equality & Human Rights**
 - (a) 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. 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 & Safety - None**
9. **Procurement -** Discussions are on-going with regards to the procurement of appropriate signage, life belts and throw ropes.

10. **Risk** – There is a risk that Renfrewshire Council will be asked to take on responsibility for the erection and maintenance of life saving equipment on privately owned land. Whilst willing to assist communities, Renfrewshire Council cannot accept this liability or responsibility.
 11. **Privacy Impact** - None
 12. **COSLA Policy Position** N/A
 13. **Climate Risk** N/A.
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List of Background Papers

- (a) Background Papers- None
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To: Council Board
On: 30th September 2021

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Renfrewshire Libraries Update

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 A motion regarding the recovery of Renfrewshire Libraries was brought to Renfrewshire Council on June 24th 2021. Members highlighted the role libraries have at the heart of Renfrewshire's culture and heritage, and that Council would work closely with Renfrewshire Leisure to ensure that as part of a COVID recovery programme, libraries would reopen as soon as possible, seeking to restore pre-Covid service provision. Further, the motion noted that Johnstone Town Hall is currently being used as a COVID 19 vaccination centre, highlighting concerns that this would adversely impact on the reopening of Johnstone Library housed in the Town Hall and whether the reintroduction of a mobile facility should be considered as an alternative.
- 1.2 The purpose of this paper is to provide a progress report on Renfrewshire Libraries' recovery programme, within the context of the breadth of activity provided by Renfrewshire's digital and library services. The report also provides details of the direct delivery model which serves those unable to visit one of our libraries in person.
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2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council notes the content of this report.
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3. **Background**

- 3.1 Throughout the pandemic, the library team has consistently reviewed and adapted services in line with Scottish Government restrictions and in response to the changing needs of communities. During the national lockdowns when physical access to libraries was not possible, the service adapted its provision to include increased digital lending and online service provision, as well as home delivery and befriending services. At all times, either during lockdown or in the preparation of restarting services, Renfrewshire Leisure has worked collaboratively with officers to agree safe operating procedures for staff and public at each stage. Engagement has also been undertaken with the trade unions in relation to staff safety and on-site safety measures.
- 3.2 Exiting each lockdown, in recognition of the importance of libraries at the heart of local communities, Renfrewshire Leisure reopened all library sites across Renfrewshire. Initially, in-person services were limited by Scottish Government restrictions to click and collect style services. Renfrewshire Leisure offered click and collect as soon as it was permitted, one of only two Council areas across Scotland to reactivate all public library sites. Renfrewshire Leisure continues to offer click and collect as a key service as we know some customers remain more comfortable with this provision than in-person browsing.
- 3.3 As soon as the Scottish Government's Covid-19 guidelines allowed, on 26th April 2021 Renfrewshire Leisure reopened all 12 of the region's libraries for in-person browsing, alongside the operation of click and collect services. A BBC news article (26th May 2021) highlighted that Renfrewshire was one of only fifteen Council areas that opened all its public libraries following this lockdown exit, with other Council areas indicating that they would not consider reopening some of their facilities until later in the year.
- 3.4 The April reopening also included the reinstatement of public access to PCs in all public library venues for the first time since restrictions came into place. Again, Renfrewshire Leisure focused on all sites in recognition of the importance of addressing issues around access and equality, helping to ensure that people without computer access at home can secure information of all kinds, and be provided with the staff support to do so.
- 3.5 Renfrewshire Leisure is now increasing overall library opening hours and restarting library programmes such as Bookbug. Whilst Renfrewshire Leisure has maintained a commitment to restart all sites, a key priority at all times remains staff and public safety. The careful recovery of opening hours and public programme supports the continued need for social distancing among staff and allows staff the time for additional cleaning to meet Covid protocols. Renfrewshire Leisure also elected to continue to provide a Home Delivery service even when all sites reopened. The Home Delivery service operates Renfrewshire-wide for everyone over the age of 70, anyone with a disability or health condition which limits their ability to access libraries, and to families with school-age children. The home delivery service was a new, additional service initiated during lockdown in recognition that, for many people, visiting in-person was still not possible, or preferable, and this remains the case.

- 3.6 Physical in-library operations are therefore now being delivered at the same time as a dedicated home delivery service, click and collect option still in place, alongside a vibrant online offering from the Libraries team. This variety of provision has been welcomed and strongly supported throughout the pandemic.
- 3.7 The impact of the pandemic has brought about a renewed focus on providing a service which is more responsive to the needs of the public, whilst ensuring the safety of staff and customers. Providing a Covid safe environment at all our sites, maintaining the standard of online service members have come to expect by investing more in our online resources to reflect the increase in demand for digital services, as well as the direct home delivery services, reflects the multi-platform nature of library provision now available to the community.
- 3.8 The library at Johnstone Town Hall opened at the same time as all our physical sites. Following the restart on April 26th, at which time the mass vaccination centre was already running at Johnstone Town hall, the library reopened with its own dedicated access via the entrance off Ludovic Square. A separate entrance/exit is in operation for the vaccination centre in Johnstone Town Hall.
- 3.9 Renfrewshire Leisure has provided regular updates for elected members about the work of our libraries - and other services – through the reopening phases and will continue to do so.

4.0 **Next Steps**

- 4.1 The table below shows the key dates for the next stages of the reopening programme, focusing on the following priorities:
- **Public libraries:** increased opening hours, reintroduction of Bookbug sessions and other community support time, increased access to pc terminals
 - **School libraries:** increased pupil browsing and participatory activities within High school libraries and Primary School settings. The outreach librarian will provide on-site support to primary schools
 - **Skoobmobile:** programme of school and community visits, working with Head Teachers and Education Services to ensure plans are integrated into school operation

<p>Public libraries</p> <p>From 16th August:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • move to 1m distancing for staff and customers • reintroduction of some library seating in line with Covid protocols • increase in number of pcs available • increase in total numbers permitted in libraries
<p>From 13th September:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase in opening hours

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relaunch of Bookbug and other community activities (allocated community focus time)
<p>From 27th Sept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relaunch Macmillan services in libraries reintroduce children's activities (during community focus time) reintroduce adult activities (during community focus time) increase library seating available (to c. two thirds) reintroduce Digiteer sessions in libraries
<p>From 10th October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reintroduce children's activities (outwith community focus time) reintroduce adult activities (outwith community focus time) remove restriction on numbers in libraries restore final library seating
<p>School libraries and Skoobmobile</p> <p>From 16th August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase numbers of pupils using secondary school libraries for browsing and activities with agreement of school
<p>From 23rd August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skoobmobile to recommence primary school and nursery visits (with approval of local Head Teachers) Primary School Outreach Librarian to begin engagements onsite at primary schools with agreement of local Head Teachers

4.2 Digital literacy support / Online content

4.2.1 Renfrewshire Leisure's online membership figures grew by 133% during 2020 in comparison to pre pandemic 2019 figures, with the breakdown of e-lending types illustrated in the table below:

Downloads	2019/20	2020/21	Difference	% change
ebooks (Adult)	19,657	35,538	15,881	81%
ebooks (Children)	3,604	7,221	3,617	100%
eaudiobooks	8,825	15,655	6,830	77%
emagazines	14,323	22,078	7755	54%

2019 – 663
2020 – 1545
Increase – 133%

4.2.2 The table above shows the developing reliance on digital access which increased exponentially during the national lockdowns. Libraries all across Scotland are at the centre of the collaborative effort to ensure no one is left behind in the new digital landscape as envisioned in the Scottish Government's publication A Changing Nation: How Scotland will Thrive in a Digital World (2021).

4.2.3 1 in 7 people across Scotland experience data poverty, rising to 1 in 4 in lower income households. 1 in 5 of those experiencing data poverty depended on libraries for access pre-pandemic. Renfrewshire's libraries continue to offer vital digital access and digital support to address these statistics as well as to ensure as many people as possible have access to the opportunities that the digital world presents, including:

- **Animal Crossing:** Renfrewshire Libraries have created a own library island in this popular online game for children. The island comes to life during school holidays.
- **Home Learning Hub:** providing curated resources and activities for primary pupils, parents, carers and teachers.
- **Coding clubs (Coder Dojo and Silly Coding):** Two twice weekly online coding programmes for young people in partnership with the YMCA
- **Just the Ticket with Dip into Digital:** Online session planned in partnership with Music Broth, Paisley YMCA Digital MakerSpace and ThinkScience. Planned activities include digital music making, coding and science activities.
- **Study support:** drop-in sessions, email support, guides to online resources.
- **C-Scape project:** provision of digital skills assistance to a group of adults with learning disabilities.
- **Digiteers project:** Funded project enabling digital volunteers to provide basic digital skills support for people across Renfrewshire's communities
- **Libraries Direct digital support calls:** Service developed in partnership with Neighbourhood Hubs to support those identified as digitally excluded and experiencing isolation
- **Connecting Scotland project:** Scottish Government initiative in partnership with Renfrewshire Council and the neighbourhood hubs, providing digital skills support from library staff and Digiteers to learners.

4.3 Home Delivery Service

4.3.1 During the first lockdown Renfrewshire Leisure launched the Libraries Direct service as part of a collaborative response from the Council's neighbourhood hubs to provide additional resources to support residents across communities who were shielding. Support included friendship calls, digital skills support calls and home delivery of books and toys to vulnerable individuals and families.

4.3.2 To reflect changes experienced through the different phases of lockdown, the service was relaunched in March 2021 as a Renfrewshire-wide Home Delivery Service for everyone over the age of 70, anyone with a disability or health condition which limits their ability to access libraries, and to families with school-age children.

- 4.3.3 To access this service customers can choose to order online or can order by phone. Renfrewshire Leisure offer a personalised service in that staff will engage with telephone customers to help them with their selections. Customers receive a call to let them know when their books will be delivered. We are conscious that for many customers this personal touch is much valued and offers the engagement with library staff that they might otherwise miss by not being able to visit in person.
- 4.3.4 In the first 6 months of the Home Delivery Service, Renfrewshire Libraries have supported the delivery of 8339 book issues to members of the public within these groups. By comparison, the last full year of the mobile library issued 7687 books.
- 4.3.5 The mobile library offered a book lending service and a limited information service. There was a common misconception that the mobile library was in some way serving housebound residents. This was not the case, as customers were required to make their way to the mobile library in person as is the case with a static library. In contrast, user feedback (as set out in the Appendix) on the current home delivery service has highlighted that not having to leave home as what they liked most about the service.

APPENDIX

Home delivery Services - feedback comments received:

Feedback comments:

- It's been a fantastic service, one that I stumbled across. The library staff choosing for my children (and me) has been a fantastic introduction to new authors and styles.
- Wonderful assistance for me and my grandchildren to experience new authors.
- Great service thank you
- A great service staff very helpful
- As an avid reader aged 94, I am very grateful to have a regular supply of books without having to walk to the library.
- Gold star on service, has really appreciated all of the staff's efforts from choosing the materials to the delivery drivers!
- This is an excellent service for housebound and infirm people
- As a 90yr old library user for many years but poor mobility now makes me appreciate the home delivery service and excellent way it is carried out. I send grateful thanks to all involved.
- Excellent and reliable service. It has added greatly to my ability to obtain books and discover varying authors
- Marvellous service, I think it's wonderful.
- Delighted with the service. Enjoyed all books chosen for me.
- Grab & Go selection is an excellent idea. It has introduced me to authors I would have by-passed.

In addition:

Mrs X of Glenburn phoned to say thank you. She had called for information on the Library Service's Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Service which she had received, but "before she knew it ... had a delivery of talking books arranged". They arrived the next day. Mrs X described the delivery service as a lifeline as she receives palliative care and can no longer walk to her library and that she "couldn't praise the service enough".

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial - None.**
 2. **HR & Organisational Development - None**
 3. **Community/Council Planning – None.**
 4. **Legal – None**
 5. **Property/Assets – None**
 6. **Information Technology – None**
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** –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 & Safety – None**
 9. **Procurement – None**
 10. **Risk - None**
 11. **Privacy Impact – None**
 12. **Cosla Policy Position – None**
 13. **Climate Risk - None**
-

Author: Laura McIntyre, Head of Policy and Commissioning



To: Council

On: 30 September 2021

Report by: Director of Finance & Resources

Heading: Update on Audited Annual Accounts 2020/21

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council's unaudited Annual Accounts for 2020/21 were presented to the Council on 24 June 2021 and submitted for audit by the statutory deadline of 30 June 2021.
 - 1.2 Local flexibility in the timescales for approval of the audited annual accounts has been provided under the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 and this was highlighted in the June report to Council.
 - 1.3 The audited Annual Accounts 2020/21 are expected to be completed for approval by 30 November 2021.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Council is asked to:
 - (a) note the revised deadline for the Council's audited accounts;
 - (b) agree that the meeting of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 1 November 2021 be rescheduled to 15 November 2021; and
 - (c) note that a special meeting of the Council will be called on or before 30 November 2021 to approve the audited accounts; or in the event the audit of the accounts is not complete, note that the audited accounts will be presented to the 16 December 2021 Council meeting.
-

3. **Background**

- 3.1 On 4 March 2021, the Scottish Government published the Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting)(Scotland) (Coronavirus) Amendment Regulations 2021, outlining the impact of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2021 on existing statutory regulations for the approval and publication of the annual accounts.
 - 3.2 Under this guidance, the Council must aim to approve the 2020/21 audited accounts for signature no later than 31 October 2021; however, provisions of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 allow a delay to this until a date that is 'reasonably practicable'.
 - 3.3 The Council's appointed auditor, Audit Scotland, considers 30 November to be a reasonably practicable date and have indicated their intention to work towards this date for completion of their audit activity; allowing the audited accounts of the Council and its Group and the associated Annual Audit Report to be authorised and published by 30 November 2021.
 - 3.4 This timescale also applies to the Common Good Funds and Coats Observatory Trust audited accounts and report.
 - 3.5 Under the Council's scheme of delegation, the audited accounts are normally presented to the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board prior to being presented to Council. In order to allow the Council to comply with the revised audit dates, it is proposed that the meeting of the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board scheduled on 1 November 2021 is rescheduled to 15 November 2021 in order to allow sufficient time for completion of the audit process.
 - 3.6 Thereafter, it is proposed that a special meeting of the Council is called on an appropriate date, but no later than 30 November 2021, for the purpose of approving the audited accounts.
 - 3.7 In the event the audit process is not complete within the timescales outlined above, it is proposed that the audited accounts would be presented for approval to the Council meeting scheduled on 16 December 2021.
-

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – approval of the audited accounts is a key step in evidencing good financial governance and allows the Council to comply with national financial regulations.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none arising from this report.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – none arising from this report.
4. **Legal** – the recommendations in the report will allow the Council to comply with the relevant regulations governing the annual accounts approval process.
5. **Property/Assets** – none arising from this report.
6. **Information Technology** – none arising from this report.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** – none arising from this report.
8. **Health & Safety** – none arising from this report.
9. **Procurement** – none arising from this report.
10. **Risk** – none arising from this report.
11. **Privacy Impact** – none arising from this report.
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – none arising from this report.
13. **Climate Risk** – none arising from this report.

Author: Alan Russell, Director of Finance & Resource

Background Papers: [The Local Authority \(Capital Finance and Accounting\) \(Scotland\) \(Coronavirus\) Amendment Regulations 2021](#)



To: Council

On: 30 September 2021

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Financial Outlook 2022 - 2025

1. Overview and Key Messages

- 1.1 As previously reported over the past 12 – 18 months, the Council has faced significant financial disruption due to the COVID19 pandemic and associated emergency response. The financial impact of COVID19 on the Council has been extremely fluid and subject to rapid change in line with decisions being taken by national governments in response to the developing management of the emergency response across the UK. As the 2020/21 financial year ended, significant additional financial support was released to local government over the final quarter of the financial year by the Scottish Government which provided both much needed financial stability to the Council as 2020/21 was financially closed but also a greater level of confidence as to the scale of COVID19 specific resources to financially support the Council during 2021/22 as the pandemic and its consequences have continued to unfold. In this context and as outlined in more detail in the report, the Council's immediate financial stability remains secure, and this is anticipated to remain the case over the course of 2021/22.
- 1.2 However, moving forward the Council will progress into 2022/23 with an unaddressed structural budget deficit of around £4 million - £5 million from 2021/22, the first time since the austerity agenda commenced that the Council has been in a position where such a deficit has not been addressed before moving forward into the next financial year. In addition, the Council's medium term financial outlook continues to be subject to considerable uncertainty, with future government grant prospects and the scale of pay pressures in future years continuing as the most significant areas of influence and uncertainty. Further, there is inevitably the added complexity associated with both the impact of the ongoing response to COVID19 and the associated recovery agenda as well as longer term financial legacy impacts, the scale of which are at present uncertain.

- 1.3 The Council continues to be faced with an expectation of an enduring financial challenge of scale to be addressed over the medium term. At present, the central planning scenario forecasts that over the period through to 2025, in gross terms i.e., before any adjustment for council tax rises and savings, a saving requirement of approximately £25 million will be required just to address the forecast structural budget deficit and therefore providing no capacity for reinvestment in service or capital investment priorities. Adjusting for an indicative council tax rise each year at 3% would reduce this forecast saving requirement to around £17 million.
- 1.5 Members will recall that the Council's medium term financial strategy previously established a central planning objective of securing £25 million of transformational savings from the Right for Renfrewshire (R4R) programme. The initial tranches of transformational change delivered to date through R4R has secured approximately £6 million of savings leaving approximately £19 million of this established financial objective outstanding. In the context of the updated medium term financial outlook, this financial objective continues to be broadly valid at this point in time.
- 1.6 Notwithstanding, it is recognised that continuing to support the response to the impact of the COVID19 pandemic, supporting the associated recovery agenda as well as recovering as an organisation remains a very significant draw on the Council's capacity and this is expected to continue for some time to come. In this context it is recognised that there will continue to be very limited capacity to progress the transformation programme at scale. The medium term financial planning arrangements and specifically the immediate strategy for the 2022/23 requires to recognise this ongoing constraint.
- 1.7 As outlined in more detail in the report, the financial strategy moving forward will be progressed based on a relatively limited financial saving contribution emerging from the R4R programme in 2022/23. Approved financial flexibilities put in place by the Council as an immediate response to the developing financial risks and disruption from COVID19 in September 2020 will be deployed to support the Council's budget position moving into 2022/23. These measures will protect the immediate financial stability of the Council, maintain a focus on securing the Council's medium term financial sustainability by securing progress in addressing the structural budget deficit and managing the impact of new pressures emerging in 2022/23, as well as providing an extended window of opportunity for the Council to recover from COVID19 before more significant and unavoidable demands for savings are placed on the transformation programme.
- 1.8 It is expected that greater financial planning certainty may emerge over coming months should, as currently planned, the UK Government announce a multi year Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in the autumn and the Scottish Government follow through on existing commitments to produce multi year spending plans. Should multi year spending plans emerge as expected, this will provide conditions that could support the potential for multi year pay negotiations and agreements in local government which if secured would help put in place much needed foundations to support councils across Scotland to progress medium term financial planning underpinned by a much greater degree of certainty. Key milestone announcements in this respect are expected to emerge over the course of the remaining months of this calendar year and into the early part of 2022 and updates will be provided as appropriate.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended the Council: -

- Note the update regarding the Council's current general fund financial position, the assessment of the projected net impact of COVID19 over the course of this financial year and the anticipated deployment of COVID19 resources provided by the Scottish Government.
- Note the updated general fund financial outlook over the medium term and the ongoing expectation of the Council being required to continue to plan for addressing significant structural budget deficits in the period through to 2025 albeit the scale of this remains subject to ongoing uncertainty at this stage.
- Note that the remobilisation of the Council's transformation programme continues to be constrained by organisational capacity being deployed to support the response to COVID19 and the developing recovery agenda. Further, to note that a limited level of transformation activity and associated financial savings are anticipated as part of the 2022/23 budget planning arrangements and details in this regard will be subject to normal transformation reporting arrangements as the programme is progressed in the coming months.
- Note that as part of the budget planning for 2022/23, the intention to deploy financial flexibility arrangements approved by Council in September 2020 as an early response to the financial disruption caused by COVID19. Further to note that this will assist securing ongoing short term financial stability, assist in partly addressing the forecast medium term structural budget deficit moving forward and will also provide the Council with an extended window of opportunity to recover from COVID19 before being required to fully remobilise the transformation programme.
- Note the update provided in respect to the General Fund capital investment programme and the potential impact from growing price and supply pressures within the construction market. Further to note that in response, a level of provision has been made against COVID19 resources to protect the deliverability of the current capital programme.
- Note the update in respect of the HRA and the relatively more secure long term financial outlook afforded by the greater long term confidence provided by rental income and the underpinning robustness of the 30 year business planning arrangements which will continue to be updated over the course of this year ahead of 2022/23.

3. General Fund Revenue Account

Immediate Financial Position

3.1 The Council's current financial position continues to remain stable and subject to the uncertain position in respect to the 2021/22 pay award as outlined below, remains within the financial planning parameters established when the Council set its budget for 2021/22.

- 3.2 Members will recall that in setting the 2021/22 budget in March of this year, a recurring budget deficit of approximately £1.7 million was temporarily funded in 2021/22 through a planned draw from COVID19 balances. Additionally, since setting the budget in March, the pay offer for 2021/22 that has been set out to trade unions has been expanded in financial scale as part of the ongoing negotiations beyond what was budgeted for by the Council. To date, the negotiations remain unresolved with no pay deal yet secured.
- 3.3 It is at this stage expected that the final pay settlement once agreed will increase this recurring budget deficit for 2021/22, pushing it potentially to circa £5 million. As reported through budget monitoring arrangements to date, this deficit position may be partly addressed in year by service-based underspends, reducing the in-year draw on general COVID19 balances to approximately £2 million.
- 3.4 Excluding resources specifically aligned to education recovery, there are approximately £21m of COVID19 resources that are available to support the Council through the ongoing pandemic response and recovery period and it is currently anticipated these will be fully required to manage the ongoing related consequences over the next 12-24 months.
- 3.5 The 2021/22 core budget (i.e. excluding COVID19 costs) was set on the basis of an unaddressed deficit of circa £1.7m to be supported temporarily from non-recurring COVID19 resources, albeit it is now projected that around £2 million will be required for this year due to additional pay pressures.
- 3.6 In addition to this core budget position, it is estimated that non education & non HSCP related COVID19 costs and income loss of £8.6m will be incurred this year and will require to be addressed from the COVID19 resources. Further, there are known issues linked to supporting the organisation to recover from the lockdown periods and adjust to new ways of working as well as tackle areas where unavoidable deferred workloads will now have to be addressed by the Council which will bring with it inevitable financial impacts if the Council is avoid such issues becoming unaddressed backlogs over the long term. The financial consequences of such issues are at this stage uncertain but are likely to become clearer over the coming months as the Council continues to progress the recovery work and establishes a clearer understanding of what will be required.
- 3.7 Taking all these issues into account and notwithstanding the recognised ongoing uncertainty, it is anticipated that the £21m of COVID19 resources will be fully required with the following indicative breakdown currently forming part of the immediate term financial plan.

Approved Support for 2021/22 Budget	£2m
Approved Commitment to Social Renewal Programme	£2.7m
Provision for Projected COVID Impact (excluding Education and HSCP)	£9m
Provision for Organisational recovery	£2m
Provision for Capital Programme COVID19 Impact	£5m
Total	£20.7m

- 3.8 In relation to Education, there is now significant resources at the disposal of the Council via a range of both temporary and recurring grants that have been made available by the Scottish Government to prioritise and support school

recovery, education digital provision, maintaining enhanced cleaning etc as well as now confirmed recurring resources (£145m nationally) from 2022/23 for teachers and classroom assistants. In addition, it is recognised there are enhanced levels of school level resources carried forward under normal school DMR schemes and Pupil Equity Fund arrangements following the disruption arising from the periods of lockdown which again will be utilised at a local school level to support the wider educational recovery process. On this basis, the totality of these resources is expected to provide sufficient financial support to allow Children's Services to progress the education and school recovery process over the next 12-24 months without requiring any draw on wider council resources.

- 3.9 Similarly, in relation to the HSCP and the ongoing commitment of the Scottish Government to meet all reasonable costs associated with COVID19, financial planning arrangements are progressing on the basis that the HSCP will be fully financially supported through the impact of COVID19 over the course of this financial year by the established Scottish Government arrangements and will therefore require no direct financial assistance from the Council.

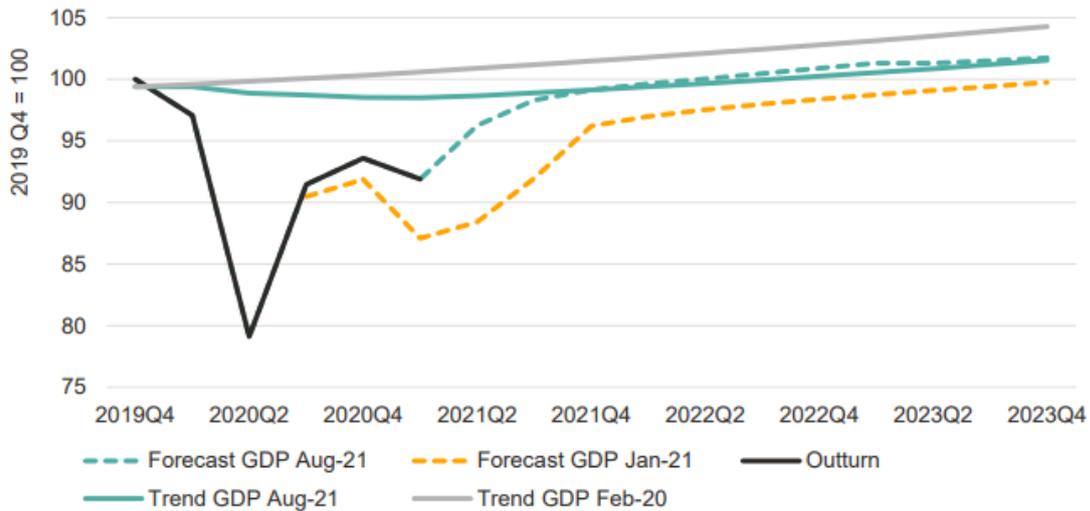
4. Medium Term Outlook

4.1 Economic and Fiscal Outlook

- 4.1.1 Economies locally, nationally and internationally have experienced unprecedented negative impacts due to the Covid19 pandemic, with significant impacts being felt by individuals, businesses and governments alike. World GDP fell by more than 3.5% in 2020 and in the UK this was more pronounced, with a fall of 9.9% being experienced in 2020 – the largest of any G7 country.

- 4.1.2 Both vaccine development and the subsequent rapid roll out to initially those at higher risk and subsequently the wider population has allowed a much swifter economic recovery to commence than would otherwise have been possible without the layer of protection that is provided through the vaccine programme. The easing of restrictions over recent weeks and months on the back of the vaccine success has had an immediate impact on supporting the restart of economic growth and in general a greater degree of positive sentiment across the economy than was previously anticipated as business restarts, pent up consumer demand is released into the economy and business confidence to take forward investment strengthens. This better than previously anticipated response across the economy has again improved economic forecast further than that previously forecast – the UK Office of Budget Responsibility in March 2021 forecast that GDP would grow by 4% in the 2021 calendar year, to reach its pre-pandemic level in Spring 2022, a material improvement in comparison to forecast towards the end of 2020. Since this forecast, indicators suggest the level of growth will be higher still although this will not be confirmed by the OBR until their forecasts are updated at the end of October – in time to support the UK Comprehensive Spending Review which is expected over the Autumn.

- 4.1.3 In Scotland, more recent forecasts by the Scottish Fiscal Commission also outline an improvement in the economic outlook, with forecast GDP growth in Scotland over the 2021/22 financial year being estimated at 10.5%.



Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission, Scottish Government (2021) GDP Quarterly National Accounts: 2021 Quarter 1 (January to March) ([link](#)).

4.1.4 The graph above though shows that the pandemic will result in permanent 'scarring' of the economy versus the trend by around 2%.

4.1.5 In order to support the economy, UK and Scottish governments have had to take unprecedented measures including grant support to businesses, support to wages through the furlough scheme and increased support to public services. Spending at this level has been funded through increased UK government borrowing - £355 billion in 2020/21 – a peacetime high. Borrowing is forecast to increase further in 2021/22 by around £200 billion – although this may reduce as the economy improves over the course of 2021/22 and tax receipts increase. Total UK government debt will however top 100% of annual GDP.

4.1.6 The future annual financial liability to service and repay this level of debt has been eased by historically low interest rates, however moving forward any rise in rates whilst significant reliance is still being placed on borrowing to balance the fiscal position nationally will put pressure on total government finances as the costs of repayment increase. A possible driver for an interest rate increase would be higher inflation – and indeed this is recognised as a material risk with the CPI level of 2.1% currently forecast by the Bank of England to increase to 4% by the end of the year – albeit only on a temporary basis before falling back to 2.5% by the end of 2022.

4.1.7 Inflation is also being experienced in relation to specific sectors of the economy in different ways, with supply issues pushing up prices for a number of commodities – particularly in the construction sector. The response of the Bank of England to managing this risk whilst balancing the impact any interest rate rise might have across the wider economy will be a key area of interest in the coming months.

4.1.8 Unemployment is also expected to peak late in 2021 as the furlough scheme is fully unwound, along with other government supports for businesses and although still significant it has not reached levels once feared at the outset of the pandemic. However, there is expected to remain pressure to maintain higher levels of public spending, particularly in the NHS to deal with a significant backlog of elective treatment and to mitigate the ongoing impact of the

pandemic on service delivery. In all of these forecasts there remains significant downside risk related to the pandemic, with the risk of a fourth wave driven by the highly transmissible delta variant an increasing risk (potentially triggering further lockdown measures); or the risk of further variants developing in areas of the world where successfully delivering the vaccination programme remains a significant and outstanding challenge.

- 4.1.9 Council has been advised previously of the growing importance of Scottish economic performance relative to that of the UK economy as a whole and how this affects the Scottish block grant through the fiscal framework process. The financial benefit of devolved tax decisions that have been taken by the Scottish Government over recent years under fiscal devolution have been eroded as Scottish economic performance has lagged that of the UK as a whole. Additionally, prior year differentials, where there are differences in actual tax receipts from those forecasts have emerged and require to be repaid by the Scottish Government. Such adjustments have been sizeable in prior years and the Scottish Government has elected to utilise temporary borrowing powers to manage these repayments, which although pushes the financial impact out over the medium term, nevertheless remains a liability that requires to be repaid by the Scottish budget.
- 4.1.10 In August the SFC produced updated forecast for tax receipts which are improved over their previous position; linked primarily to an improving economic picture. These forecasts are now out of step somewhat with forecasts by the OBR, whose most recent position in March will not reflect the improved economic sentiment experienced over the summer. However as referred to above the OBR forecast update is due in October and is likely to bring the two sets of forecasts better into line. As previously reported to Council in March, updated forecasts by the SFC were the trigger under the fiscal framework for a 'Scotland-specific economic shock' which allowed the Scottish Government to waive the borrowing limits usually applying under the framework for a three year period, permitting an increased level of borrowing in 2021/22. The Scottish Government has stated its intention to continue to utilise its increased borrowing powers provided under this mechanism to manage income tax reconciliations and subsequent BGAs over coming years. Again, although an effective measure in the short term, such borrowing requires to be repaid and therefore it is recognised there is a medium to longer term financial commitment that arises from such decisions.
- 4.1.11 Income tax in Scotland – now a major influence on the overall Scottish Budget – is expected by the SFC to improve by nearly £7 billion over the next 5 years compared to their previous forecast; linked predominantly to an assumed continued level of economic recovery. This suggests improved revenue prospects for the Scottish Budget, however there remain ongoing risks in terms of the demand on the budget over this same period growing well beyond that which may have been previously anticipated linked to support individuals and businesses, the impact of new policy commitments such as free school meals for all primary pupils and increasing the Scottish Child payment amongst other social security reforms which also require to be funded as well as the emerging commitment from the Scottish Government to increase funding and investment in social care without at this stage being clear on where such resources are to be found.
- 4.1.12 In addition, as the devolution of social security continues from the UK government, a new support payment – the Adult Disability Payment (ADP) – being introduced from the summer of 2022 will bring further expenditure to the

Scottish Budget. The ADP will replace the current Personal Independence Payment (PIP), and it is currently forecast that due to entitlement differences, the ADP will cost more than is currently provided under PIP. This reflects an expected increase in people entitled to ADP, longer payment durations and higher average awards. It is also expected that spending on the carers allowance will increase as more people become entitled to ADP.

- 4.1.13 The Scottish Budget has benefitted from additional funding specific to the pandemic - £4.6 billion in 2021/22. This funding is not guaranteed, and late increase or decreases in the financial year (as occurred in 2020/21) can be difficult for the Scottish Government to manage within the limits on how much funding can be carried between years through the Scotland Reserve.
- 4.1.14 As outlined above, the improving economic prospects in the near future, are encouraging, however the underlying strength of the Scottish economy will be impacted in the longer term by the pandemic over what was (pre-pandemic) a relatively weak growth scenario by long term historical standards. It is this medium to longer term prospect which will influence most significantly the Scottish Budget, in conjunction with Scottish Government policy priorities and commitments as part of the programme for government.
- 4.1.15 Prior to the COVID19 pandemic, the Council's financial strategy was based on a central financial planning scenario of the Council likely to experience further reduction in government revenue grant over the period through 2023 and potentially beyond. This reflected the wider challenges likely to be faced by the Scottish Government in terms of their own budget over this period coupled with their stated commitment to grow the other major areas of their budget outwith local government.
- 4.1.16 However, as previously reported to Council, in 2021/22 the Council secured a marginal like for like grant increase of 0.5% and additionally the most recent medium term financial strategy published by the Scottish Government early in 2021 set out a medium term financial planning assumption where the local government budget would be positioned more positively by the Scottish Government relative to other areas of public expenditure. However, it is recognised that such planning assumptions set out by the Scottish Government will be subject to a range of pressures and challenges as well as the impact of commitments that are set out in the programme for government and how these are subsequently developed and delivered over the medium term.
- 4.1.17 National Government budgets will continue to be subject to a range of downside risks and uncertainties despite the indications emerging of a more positive and stronger economic recovery than was previously forecast. It is expected that the UK Government will set out a multi-year spending review in the Autumn which will go some way to providing a greater degree of certainty over the future shape of public spending in the UK and how this will be targeted at supporting the country and public services recover from COVID19. As ever, this will undoubtedly have an influence on the scale of resources that will be at the disposal of the Scottish Government and consequently the potential prospects for the local government settlement.

4.2 Overview of Updated Outlook

- 4.2.1 As outlined above moving into 2022/23 it is expected that the budget position will be running a recurring deficit position of approximately £4 million - £5 million carried forward from 2021/22. This represents a seminal milestone for the

Council, being the first time since the onset of the austerity agenda across public services that the Council has been in a position where a structural budget deficit has not been addressed before progressing to the next financial year.

4.2.2 As previously reported to Council, there continues to be material uncertainty in respect to future years, with future grant prospects and pay continuing to be the most significantly influential factors but now with additional uncertainty linked to the legacy impacts of COVID19 that may take a considerable time to be reversed, if at all.

4.2.3 As referred to above, at present the Scottish Government are committing to the publication of three year spending plans and potentially a local government settlement, irrespective of whether the UK Government produces a multi-year Comprehensive Spending Review this autumn. Should a three year financial settlement emerge for local government it would be the first time for many years and would represent an important step in removing a significant degree of uncertainty moving forward.

4.2.4 Subject to the level of detail that may be provided in relation to years two and three, even an indicative high level confirmation of the local government settlement at a national level would provide clearer planning parameters in respect to both the scale of challenge from movement in grant moving forward and whether over the medium term sustainable like for like growth is likely to emerge for local government as has been suggested in the Government's March medium term financial plan.

4.2.5 Further, should local government as an employer secure greater visibility over the medium term prospects for government grant (the most significant source of funding for local government), this would provide conditions that could facilitate a multi-year pay deal, for which there is a developing appetite from both employers and trade unions alike in terms of national negotiations.

4.2.6 The opportunity to secure improving certainty will not emerge until the end of this year at the earliest, with the prospects of a UK Government CSR announcement in the autumn being the first major milestone in this potential journey. In this context the Council is required to progress its financial planning on the basis of forward projections based on a range of assumptions and potential scenario outcomes. The central scenario for the Council's financial update is based on the following key assumptions:

- Grant – it is assumed 1% like for like annual growth will emerge over the following three years, broadly reflecting that experienced in 2021/22. The Scottish Government's last published medium term financial plan suggested an improved positioning of the local government budget which would broadly mirror that movement in the overall Scottish budget – implying a more significant annual uplift than 1% per annum. This however was based a range of significant assumptions nationally and mores significantly provided no detail of what new service growth, responsibilities or commitments may accompany future growth in resources for local government. As reported to members in earlier reports, in previous years significant growth in resources for local government has been accompanied by significant new responsibilities reducing like for like grant change to near flat cash. A 1% per annum growth builds in a cautious degree of improvement from 2021/22 and is

therefore considered prudent for the purposes of medium term planning at this stage.

- Pay – with national pay bargaining yet to be settled for 2021/22, it is expected that material pay pressures will continue over the medium term. With inflation expected to progress through a temporary spike over future months before gradually falling back towards the longer term 2% economic target over a period of time, a central assumption for future pay provisions has been set which broadly reflects this expected pattern with a higher provision in year one which reduces over the medium term period. There remains a material risk that like 2021/22 future pay deals may exceed this assumed provision and profile albeit affordability and financial sustainability will remain a major constraining factor and consideration for local government employers in respect to what pay offer can realistically be provided as part of future negotiations.
- COVID19 Legacy Impact – it is expected that longer term financial legacy impacts are likely to emerge for the Council from COVID19 and or from related decision the Council may take, and which will require to be addressed on a recurring financial basis. At present this remains an unknown in terms of both nature and scale but is likely to reflect permanent behavioural changes, areas of longer term compliance etc and therefore will focus on areas of income loss, increased household waste, permanent long-term costs of hybrid working, enhanced long term requirements linked to cleaning, PPE, support to communities etc. Despite the uncertainty a level of future financial provision has been included for such recurring pressures crystallising over the medium term.
- HSCP – in the context of the Feely Review/National Care Service consultation, programme for government commitments to grow investment in social care in the post COVID environment, financial planning is progressing on the basis that the Scottish Government are likely to continue with their approach of “ring fencing” pass through growth in resources linked to social care as part of future financial settlements. It is therefore assumed that this will continue, that such resources will be passed through by the Council to the HSCP to cover all related pressures and there will be no additional contribution from the Council.
- Teacher Growth – as referred to earlier the Scottish Government has confirmed that £145m of funding provided for additional teaching / classroom assistant resources as part of the COVID19 response will now be provided on a recurring basis from 2022/23. For Renfrewshire this is likely to amount to circa £4.5 million of addition recurring teaching resources and it is anticipated that this will be deployed alongside non-recurring resources to support a medium term plan to manage future changes in school rolls as well as support long term additionality of teaching resources as part of the overall programme to support the education recovery for our young people.
- Council Investment Commitments – the medium term financial plan includes provision for the recurring impact of existing investment commitments from the Council ranging from city deal, regeneration, schools investment as well as planning for the financially sustainable long term service changes that will emerge from tackling poverty, social

renewal and alcohol and drugs initiatives being progressed by the Council.

- 4.2.7 Taking all the above key factors into account along with provisions for other general pressures, it is forecast the Council will face a gross budget deficit of approximately £25m in the three year period through to 2024/25 (this includes the existing forecast structural deficit of £4 million - £5 million carried forward from 2021/22). Assuming an indicative 3% per annum council tax increase is applied, this deficit over the three year period would be reduced to approximately £17 million.
- 4.2.8 As indicated above, this represents the central forecast in what is recognised is a range of potential scenario outcomes. Applying sensitivities to only the key variables of grant, pay and COVID19 legacy impacts, would suggest lower and upper scenarios with gross budget deficits of £16 million to £42 million respectively. Again, applying an indicative 3% council tax increase, the lower and upper scenario budget deficits are reduced to £8 million and £34 million respectively.
- 4.2.9 It should be noted that these forecasts represent the anticipated minimum level of recurring savings the Council would need to achieve over the medium term to secure a sustainable and balanced budget. This provides for no financial provision to secure the release of resources to support any future investment priorities, which would require to be factored into future transformation plans. Additionally, given the Council already has an existing structural budget deficit of around £4 million - £5 million that will be carried forward into 2022/23, it is recognised there is likely to be more limited prospects of securing temporary non-recurring spending capacity over the medium term period as has been the case in the years prior to the pandemic.

5 Financial Strategy Response Measures

- 5.1 The Council's financial strategy prior to the COVID19 pandemic had targeted a requirement to deliver £25 million of recurring savings from the Council's Right for Renfrewshire (R4R) programme to address the Council's financial challenges over the medium term. The initial tranche of R4R is on course to secure approximately £6 million of savings which are already incorporated into the Council's existing financial budgets and forward plans. In line with the original savings objective, there would remain approximately £19 million of associated savings yet to be delivered through the Council's transformation programme. In the context of the above financial outlook, this financial target for the transformation programme remains at this stage broadly appropriate in scale.
- 5.2 As outlined above, there is potential for greater financial planning certainty to emerge over the next 6-9 months in relation to grant and pay. Should this emerge, the scale of financial challenge facing the Council over the medium term could be more confidently forecast and critically a clearer understanding of the scale of financial savings that the transformation programme will be required to deliver to secure financial sustainability of Council services. However, it is recognised that the Council's organisational capacity remains significantly focused on COVID19, supporting the wider recovery agenda as well as recovering as an organisation from the very significant disruption caused by COVID19. It is anticipated that the demands arising from this recovery phase will continue for the immediate future. Similar therefore to this

time last year, this context once again presents a position where the Council's financial planning for the forthcoming financial year is unlikely to be in a position where reliance can be placed upon a significant financial contribution to emerge from the transformation programme and the immediate financial strategy should therefore be progressed on this basis. The potential for the COVID19 pandemic and associated recovery period impacting on the Council for longer than was originally envisaged was considered as a possibility when a range of decisions were taken by the Council to reposition the financial strategy in September 2020. The decisions taken at that point have provided the Council, as intended, with greater short term flexibility to respond to the ongoing context of COVID19 and position the financial strategy for 2022/23 with the following key objectives in place: -

- Provide immediate confidence that the Council can maintain short term financial and organisational stability with limited requirements for service & transformation savings to support the budget moving into 2022/23.
- Provide confidence that the Council can respond to the new cost pressures that will emerge in 2022/23 whilst resuming progress to address the structural budget deficit and moving away from reliance on reserves to achieve a balanced budget. Should the Council fail to respond in this manner moving into 2022/23, the organisation would move into a space where immediate financial stability and more significantly recurring financial sustainability would come under very significant risk moving forward.
- Provide the Council with a longer window of opportunity to recover from the wider demands placed on it by COVID19 Council before unavoidably greater demands are placed on the transformation programme to deliver significant financial savings.
- Provide a window of opportunity for greater financial planning certainty to emerge over the medium term on grant, pay and COVID legacy impacts in order that increased confidence can be provided on the scale of financial challenge moving forward for the Council - both the minimum scale of savings to address the structural budget deficit first and foremost but also to establish the scale of opportunity to support a future agenda where resources released through transformation are available to support investment in new Council priorities.

5.3 The following areas will be progressed to support the 2022/23 budget strategy and provide the opportunity to appropriately position the Council's financial position for the forthcoming medium term period: -

- Relative to previous years, a minimal target of £2 million of savings from transformation activities will be planned for in 2022/23. This will be delivered from areas under less immediate demands from COVID19 recovery and where capacity exists to progress R4R transformation and redesign work. Progress on identifying designing and progressing change in such areas will be reported to future Leadership boards as this work progresses.
- The financial planning will be progressed on the basis that long term Corporate Financing flexibility arrangements established early in the

Council's financial response to the anticipated impact of COVID19 will be triggered moving into 2022/23. This will release recurring savings to support the immediate revenue budget position. It should be noted that this saving is financially not a free good and is underpinned by the release of long term flexibility resources indirectly facilitated through increased borrowing to support the capital programme. This creates a longer term recurring revenue cost to support the repayment of the associated borrowing as well as committing the Council to an annual revenue base budget adjustment each year over the long term. The impact of both factors has been incorporated into the Council's long term financial planning arrangements to ensure the action taken now is appropriately and sustainably planned for over the long term. It should be noted that at this stage, flexibilities introduced nationally have offered very limited opportunity reflecting the Council's very specific local financial position.

- Plans to develop a refreshed approach to the transformation programme will be progressed and developed in preparation for the Council emerging fully from the immediate demands of COVID19. This revised approach will be appropriately influenced by the new emerging post COVID environment, key learning from the organisation's experience during the COVID19 emergency period, learning from the rapid deployment and better use of technology as well as opportunities that are available from increased appetite for new ways of working and engaging with the Council that have been shown by communities, businesses, and partners over the course of the past 18 months.

5.4 It is anticipated that over the following months there will be a range of key announcements and changes which will continue to influence and change the Council's financial outlook, both in terms of the immediate short term, looking ahead to the 2022/23 budget, but also over the medium term through to 2024/25 and beyond should multi-year settlements emerge. In line with previous years, reports will be provided to future cycles of the Council as key announcements are released and the financial outlook and strategy is updated and adapted as appropriate.

4. Capital Investment Programme

4.1 The Council agreed in March capital investment plans for housing and general services for the period 2021/22 to 2025/26 which included investment totalling £443 million. In the current financial year, it was planned that spend of £115 million would take place.

4.2 Previous updates to members have outlined the impact, particularly over the course of 2020, that lockdown measures associated with the Covid19 have had on the capital plan and progress with construction projects in particular. The easing of lockdown measures has allowed major projects to be recommenced however social distancing measures have continued to have an impact.

4.3 Aside from the impact on the progress of projects arising from the initial phase of disruption associated with the pandemic, an arguably more significant second phase of risk has emerged and continues to increase in significance over the course of recent months in relation to construction inflation. Recent forecasts have placed this at around 8% for construction materials – significantly ahead of inflation in the wider economy generally. The increase in

price is being driven by several factors linked to both supply and demand. As the pandemic continues to impact on the operation of companies globally and affect workforce availability, many suppliers of construction materials have taken time to fully re-start their operations as well as struggling to keep pace with heightening demand. Shortages, elongated supply times and price increases are being experienced with timber, paint, cement, and steel being areas of particular significance. Raw material shortages and labour constraints are also being experienced in other key commodity areas e.g. microchips – with a subsequent worldwide shortfall impacting on the availability of items from vehicles to laptops. Further constraints on supply flow from transportation issues with the impact of the blockage of the Suez Canal still being felt; delays linked to additional administration of imports to the UK following the Brexit vote and the national shortage of HGV drivers all playing a role in supply constraints across the UK.

- 4.4 Compounding the supply side issue is an increase in demand as lockdown measures are eased and construction sites have reopened. Additionally, the volume of demand has also increased with both domestic (eg house extensions linked to pent up spending power) and commercial and public bodies looking to catch up on backlog maintenance issues and invest in new facilities along with national government interventions accelerating infrastructure investment as part of wider economic recovery measures. Previous concerns highlighted to members in relation to the potential financial sustainability of contractors do not appear to have manifested themselves to any specific degree and conversely what is now unfolding is a level of demand that the construction industry is struggling to keep pace and where labour and skill shortages within the industry are now impacting on overall capacity.
- 4.4 Reports to members over the course of the current financial year have highlighted the risks of cost pressures on the capital programme linked to the impact of the COVID19 disruption and this has now moved beyond the initial lockdown phase impact to this second phase focused on price increases linked to industry supply and demand mismatch aligned with material shortages. The impact of this is now being increasingly experienced in both live Council projects and as Council projects are coming to the market. The Council will need to keep under careful and detailed review the cumulative impact on both individual projects and the overall approved capital plan as set against available resources and contingencies and remain alert to the prospect of capital projects requiring additional funding to maintain the deliverability of the overall programme. In this context and as referred to earlier, it is proposed that £5 million of the COVID19 resources are earmarked for this purpose in the first instance. The adequacy of this provision will be assessed over the coming months however it should be noted that in the context of the general fund capital programme this represents a relatively limited level of additional financial cover for the Council and further actions may require to be considered.
- 4.5 Moving beyond the existing capital programme, the level of Scottish Government capital grant the Council can expect in future years has been confirmed by the Scottish Government to remain at current levels over the medium term. Scottish Government capital grant was reduced by around 20% in 2020/21, maintained at this level in 2021/22 and there is therefore no prospect of any recovery in this source of grant funding moving forward. Members will recall that at this level of funding, capital grant resource is able only to support a limited rolling lifecycle maintenance programme across all asset classes. The Council will therefore be required to continue to seek out

and pursue alternative capital grant opportunities from government funds and other grant providing bodies as well as recognising that prudential borrowing represents the major lever at the Council's disposal to support major investment. However, prudential borrowing requires to be financially sustainable and underpinned by recurring revenue resources to ensure this is the case. As the Council moves forward and major financial challenges persist for the revenue budget, the capacity to sustainably support prudential borrowing will become an increasing challenge.

5. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- 5.1 The Covid19 pandemic and the consequential lockdown resulted in additional costs and a loss of income to the HRA during 2020/21, incurring a £0.3m overspend which was managed through the application of reserve balances. This overspend was less than had originally been forecast, linked to housing rent income holding better than expected.
- 5.2 Forecasts for 2021/22 suggest that while pressures on the HRA financial position will remain, these will be containable within the agreed HRA revenue budget. There remain some downside risks to this forecast, including the cessation of the UK government furlough scheme potentially having a knock on negative impact on some tenants ability to maintain rent payments; albeit this risk is mitigated to an extent by the protection offered through Universal Credit and the option of direct payments to landlords.
- 5.3 Other pressures may also manifest themselves linked to the continuing additional support to tenants through COVID19 being required for a longer period, additional PPE costs and other working requirements, the ongoing impact of social distancing on building services and the associated impact on productivity levels as well as price pressures on construction material increasing costs of cyclical maintenance.
- 5.4 Members will be aware that the HRA is a ringfenced account and the Council's financial strategy is to ensure that service delivery can be maintained within the available resources. Equally the financial strategy has also maintained a level of HRA reserves at £6.5m to provide adequate protection to the HRA against the short to medium term impact of the materialisation of any financial risks.

Housing Capital Programme and future Investment Capacity

- 5.5 Council approved a capital expenditure plan for 2021/22 – 2023/24 on the existing housing stock of £58m, including significant investment in the external fabric of buildings. In addition, a further £49m was approved in relation to an ambitious regeneration and new build programme approved by Council in December 2020 – a programme which could see around £100m of new additional investment over the next 10 years, supporting both tenants and local economic recovery.
- 5.6 The cost of supporting the associated investment is borne by the revenue account through the associated debt charges and therefore maintaining confidence of the long term financial sustainability of the HRA remains critical. In this context officers will continue to closely monitor the HRA revenue position; however given the stability and long term predictability of rental income (which has held up very well throughout the challenges of the pandemic) and the existing prudent reserve balance available, there is continued confidence that

the HRA and its future investment plans remain financially sustainable over both the medium term but also over the very long term as set out each year as part of the overall 30 year business model. Appropriate adjustments will be factored into the ongoing financial sustainability planning for the HRA and will be kept under close review over coming months and years.

- 5.7 As outlined above, construction inflation remains a key area of risk and this applies equally to housing through the impact on major investment programmes as well cyclical and reactive maintenance. The impact of potential additional cost pressures through this area of risk will require to be carefully monitored and considered and where required appropriately factored into the overall investment plans and long term financial planning arrangements underpinning the 30 business planning horizon.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – the report highlights the heightened financial risks facing the Council because of the COVID19 emergency. Over the medium term, the requirement to continue to make significant financial savings to secure financial sustainability remains. However increased short term risks remain as the impact of COVID19 is expected to last on the Council for longer than originally anticipated. In direct response a number of adjustments to the financial strategy are outlined in the report in order to protect the Council’s immediate financial stability and prepare the Council to be in a position to sustainably address the scale of financial challenge moving forward.
- 2.
3. **HR & Organisational Development** – the medium term financial position and associated plans require to align with workforce and service plans to ensure the size and composition of the Council workforce remains appropriate and affordable.
- 4.
5. **Community/Council Planning** – the Council requires to remain financially sustainable in order to deliver on its priorities as outlined in the Council and Community Plans.
6. **Legal** - none
- 7.
7. **Property/Assets** - none
8. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality & Human Rights** – n/a at this stage and any implications will be assessed as part of associated proposals taken forward as part of the financial strategy and wider Right for Renfrewshire programme.
8. **Health & Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** – a range of financial risks are outlined within the report, along with mitigation measures as far as they are possible.
11. **Privacy Impact** - none
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – none
13. **Climate Risk** - none

Author: *Alan Russell, Director of Finance & Resources*



To: Council

On: 30 September 2021

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Governance Arrangements

1. Summary

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to set out arrangements for the next cycle of Board meetings starting in mid-October 2021 up to and including the full Council meeting on 16 December 2021.
- 1.2 The report outlines arrangements for meetings going forward taking into account a number of key developments since the last Council meeting, including:
- the successful use of the hybrid model for conducting Board meetings; and
 - the Scottish Government's decision to move to "Beyond Level 0" with effect from 9 August 2021 which removed most of the restrictions to control the transmission of Covid-19.
- 1.3 The arrangements set out in the report aim to allow maximum flexibility to enable meetings to take place in the most appropriate and safe way, depending on the guidance that is in force at the time the meetings are due to take place.
- 1.4 The report also covers the arrangements for the appointment of a new chief executive, some Board appointments by the Labour Group and provides an update on the appeal by Paul Mack against the sanction of disqualification imposed by the Standards Commission of Scotland.
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2. Recommendations

2.1 Council is asked to:

- a) note the successful completion of the first cycle of Board meetings using the Public-i system to facilitate the conduct of hybrid meetings that were broadcast live,
- b) note the terms of the Protocol for the Conduct of Hybrid meetings that was agreed for use for those meetings, a copy of which is attached as an appendix to this report,
- c) approve the arrangements for the next cycle of Council and Board meetings set out in section 4 of this report, which will continue to include the option to use hybrid meetings involving elected members attending meetings in person in Renfrewshire House, should Scottish Government Guidance allow it,
- d) note that Sandra Black has intimated her intention to retire from her post as chief executive and Head of Paid Service of Renfrewshire Council with effect from 15 December 2021 and that a recruitment process has begun to find her successor,
- e) agree that in the event that there is a period of time between the current chief executive retiring and the new chief executive starting in post, the Chief Executive's Appointments Panel will approve arrangements for the appointment of an acting chief executive,
- f) note that the appeal by Paul Mack against the sanction of disqualification imposed on him by the Standards Commission for Scotland was heard by the Sheriff Principal on 31 August 2021 although the decision is still awaited,
- g) approve the following Board appointments by the Labour Group:
 - Cllr Karen Devine-Kennedy will replace Cllr Jim Sheridan as a member of the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board.
 - Cllr John Hood will replace Cllr Jim Sheridan as a member of the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board.
 - Cllr Jim Sharkey will replace Cllr Jim Sheridan as a member of the Leadership Board.
- h) note that a further report on the arrangements for future meetings of Council and Boards will be brought to the next Council meeting on 16 December 2021.

3. Background

- 3.1 At its last meeting on 24 June 2021, the Council agreed that officers could plan for the introduction of the use of hybrid meetings for the next cycle of Council and Board meetings, should Government guidance permit the return of some elected members to Renfrewshire House to attend meetings in person.
- 3.2 On 13 April 2021 the First Minister announced plans to accelerate the easing of lockdown and provided an indicative timetable for this to happen. That timetable provided for the whole of Scotland to be in level 3 from 26 April 2021 with a move to Level 2 on 17 May 2021, to Level 1 in early June and to Level 0 by the end of June 2021. That timetable provided sufficient optimism to plan for the re-introduction of meetings in the Council Chamber for the August/September 2021 cycle of meetings either fully in person or by hybrid meeting using the Public-i system.
- 3.3 Since the last meeting of the Council on 24 June 2021, Renfrewshire like all other Scottish local authority areas, moved to Level 0 on 19 July 2021 and then moved to a stage referred to as “Beyond Level 0” which had the effect of removing all legal restrictions relating to Covid-19 with effect from 9 August 2021. The move to “Beyond Level 0” happened in advance of the first Board meeting of the current cycle of meetings on 17 August 2021.
- 3.4 The current guidance which applies to office-based working is that where possible you should continue to work from home. However, the guidance does allow for a phased return to office-based workplaces. In these circumstances, it was accepted that the return of elected members to Board meetings should be included as part of the phased re-opening of Renfrewshire House
- 3.5 The main obstacle to a return to Board and Council meetings where everyone is present in the Chamber is the requirement for physical distancing in the workplace. Although legal requirements have been removed, there is still a duty on the Council to protect the health and well-being of its elected members and employees. To reflect this, the Protocol that has been adopted for hybrid meetings maintains a 2 metres physical distancing requirement in the Council Chamber.
- 3.6 All of the Policy Boards as well as the Leadership Board and the Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board have taken place as hybrid meetings. These meetings have been carried out in accordance with the agreed protocol which is an appendix to this report. The intention is that the Public-i system will also be used for all future meetings of the Regulatory Functions Board. A further consideration for the re-introduction of physical meetings of that Board is that arrangements would also have to be made to allow access for those applicants appearing in front of the Board.

- 3.7 In recent weeks there has been a significant increase in the number of positive cases of Covid-19 in the community which has resulted in some caution about any further relaxation of restrictions that would lead to the full return of elected members to the Council Chamber. Any decision to remove the current physical distancing requirement in the Chamber will only be taken after a full risk assessment has been completed taking into account the relevant Scottish Government Guidance in force at the time.
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4. Arrangements for the next Cycle of Board meetings

- 4.1 The installation of the Public-i system created the opportunity for the Council to hold hybrid Board meetings in Renfrewshire House with at least some elected members and officers being present with others accessing the meeting remotely.
- 4.2 This meant that the system was available for its use to begin at formal Board meetings in August 2021, to take advantage of the loosening of Covid related restrictions. All of the Council's Policy Boards, the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board and the Leadership Board have taken place using the Public-i system. In all cases these have been hybrid meetings with some members present in the Chamber while others accessed the meeting remotely.
- 4.3 It is proposed to continue with the current arrangements for Board meetings which allows for hybrid meetings with the option available to the Convener of each Board to hold the meeting remotely by Teams if they wish, in line with the agreed Protocol.
- 4.4 Until the position is absolutely clear regarding the control of Covid-19 infections and the Council is convinced that it is safe to do so, there is no proposal at this time to remove the current physical distancing restrictions in place in the Council Chamber as described in paragraph 3.5.
- 4.5 It is proposed to extend the use of the Public-i system for meetings of the Regulatory Functions Board starting with the meeting on 27 October 2021.
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5. Chief Executive of Renfrewshire Council

- 5.1 Sandra Black has intimated that she is retiring from her post as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service of Renfrewshire Council with effect from 15 December 2021. A recruitment process to identify her successor has started and an Appointments Panel comprising 9 elected members has been established.
- 5.2 Members will be advised of the appointment of the new chief executive once the decision has been made. This is anticipated to be in November 2021.

- 5.3 In the event that there is a gap between the current chief executive retiring and the new chief executive being in post, the intention would be to appoint an acting chief executive to provide cover during that time. The arrangements for making any appointment of acting chief executive will be approved by the Appointments Panel.
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6. Appeal Against Disqualification

- 6.1 Members have previously been advised that following a Hearing, the Standards Commission of Scotland imposed a sanction of disqualification on Paul Mack to reflect their findings that he had breached several paragraphs of the Councillors Code of Conduct.
- 6.2 The Standards Commission's decision was the subject of an appeal and the appeal was heard by the Sheriff principal on 31 August 2021. However, the decision in the appeal has still to be issued. Members will be advised of the decision as soon as it is known.
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7. Changes to Board Memberships

- 7.1 Cllr Devine has intimated that he wishes to make some changes to the representation of the Labour Group on three Boards. These involve replacing Cllr Sheridan with Cllr Devine-Kennedy on the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board, with Cllr Hood on the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board and with Cllr Sharkey on the Leadership Board.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – The report refers to the appointment of a new chief executive.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – None.
4. **Legal** – As detailed in the report.
5. **Property/Assets** – None.
6. **Information Technology** – The report refers to the successful introduction of a system from Public-i which enabled meetings to be undertaken with some members being present in the Chamber with others accessing remotely and also for those meetings to be broadcast live.

7. **Equality & Human Rights** - 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 & Safety** – The proposals in the report recognise that it's formal Council and Board meetings only take place in Renfrewshire House when it is safe to do so. The report also acknowledges that where meetings can take place in Renfrewshire House, the number of attendees will be limited by the social distancing restrictions that are in place at the relevant time.
9. **Risk** – None.
10. **Privacy Impact** – The report refers to the introduction of live broadcasting of Council and Board meetings.
11. **Cosla Policy Position** – None.
12. **Climate Risk** – None.

List of Background Papers –

- 1) Minute of the Council meeting on 24 June 2021.
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Author: Ken Graham, Head of Corporate Governance.

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL- PROTOCOL FOR HYBRID MEETINGS

A. Introduction

- 1. On 24 June 2021 the Council approved a report setting out the arrangements for the introduction of Council and Board meetings which allowed some elected members to be present at a meeting in the Council Chamber and others to access the same meeting remotely. These are referred to as “hybrid meetings” for the purposes of this document.**
- 2. The same report approved by Council authorised the Head of Corporate Governance to put in place protocols for the proper conduct of hybrid meetings in consultation with the Group and Party Leaders.**
- 3. This document is the protocol for the conduct of hybrid meetings for the purposes of the Council authorisation. The protocol is supplemental to the Council’s procedural standing Orders, which will continue to apply to Council and Board meetings except to the extent that they are inconsistent with the terms of this protocol.**

B. Background

- 1. There have been no Board meetings held in the Council Chamber at Renfrewshire House since March 2020. Instead, meetings have taken place remotely, most recently using the Microsoft Teams platform.**
- 2. The gradual easing of Government restrictions relating to the control of the Covid-19 pandemic has now made it possible for elected members to return to Renfrewshire House to attend Board meetings although that return is subject to whatever Government guidance is in place at the date of each Board or Council meeting.**
- 3. The arrangements set out in this Protocol are based on applying a physical distance requirement of at least 2 metres. This requirement restricts the number of people who are able to be present in the Council chamber for each meeting.**
- 4. The maximum number of people who may be present in the Council Chamber is determined by the number of available seats taking into account the physical distancing requirements.**
- 5. The maximum number is currently 26. This comprises the following:**
 - 18 seats with microphones**
 - 3 seats for clerks (no microphones)**
 - 5 seats in the public gallery (no microphones).**

6. The number of elected members on the Leadership Board and on three of the four policy boards is 15.
7. The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board has 9 members and the Regulatory Functions Board has 10 members. There are various other Boards and sub-committees, none of which have a membership in excess of 15.
8. Therefore, all elected members on those Boards should be able to attend meetings in Renfrewshire House.
9. The only exceptions to this overall position are the Full Council meetings where 43 members would require to be present and the Education and Children's Services Policy Board where there are 20 members including 3 representatives of religious groups.
10. For Full Council meetings and meetings of the Education and Children's Services Policy Board at least some of the members will have to attend remotely.
11. It is also the case that most officers attending Board and Council meetings which are being held in the Council Chamber will continue to do so remotely. The Chair may wish to discuss with the chief executive or relevant director if they wish to have certain senior officer (s) present in the Council Chamber.

C. Prior to the Meeting

1. The Notice calling the meeting will specify that the meeting will be webcast live and that elected members will in some circumstances be able to attend the meeting in person in the Council Chamber while others will be able to access the meeting remotely.
2. The Chair must be present in the Chamber. If the Chair is unable to attend the meeting, the Vice-Chair must be present in the Chamber.
3. Members should provide at least 24 hours' notice to the Head of Corporate Governance that they intend attending the meeting remotely, unless this is unavoidable for circumstances outwith their control.
4. All members with the exception of the Chair will be invited as "attendees".
5. All members (other than the Chair) attending a meeting in the Chambers should bring their own laptop with them to allow them to access emails. This will enable them to see any amendments circulated at the meeting. Members should ensure their laptop is fully charged before attending the meeting.
6. To prevent disruptive feedback noise, member will require to have their microphones and speakers on their laptops turned off.

7. The Chair will have a laptop provided and this will be set up in advance of the meeting.
8. The Chair's laptop will provide the Chair with access to the on-line meeting attendees list, a view of the on-line screen and the private chat function.
9. In addition to Committee Services staff operating the Public-I system, each meeting will be supported by two committee services clerks. The duties of Clerk 1 are to advise the convener, conduct any votes and be alert to any member who wishes to speak. The duties of Clerk 2 are principally to support the convener in relation to those members and officers accessing the meeting remotely. They will alert the convener to any member accessing the meeting remotely who wishes to speak. Clerk 2 will also be responsible for circulating any amendments to be considered at the meeting.
10. Members are encouraged to send any amendments they propose to make to the Committee Services officer assisting with the circulation of amendments whose email address will be communicated to the members attending the meeting. Ideally, the amendments should be passed to Committee Services in advance of the meeting.
11. Members attending the meeting in the Chamber will be allocated one of the available seats in the Chamber and the member must sit at the seat allocated to them.
12. The Convener has the power to determine whether any meeting of a Board or Full Council should be conducted remotely using the Teams platform.
13. The Chair may wish to consider whether any particular senior officers should be present in the Council Chamber for a meeting. They should discuss a requirement for an officer to attend with the chief executive or the relevant director.
14. The committee rooms are available for Groups to use immediately prior to a Board meeting or during any adjournment.

D. At the Start of the Meeting

1. The Chair will announce that the meeting will be broadcast live.
2. The Chair will also establish how many members are present in the Chamber and how many members are accessing the meeting remotely.
3. The Chair will also establish and state which officers (other than the officers operating the system) are present in the Chamber.

E. During the Meeting

- 1. Members must comply with any advice in place regarding Covid-19 to protect the health and safety of those attending or supporting the meeting.**
- 2. Members present in the Chamber must activate their microphones when speaking. Failing to do so will mean that their contribution will not be picked up on the webcast and those attending the meeting remotely will not be able to hear what is being said.**
- 3. All motions and amendments intimated during the meeting should be by email although the Chair may instruct that a motion or amendment is set out in the on-line meeting chat. The Chair may also request that the proposer of any motion or amendment reads their motion or amendment out for the purpose of informing those watching the remotely.**
- 4. Hard copy motions or amendments should not be circulated in the Chamber unless all members attending the meeting are present in the Chamber.**

F. Contingency

- 1. Where it was intended to use the Public-I system for a meeting but for any reason it is not possible to use that system, the meeting will be adjourned until such time as the Chair may decide to enable a Teams meeting to be set up. Once reconvened, the meeting shall then proceed as a remote meeting on the Teams platform and the procedures for holding a meeting using Teams shall apply.**



To: Council

On: 30 September 2021

Report by: Chief Social Work Officer

Heading: Annual Report of the Chief Social Work Officer 2020/21

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Chief Social Work Officer provides an annual update report to Council in Autumn each year. The requirement for every local authority in Scotland to appoint a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is set out within Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. The particular qualifications are set down in regulations and this is one of a number of statutory requirements which local authorities must comply with. In Renfrewshire Council the role of the Chief Social Work Officer is held by the Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice.
- 1.2. The annual reports of all CSWOs are submitted to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor at the Scottish Government in order that a national overview report can be produced.
- 1.3. The report provides a summary of activity relating to the role of the Chief Social Work Officer during 2020/21.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that elected members:
 - Note the key activities outlined in this report;
 - Note that the report will be submitted to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor at the Scottish Government; and
 - Agree that the next update to Council will be presented in Autumn 2022

3. The Chief Social Work Officer

- 3.1 The principal role and purpose of the Social Work service is contained within the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, which gave local authorities the responsibility of “promoting social welfare”. The Social Work Service has a statutory duty to provide care and protection to the most vulnerable people across Renfrewshire, often meaning that many of our service users do not engage with us on a voluntary basis. The role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is critical in terms of achieving this purpose.
- 3.2 The CSWO is a ‘proper officer’ in relation to the social work function: an officer given particular responsibility on behalf of a local authority, where the law requires the function to be discharged by a specified post holder.
- 3.3 The qualifications of the CSWO are set down in regulations and stipulate that the postholder must be a qualified social worker registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. The CSWO must be able to demonstrate extensive experience of operational and strategic management at a senior level within social work or social care services.
- 3.4 The overall objective of the CSWO is to provide professional advice on the provision of social work services to elected members and officers; advice which assists authorities in understanding many of the complexities which are inherent across social work services. The CSWO should also assist authorities in understanding the key role that social work plays in contributing to the achievement of national and local outcomes, to improving local performance and in terms of the management of corporate risk. The key aspect of this locally has been the provision of an annual report to Council, and these, along with CSWO reports from other local authorities, are now being used nationally to create an overview report.
- 3.5 The scope of the CSWO role covers all social work and social care services, whether provided directly by the local authority, or in partnership with others. Where these services are purchased or commissioned from external providers, the CSWO has responsibility to advise on the specification, quality and standards of services commissioned. The environment in which social work services operate is much more complex than when the Act established the role, and current guidance reflects the increased strategic nature of the role, and the particular functions in relation to Integration Joint Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships.
- 3.6 The CSWO has a range of other responsibilities relating to the promotion of values, standards, and leadership.

- 3.7 Social work services have a statutory duty to provide care and protection to the most vulnerable people across their local authority area. A significant proportion of service users do not engage with the service on a voluntary basis. Access to the majority of services is assessed on the basis of need, and social work staff work in partnership with individuals, carers, families and communities to meet this need within the resources available to the service and partner agencies.
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4. Local Governance Arrangements

- 4.1 Within Renfrewshire Council the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice also acts as Chief Social Work Officer. As well as the responsibilities associated with the directorship, as CSWO he retains professional leadership for adult social work and social care services delivered by the HSCP.
- 4.2 The CSWO has a number of general and specific duties, including:
- (i) Providing regular reports to elected members on the key activities and role of the Chief Social Work Officer.
 - (ii) Leading for Social Work on the Renfrewshire HSCP Executive Governance Group and the Integration Joint Board
 - (iii) Reporting directly to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board and Renfrewshire Council.
 - (iv) Being a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team and the Chief Officer's Group and reporting directly to the Chief Executive and senior elected members.
 - (v) Representing services and the council more widely, at a local, regional and national level.
 - (vi) Chairing the twice-yearly meeting of all social work managers from both Children's Services and the HSCP.
 - (vii) Providing advice on social work issues to the Chief Officers' Group
 - (viii) **Specific Duties**
In relation to specific duties associated with the position, the CSWO within Renfrewshire Council acts as:
 - Final point of appeal in relation to Adoption and Fostering decisions
 - Recipient of all Mental Health and Adults with Incapacity Orders, and Guardianship cases
 - Decision maker in relation to Secure Care applications for Children

(ix) Management of Risk

The Chief Social Work Officer is accountable to the Chief Executive, the Corporate Management Team and the Council as part of the Chief Officers' Group which manages public protection risks on a partnership basis. Heads of Service have responsibility for the management of risk within their respective service areas.

5. Activities of the Chief Social Work Officer 2020/21

- 5.1 The report attached as Appendix 1 summarises the key activities of the Director of Children's Services in his capacity as Chief Social Work Officer in Renfrewshire during 2020/21. It does not provide an exhaustive description of the full range of duties and responsibilities undertaken but seeks to provide a broad overview of the CSWO role and, for this year, the particular challenges of operating during a pandemic. This report and its appendices will be submitted to the Office of the Chief Social Work Officer to inform a national overview report.
- 5.2 The next report on the activities of the Chief Social Work Officer will be submitted to the Council in Autumn 2022.
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6. Overview of activities within social work services

- 6.1 Services continued to operate during the pandemic, with public health measures in place in line with the rules governing national lockdowns and local restrictions. Child protection registrations remained fairly stable throughout the year and in line with previous years. Adult protection referrals were slightly lower during the first lockdown than the comparable period in 2021, but this was short-lived and might be attributable to normal levels of fluctuation. Justice services did have a reduction in demand in some areas whilst courts were closed, and where appropriate, staff were redeployed to support the wider crisis response work.
- 6.2 The CSWO has a range of statutory duties which are detailed in Appendix 1 to this report; that appendix also includes more detail of demand and provision in those areas.
- 6.3 Statutory functions in respect of children encompass looked after and accommodated children, child protection, work with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and work with young people who offend and are subject to secure orders. As part of a long-term plan to reduce the use of residential services for looked after children, two of the council's children's houses were decommissioned in 2020/21, having become surplus to requirements as more family settings are used. The implementation of The Promise will help shape future service developments within Children and Families Social Work, but will also influence some aspects of social work delivery for adults where this intersects with services for children and young people.

- 6.4 Day to day management of adult social work services is delegated to Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. The CSWO retains a professional advisory role in relation to these services and continues to have statutory duties within adult social work. The Renfrewshire Adult Protection Committee is responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring the strategic approach to the management of the protection of vulnerable adults in Renfrewshire in terms of the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. There continues to be high demand for work related to the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000, and this has been complicated by the extended closure of courts across Scotland. More detail is included in Appendix 1.
- 6.5 The Criminal Justice Service supervises a range of community-based requirements on offenders, provides reports to Courts and the Parole Board, manages a service for sexual offenders, and operates a range of statutory and voluntary services to support female offenders. The Unpaid Work service has been significantly impacted by Covid-19, with public health measures reducing the capacity of the service for a prolonged period. More generally, the court closures led to a temporary reduction in report requests and in new orders commencing; as courts return to normal, the service can expect a large increase in new activity as backlogs are cleared.

Key Priorities in 2021/22

- 6.6 Based on an assessment of internal and external factors the CSWO has identified key priorities for the year ahead:
- Effectively discharging our public protection role and working with partners to ensure that vulnerable children and adults live as safely as possible within local communities;
 - Continuing to respond to the particular challenges related to the pandemic and its management;
 - Continuing the implementation of The Promise;
 - Responding to the findings of the Feeley Review on Adult Social Care;
 - Supporting the wider Council to deliver on the priorities set out in the Social Renewal Plan and the Economic Recovery Plan;
 - Continuing to ensure strong and positive links between Children's Services and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership;
 - Implementing a new social work case management system within Justice Social Work

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None

3. **Community Planning** – The report details the progress made by the service to protect vulnerable children and adults, reduce offending behaviour, increase community safety, and promote early intervention, independent living and wider health improvement. It highlights partnership working, details the measures which ensure the workforce is skilled and effective and highlights achievements in relation to support to communities, customer service and consultation.
4. **Legal** - None
5. **Property/Assets** – None
6. **Information Technology** – None
7. **Equality & Human Rights** –
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 & Safety** – None
9. **Procurement** –None
10. **Risk** - Risks related to the management and delivery of social work services are closely monitored and are included within both the Children’s Services Risk Register and, where appropriate, the Corporate Risk Register.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – None
13. **Climate Change** - None

List of Background Papers

“The Role of the Chief Social Work Officer – Guidance Issued by Scottish Ministers”
Paper to Education and Children Policy Board, 18 August 2016

JT/LF
21 September 2021

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Annual Report of the Chief Social Work Officer

2020/21

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.”

Definition of social work agreed by the International Federation of Social Workers, 2014

Chief Social Work Officer – Renfrewshire

Introduction

I'm pleased to present the annual Chief Social Work Officer report for Renfrewshire for the period April 2020 to March 2021. The Chief Social Work Officer is a "proper officer" in relation to the social work function of the local authority. As such, the Chief Social Work Officer is given particular responsibility on behalf of the local authority in respect of social work functions and also the authority to discharge some functions in law on an individual basis.

This report provides an overview of social work and care activity during a period where the whole country was impacted for significant periods due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this annual report I attempt to demonstrate the commitment of social work and care staff to ensure that those who were most vulnerable to the challenges posed by the pandemic were supported and the care they required was delivered. The delivery of care was impacted by the restrictions of the pandemic however staff from social work and care remained on the front line throughout.

I want to take the opportunity to express my thanks to social work and care staff for their ongoing commitment to those who required support over the past year.

In discharging my role as Chief Social Work Officer, I'm supported in Children's Services by the Director, the Social Work Children's Services Manager and the Criminal Justice Services Manager. Within the Health and Social Care Partnership I'm supported by the Chief Officer and the Heads of Service. I want to acknowledge their support in helping me address the delivery of social work and care services in Renfrewshire.

This report doesn't detail all of the social work and care activity within Renfrewshire, but rather serves to provide an overview of services.

John Trainer
Chief Social Work Officer
August 2021

Governance and Accountability

In Renfrewshire, social work services for children and families and criminal justice social work services are delivered by Children's Services. Social work and care services for adults are delegated to and delivered by Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. Each local authority is required to appoint a Chief Social Work Officer, an officer with an appropriate social work qualification, to oversee the functions of social work. As social work and care services for adults are delegated, as Chief Social Work Officer I have oversight of how the delegated functions are delivered and I'm active in the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care governance arrangements.

As the Chief Social Worker in Renfrewshire, I have operational responsibilities in my post as Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice and line managed in that post by the Director of Children's Services. In the role of Chief Social Work Officer, I provide professional advice on social work functions to the Chief Executive, the Corporate Management Team and elected members. I also provide professional advice on adult social work and care to the Chief Officer and Senior Management Team of Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and to the Integrated Joint Board.

The role of CSWO was originally designed to provide professional advice on social work services to elected members and council officers, in order to assist local authorities in understanding the complexities inherent in social work and social care services. The growing incidence of strategic partnerships across the public sector, whether legislated for or developed through good local joint working, adds a level of complexity to the role of Chief Social Work Officer.

As CSWO I'm a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team and of the Chief Officers Group. I have a key role in multi-agency public protection arrangements and as such I'm a member of the Child and Adult Protection Committees, I co-chair the Gender-Based Violence Strategy Group and a member of the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

As Chief Social Work Officer I report to elected members, primarily through two Policy Boards and the Integration Joint Board. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board has the remit for matters relating to Children and Families Social Work and the Communities and Housing Policy Board has the remit for Justice Social Work as part of its overall responsibility for community justice in Renfrewshire. All matters pertaining to Adult Social Work and Social Care are dealt with by the Integration Joint Board, which has representation from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Board as well as elected members.

During the initial period of the pandemic in March 2020, with the Chief Officer and Head of Health and Social Care from Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership I established a daily monitoring process to assess the risks in care homes for older adults (both internal and those run by independent providers) and ensured a multi-agency response to the challenges faced by that sector. This model was replicated by other local authorities and health and social care partnerships across the country.

In assessing and supporting the social work and care staff to deliver the best services possible and to make the biggest difference for those who need social work and care support I regularly meet with managers and front-line staff to discuss their work.

In addition, regular performance reports are considered at strategic meetings to allow the identification of challenges in delivery and to find solutions to unblocking these for staff and those who need access to services.

As we enter 2021/22 in addition to supporting business as usual and Covid recovery work, a priority for me will be responding to the Scottish Government's Consultation on a National Care Service. The proposals contained within the consultation would have a considerable impact on the social work and social care workforce as well as on people who use these services and will need a considered response.

Service Quality and Performance

As a statutory service, social work provision continued throughout the pandemic and the various phases of restriction, though these restrictions did necessitate a shift in how some services were delivered. Many of the social work services are delivered by locality teams in Renfrewshire or by one of the specialist services.

In addition to the locality and specialist services the council and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership operates 23 services registered with the Care Inspectorate – four children’s houses, three care homes for older adults, five day services for older adults, five day services for adults with learning disabilities, one day service for adults with physical disabilities, one residential respite service for adults with learning disabilities, Care at Home Service, Fostering and Adoption Services, and a housing support service for care leavers.

The Care Inspectorate undertakes regular inspections of all registered services and indicates a formal assessment of the standard on a graded scale. The Care Inspectorate grades are:

- Unsatisfactory – major weaknesses
- Weak – important weaknesses
- Adequate – strengths just outweigh weaknesses
- Good – important strengths with some areas for improvement
- Very Good – major strengths
- Excellent – sector leading

The Care Inspectorate generally reviews the following areas when undertaking inspections by assessing:

- How well people’s wellbeing is supported?
- How good is the leadership of the service?
- How good is the staff team?
- How good is the environment?
- How well are care and support planned?

Not all of the registered services in Renfrewshire have been inspected over the past twelve months because of the impact of the pandemic. Most of the registered services in Renfrewshire have been graded as good or very good at their last inspection.

As Chief Social Work Officer I have procedures are in place for reporting to elected members should any care service receive an assessment of Weak or Unsatisfactory for any element. None of the recent inspections have required these procedures to be initiated as no service has been graded weak or unsatisfactory.

The following pages set out the performance of each of the three main areas of social work practice in Renfrewshire during 2020/21. This includes information about how the service responded to Covid-19 and the additional challenges which arose from delivering services during a pandemic.

Statutory Service Provision: Adult Social Work and Social Care

In Renfrewshire, the delivery of adult social work and social care services is delegated to Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. Mainstream social work services are delivered on a locality basis by two teams – one covering Paisley and the other covering the rest of the local authority area. As Chief Social Work Officer I provide professional leadership and advice to senior officers in RHSCP and to the wider social work and social care staff in adult services.

Throughout the period covered by this report social work and care staff in Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership continued to deliver services to those most in need. There were, as a result of the restrictions required by the pandemic significant changes to how some services were delivered.

The three care homes, Hunterhill, Montrose and Renfrew continued to operate throughout the pandemic with staff having to work to ensure that those who live in the homes had as close to a normal experience as possible whilst managing the risks and restrictions in place. The care staff worked closely with staff from environment and infrastructure to deliver care and support to the residents. Staff from other areas of adult services including day care also supported the operation of the care homes.

The care at home staff continued to work in the homes of individuals throughout the pandemic. There was pressure on care at home at various points in the pandemic however staff rose to the challenge to ensure those who needed services received them.

There was considerable impact on day care services as a result of the pandemic. The imposition of stringent lockdown restrictions meant that day care services closed for a significant period of the lockdown. Staff developed a range of additional supports for those who previously accessed day services including arranging online programmes and activities.

Adult social work staff in the localities and specialist teams in the main worked from home during the pandemic. Through much of the period covered by this report the locality teams provided a duty response from offices where possible. Much of the contact with those needing services was on an outreach basis using technology for assessment purposes.

The volume of adult protection work continues to increase, and Renfrewshire received 3483 adult welfare concerns and 1325 adult protection referrals in 2020/21; these are increases of 12% and 10% on the previous year and are the highest numbers since 2016/17. The number of AP investigations resulting from referrals has been fairly stable – 100 this year compared with 97 last year and 102 in 2018/19. The number that have progressed to a case conference is showing a year-on-year increase and was 51 in 2020/21 (31 in 2018/19 and 41 in 2019/20).

Additional operational guidance on adult support and protection was implemented in light of the pandemic and the potential for increased risk of harm to vulnerable individuals. The Renfrewshire Adult Protection Committee (RAPC) stepped up a sub-group which met fortnightly initially (moving to monthly when appropriate) to provide additional strategic and operational oversight of this area of work.

Adult Support and Protection was the subject of a joint inspection (by the Care Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Healthcare Improvement Scotland) in early 2020. The pandemic caused this activity to be halted before all work was completed but the inspection team were able to provide feedback which has now informed an improvement plan which will be overseen by RAPC.

During the year, three large-scale investigations were carried out in private sector care homes across Renfrewshire, as a response to concerns raised by HSCP staff and by the Care Inspectorate. Enhanced governance arrangements and safeguards were put in place in these three establishments.

Adults with Incapacity work remains a significant demand pressure, and the situation in Renfrewshire reflects the national picture of having to manage an increasing number of guardianships and supervise private guardianships. The granting of a guardianship is a complex legal process involving several agencies and professionals; the closure of court services in 2020 has brought additional delays. Orders where the Chief Social Work Officer is appointed Welfare Guardian rose in recent years, from 79 in March 2015 to 116 in 2020; on 31 March 2021 there were 108 such orders existent in Renfrewshire. Each order requires a qualified social worker to act as the "nominated officer" on behalf of the CSWO for day to day management of the case. In addition, there are in excess of approximately 435 private welfare guardianship orders running throughout Renfrewshire. These require a minimum of one statutory visit by a guardianship supervisor after being granted.

The MHO Team continued to experience a high volume of their routine work, alongside the need to support the broader social work Covid response. In 2020/21, there were 64 applications for Compulsory Treatment Orders, MHO consent for 24 emergency detentions (72-hour detention for assessment), 162 short-term detentions (28 days for assessment and treatment) and 153 Mental Health Tribunals in respect of 104 people. The service also manages 'Restricted Patients' who come under the control of Scottish Ministers

As of 31st March 2021, 138 individuals had an open involvement with the Integrated Alcohol Team and 680 individuals had an open involvement with Renfrewshire Drugs Service. The Renfrewshire area continues to have a high number of drug- and alcohol-related deaths relative to other council areas. In 2019, the Council and partners established an Alcohol and Drugs Commission to investigate underlying causes and make recommendations for improvement; more information on the work of the Commission can be found on its website.

Statutory Service Provision: Children and Families Social Work

Renfrewshire Council operates a locality-based model for mainstream Children & Families Social Work, with four teams based across the three largest towns in the area. Specialist teams provide focused support in the areas of Fostering and Adoption, Kinship Care, Residential Services, Pre and Post Birth Team Throughcare, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, Children with Disabilities, and the Whole Systems Team who support children and young people involved in the justice system.

There was a fear that the pandemic and the consequent restrictions would impact significantly on social work services through a reduction in children being referred (because they were no longer visible to universal services); an increase in domestic violence and greater risk because women were less able to leave an abusive household; and the longer-term impacts of prolonged stress arising from lockdowns, job losses and ill health.

As a frontline protective service, Social Work staff continued to operate throughout the national lockdowns and the different phases of restrictions. Whilst offices were completely shut for a few weeks, staff moved quickly to reopen an office as a base to support the work of the service. During times when public health advice was constantly changing, staff continually adapted their approach to ensure that children and young people remained safe and supported.

Teams quickly found creative solutions to the challenges of carrying out statutory duties in a world of restrictions. Families were supported to contribute to meetings virtually and where they did not have the technology to allow this, social work staff would go to their homes and provide the technology so that their voice could be heard in relation to decisions about their children. Other staff met with children and young people outdoors to minimise the risk of infection whilst still ensuring that the child or young person had the opportunity to speak with their worker alone. Our Women and Children First service, which works with women and children experiencing gender-based violence, ensured that service users had their own mobile phones and arranged meetings away from the family home.

Family contact visits did stop for several months during the first national lockdown and this had a considerable impact on children, young people and their families. Our foster carers helped fill that gap, arranging video calls and text messages between children and families in order to maintain that connection whilst face to face meetings were not allowed. Showing their usual high levels of care and compassion, foster carers put their fears about their own health aside to ensure that children could see their birth families when restrictions allowed. When contact was able to restart, our staff organised outdoor activities so that families could safely meet wherever possible.

Our staff remained a constant in the lives of children and young people who needed support and protection during times when many other services had to withdraw either because of national policy, a need to redirect staff to other services or concerns over the risk to staff during some phases of the pandemic. This was particularly challenging for the families of children with additional support needs who rely on universal services for a degree of respite and for other supports. Social work staff continued to make home visits, putting their own concerns about the risk of Covid for them and their families aside in order to make sure our most vulnerable children were safe.

The dedication and commitment of residential staff during the pandemic cannot be overstated. Staff rearranged working patterns and often put their own needs aside in order to maintain a loving and safe home for the young people in our children's houses. Social distancing concerns became less important than providing a hug for someone who needed that extra bit of care. The ethos of the service has been summed up by a senior manager thus: "The world changed outside but not inside for our young people." Children's houses in Renfrewshire remained a family home for our young people.

Our Throughcare Team supporting young people at Charleston Square and in our satellite flats changed how they engaged with young people to reflect the additional isolation and vulnerability that lockdown brought. Individual and small group support moved outdoors and provided an opportunity for new skills to be developed, including learning to cook on the barbecue, working in the garden, exercise classes and drumming workshops. One of the cooks from our residential team provided home cooked food as well as teaching sessions, recipe cards and ingredients so that our young people had access to fresh food and were able to further develop their skills.

One of the challenges during the period, and one that remains to some extent, was the closure of other services, particularly the courts and Children's Hearings. These closures had a knock-on effect across Children & Families. The timescales for Children's Hearings doubled, which impacted on decision-making and on the implementation of Child's Plans. The closure of courts created delays in adoption processes. Perpetrators of gender-based violence were no longer remanded in custody, creating an additional risk for women and children who had survived that violence.

Staff have demonstrated incredible resilience over the last eighteen months. They have continued to carry out statutory duties even at increased risk to themselves. There have been cases of workers undertaking home visits where there are positive Covid cases in the household, because their primary concern was the welfare of the children in that household. Social work teams organised supermarket vouchers, deliveries of nappies and baby milk at times of empty supermarket shelves, provided tablets and dongles to families to keep them connected, all on top of their day-to-day work.

Training had to move online and though the training team provided excellent online resources, there are areas of work where in-person training will always be preferable. The implementation of a new case management system had a significant impact on the amount of time staff had to dedicate to training as well as to familiarising themselves with new processes once the system was implemented.

The additional weekly reporting required from all local authorities created a further resource pressure. A new requirement to have weekly contact with all children subject to a Child's Plan took the element of individual judgement and risk assessment out of the hands of practitioners to some extent, with contact having to take place weekly even where a child was in a safe and stable placement. This contact, and the recording which went alongside, reduced the capacity of staff to undertake more in-depth work on other cases.

A primary concern during lockdown was whether child protection referrals would fall as engagement with services such as health and education was paused. In Renfrewshire, there was a slight drop in referrals in the first few weeks of lockdown but numbers quickly returned to normal levels.

Information on referrals, investigations, conferences and registrations continued to be monitored by the Child Protection Committee. During 2020/21, there were 125 new registrations and 142 deregistrations, and there were 71 children on the register as of 31 March 2021. The biggest areas of concern remain domestic violence, parental mental health problems, and parental drug misuse. There were 15 Child Protection Orders granted during the year, slightly lower than figures in the previous two years. Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee and its subgroups continue to meet virtually and a new business plan (delayed to allow staff to focus on the Covid response) will be completed shortly.

Renfrewshire has consistently had a rate of looked after children which is higher than the national average. Children's Services has implemented a targeted programme of work to reduce that number over the last decade, with our looked after child population dropping by 17% in that time. There has been a reduction in the use of residential placements and an increase in the use of local authority foster care and kinship care. As of 31 March 2021, Renfrewshire had 594 looked after children, of whom 93% were placed in a family setting. Nine children were adopted during 2020/21. The use of secure placements continues to be low, with 4 new placements commencing in 2020/21.

During 2020/21 Renfrewshire Council and its partners began implementing a programme of work based on The Promise. The service has adopted a new approach to supporting children and young people to have their say in decisions affecting them. Called 'Your Voice, Your Way' the project spoke with children and young people, with carers and with practitioners to develop new resources which help children and young people have their say in ways and at times that work for them. This has been rolled out to all Children & Families Social Work staff.

The RADAR service supports children and young people aged 12-21 whose alcohol and/or drug use is impacting on their wellbeing, and had 57 service users at the end of March 2021, of whom 30 were 16 or under. The service has a holistic approach and works flexibly and intensively with young people to address the causes as well as the impact of substance use.

The Whole Systems team works with young people either involved with the justice system or at risk of becoming involved. Where a person aged under 21 is made subject to a community sentence or is released from custody on licence, the Whole Systems Team undertakes supervision, rather than Justice Social Work. This allows for a continuity of support from Children's Services, who will work closely with justice colleagues as well as with the RADAR service and the Throughcare Team, with whom they are co-located.

High levels of alcohol and drug use within the local population continues to pose a major risk for children and young people in Renfrewshire and drives much of the social work activity. Renfrewshire's Alcohol and Drug Commission has made a number of recommendations to help address this issue and social work will play a significant part in progressing this work, which has a strong recovery focus.

Emotional and mental wellbeing had already been identified as a risk factor for children and young people prior to the pandemic, and there is evidence to suggest this has been exacerbated. Work is already well progressed within Renfrewshire to establish a new service which can offer holistic and family-based mental health support.

Statutory Service Provision: Justice Social Work

Justice Social Work services were heavily impacted by Covid-19 restrictions and continue to be more impacted than other social work services due to changes/delays in court processes and to the challenges in providing an unpaid work service with strict public health restrictions in place. Much of Justice Social Work is an office-based task, to enable intervention within a confidential setting.

Creative solutions were required in order to maintain services which would normally involve in-person contact for individual interventions and groupwork. Home-based work was provided to suitable unpaid work clients to enable them to continue with their order, and created other activity interventions which could be undertaken technologically, all of which allowed some individuals to complete the order within the original timeframe. Groupwork services made use of technology where this was appropriate and resumed face-to-face services with smaller groups as soon as risk assessments allowed this to be done safely in line with public health restrictions.

The government decision to extend the timescale for all orders with an unpaid work requirement is currently being mitigated by the lower number of new orders being made, and the lifting of social distancing requirements will increase the working capacity of the unpaid work team and allow hours to be completed. This will be supplemented by third sector provision. However, justice social work services across Scotland are likely to experience additional resource pressures as court services return to normal and staff manage new report requests and orders alongside those delayed by the pandemic.

This impact of court closures is clearly demonstrated in the volume of court work undertaken during the year and in the reduced number of new orders imposed by courts. The service completed 360 CJSW reports in 2020/21 compared with 966 in 2019/20. The number of new Community Payback Orders was 218, compared with 561 in 2019/20. (Please note 2020/21 data is provisional). Tables 4 to 8 in the appendix show trends in the last decade in relation to orders and requirements.

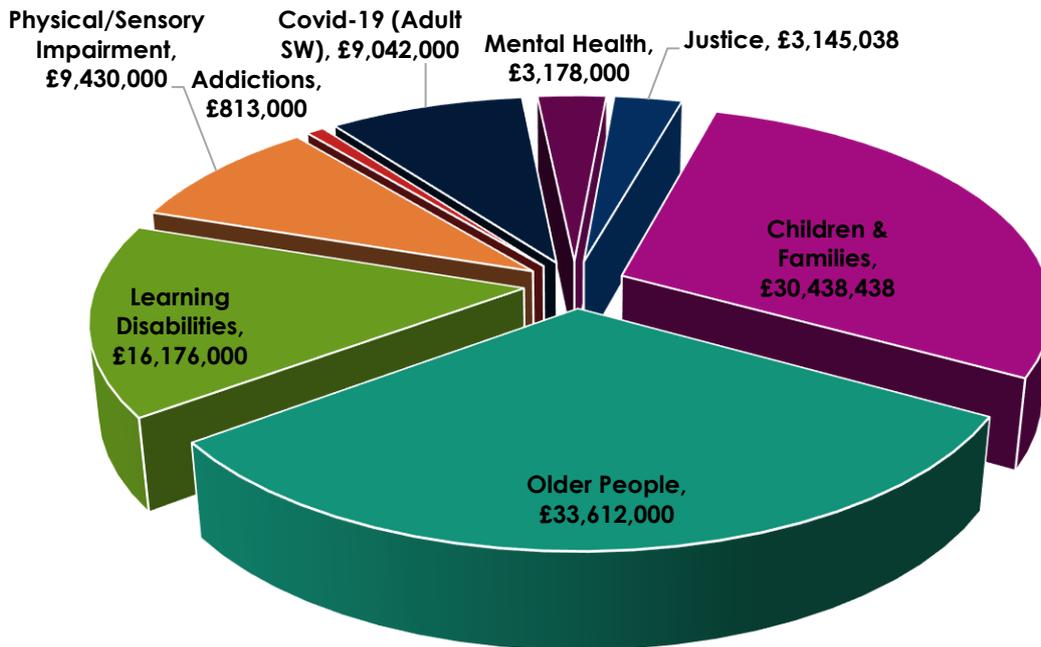
As well as the closure of courts, processes were implemented to allow a small number of individuals to be released early from prison at the start of the pandemic. Justice Social Work provided a Voluntary Throughcare service to support people with the transition and ensure they were able to access the vital services needed on their return to their communities. This service is offered to all individuals in Renfrewshire released from short custodial sentences.

Renfrewshire Community Justice are active partners in the Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership and Invest in Renfrewshire provided continued funding for our Just Recovery initiative. This ensures specific support for individuals with convictions to be supported in overcoming specific barriers to education, employment and training. As part of our employability work, staff were provided with training sessions explaining changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and how to support service users to disclose convictions appropriately. The Just Recovery initiative also benefited from funding from the Scottish Government's Challenge Fund to support activities tackling problem alcohol and drug use. Pathways into addiction services for people involved in the justice system are being mapped and this will help us improve support to service users living in or returning to Renfrewshire. We have created a new post to take forward this work.

Resources

The chart below shows the breakdown of expenditure on social work by Renfrewshire Council and Renfrewshire in 2020/21/. As in previous years, the largest area of expenditure is on services for older people, followed by services for children and families. Funding for Justice Social Work comes directly from the Scottish Government by means of a grant.

The adult services elements contains a separate entry for spend directly related to Covid-19 measures, and this was just over £9 million, or 9% of all social work and social care expenditure for the year.



There have been significant pressures on services during 2020/21 and Renfrewshire Council has ensured that appropriate funding has been allocated to children and justice social work. Funding for adult social work and care has been enhanced in the period 2021/22 by additional funding from the Scottish Government to support the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Workforce

The largest change impacting the workforce in 2020/21 was the necessity of home-based working for some of the time, even for frontline services. Some minimal use of office space became possible by the end of April 2020 but staff continue to have a hybrid model of working, moving between working at home, working in the office and out in the field. The dedication, compassion and resilience of our staff throughout the year has been extraordinary and has ensured that our most vulnerable residents have been kept safe and supported despite the extra challenges everyone has experienced during the pandemic.

In previous years, this report has highlighted the challenges of recruiting and retaining residential staff. During 2020/21, the number of council-run children's houses was reduced from six to four, and a new staffing model implemented. The new model should reduce the use of overtime and agency staff, ensure more staff are available at key points during the day and evening and most importantly, help the service deploy staff in a way that allows more time to spend on building relationships with the young people living in the houses.

A transformation programme (part of a wider council programme) which began in 2019/20 was paused during the pandemic and has now restarted. Any service redesigns arising from that programme may lead to changes in the shape of the workforce.

Children and Families Social Work implemented a new case management system in 2020. This project had been planned for several years and a decision was taken to continue with the roll-out as planned, given the stage the work was at when restrictions began. This necessitated a complete shift in the planned training for staff, which had to be moved from face-to-face sessions to online learning based on videos and virtual drop-ins. Staff showed considerable resilience in managing the transition alongside 'business as usual' and the additional pressures arising from the pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic there have been pressures experienced in residential care homes for older adults and in the care at home service. There have been challenges in recruitment on an ongoing basis, particularly in care at home, but across most social work and care services over the period of the pandemic. These issues aren't unique to Renfrewshire and are being experienced across the Country in other local areas and in the independent sector.

“The reward of gratitude is a star in dark skies.
You cannot always help but trying is the crux.
I well remember that old alky Bill
Who shared his hovel of a house with others;
They held him prisoner among the litter
Of needles and syringes and empty bottles
Waiting to be smashed on social workers.
Another place for Bill? - possible,
But he's a bloody mess from fights at the moment.
We don't give up, that nothing is easy
Makes it even better not to give up.
Everyone alive is subject to change.
Hope lies where you least expect it.”

From Brothers and Keepers by Edwin Morgan



To: Council

On: 30 September 2021

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Renfrewshire Community Protection Chief Officers Group – Annual Report 2020/21

1. Summary

- 1.1 Renfrewshire Community Protection Chief Officers Group (COG) is responsible for leadership, strategic oversight and scrutiny of multi-agency public protection activity and practice in Renfrewshire, including in relation to child protection, adult protection, community safety, the management of offenders and community justice, alcohol and drugs, and gender-based violence.
- 1.2 The group is chaired by the Chief Executive of Renfrewshire Council with core representation from the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Police Scotland, and wider membership drawn from other partners agencies and services.
- 1.3 This is the sixth annual report of the Chief Officers Group. It provides an overview of the key areas of work of in relation to public protection during 2020/21, with a particular focus on the partnership working that has taken place during the pandemic to support local people and communities. The report notes for information that an independent review of the Chief Officers Group was completed during 2020, providing formal reassurance that oversight and scrutiny arrangements in Renfrewshire are robust and facilitate effective joint working at a strategic level.
- 1.4 The pandemic and associated restrictions have continued to impact those most vulnerable across Renfrewshire's communities, and there has been an ongoing need for partners to work together very flexibly in order to ensure local people living across communities receive the support they need. The Chief Officers have met with much greater frequency during 2020, regularly scrutinising activity and to consider the local response in relation to protection issues as these have arisen. The annual report

attached at Appendix 1 to this report provides detailed information on the activities which have been undertaken over this period, whilst section 4 of the report highlights the key priorities which partners have identified for collective focus and action during 2021/22.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council:
- (a) Note the content of the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 Renfrewshire Chief Officers Group was established to provide leadership, governance, direction and oversight to ensure local accountability for all aspects of public protection. Chief officers are responsible for ensuring that their respective agencies, individually and collectively reflect national guidance, which directs local services to work in partnership to achieve public protection measures. The arrangements are comparable to Chief Officer Group arrangements in other local authority areas throughout Scotland.
- 3.2 The key area of activity overseen by the Renfrewshire Chief Officers Group are:
- child protection;
 - adult protection;
 - offender management (MAPPA processes for sexual and violent offenders);
 - community protection;
 - Alcohol and Drug Partnership; and
 - Gender Based Violence Strategy
- 3.3 The Chief Officers Group provides regular reports to the Member Officer Group which is comprised of elected members on a cross party basis, and key officers from the Council and partners. The purpose of the Member Officer Group is to provide senior elected members with the opportunity to formally and regularly discharge their strategic independent scrutiny and assurance role in relation to key activity and significant developments which have implications for public protection matters in Renfrewshire.
- 3.4 This is the sixth annual report of the Chief Officers Group. It provides an overview of the key areas of work in relation to public protection in Renfrewshire over the course of 2020/21, and in doing so highlights the ongoing importance of partnership working.
- 3.5 The annual report is provided against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is now recognised as being the most significant challenge to have faced the international community in modern times. On 23 March 2020, the first national measures were introduced by the Scottish Government which placed restrictions on all non-essential travel, work and social contact out with the home. This had an immediate effect on service provision most of which moved to delivering an emergency response. Since this time, our understanding of COVID-19 has developed and the Scottish Government introduced a framework to guide decision

making and latterly introduce a route map on how Scotland will transitioning out of lockdown.

- 3.6 During these unprecedented times public services continue to be under significant pressure and it is widely acknowledged that many vulnerable individuals will be impacted significantly and for a considerable time by the pandemic and the unintended consequences of actions taken to control it. While the most vulnerable have been disproportionately affected, new vulnerabilities have been created amongst individuals and families as a result of a range of factors such as, loss of employment, school closures and shielding.
- 3.7 During the pandemic, the strength of partnership working within the Chief Officers Group has been evident and our approach has adapted and flexed in order to jointly address and respond to emerging issues. The introduction of special meetings of the Chief Officers Group provided a platform for short notice meetings to be arranged to tackle the most imminent issues and threats.
- 3.8 Despite the challenges of the pandemic, good progress has been made collectively at a local level to drive improvements to joint working and practice across Renfrewshire. A summary of key activities is provided for elected members within the annual report attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

4. Strategic focus for 2021/22

- 4.1 Whilst services are now focusing on recovery, the Chief Officers Group remains very alert to the impact of the pandemic over the medium to long term, and of the demand pressures which the local service and employees are responding to on a daily basis.
- 4.2 Moving forward the Chief Officers Group have identified a number of specific priorities to be progressed during 2021/22 in addition to ongoing activity. These are:
- Collectively monitor the impact of COVID-19 on those most vulnerable across communities, including the impact of demand pressures being experienced by all local partners, and considering opportunities for joint working in relation to any new areas of concern or harm identified.
 - Continue to provide scrutiny, support and oversight of activity in relation to care homes, with a particular focus on the safety and wellbeing of residents and staff;
 - Robustly respond to increasing levels of alcohol and drug related harm in Renfrewshire, providing strategic leadership and support for the local response to the recent findings of Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drugs Commission.
 - Provide leadership to support the implementation of trauma informed and responsive practice across all services and partners in Renfrewshire;
 - Promote learning and improvements to practice identified through initial and significant case reviews undertaken within Renfrewshire and from other areas;
 - Review cyber crime activity across Renfrewshire, identifying joint action which can be taken to reduce or prevent levels of crime and harm.
 - Support positive mental health and wellbeing with a focus on suicide prevention and people presenting to agencies in distress; and
 - Have oversight of the Care Inspectorate Thematic review of Justice Social Work Throughcare arrangements in Renfrewshire and implement any findings from inspection activity.

- 4.3 The Chief Officers Group will continue to seek to ensure that performance and practice are scrutinised at a strategic level, to identify what works well, to highlight any areas for improvement, and to consider where further opportunities for early intervention and prevention activity would achieve improved outcomes for local people.
- 4.4 The group will also continue to review on an ongoing basis the implementation of relevant policies and legislation which relate to public protection including Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 and the review of Forensic Mental Health the incorporation of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – the Community Protection Chief Officers is embedded within the wider approach to community planning in Renfrewshire.
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality and Human Rights** - 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** - none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none
13. **Climate Risk** – none

Renfrewshire Community Protection Chief Officers Group

Annual Report 2020/21

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3. Analysis of Current Trends
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Renfrewshire Community Protection Chief Officers Group (COG) is responsible for leadership, strategic oversight and scrutiny in relation to multi agency public protection activity and practice in Renfrewshire. The group oversees the work of seven strategic partnerships which examine performance and ensure the provision of quality services in relation to child protection, adult protection, wider public protection, offender management, community justice, alcohol and drugs, and gender-based violence.
- 1.2 As elsewhere in the country, Renfrewshire continues to face challenges in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing a range of local protection issues, however the Chief Officers Group and the local multi-agency partnerships, continue to recognise, alongside scrutiny and reflection, the value of a proactive focus on awareness raising and preventative approaches to protect people in the community. This has been evident in the work of those groups, agencies and partnerships involved in public protection.
- 1.3 This is the sixth annual report of the Chief Officers Group. It provides an overview of the key areas of work in relation to public protection in Renfrewshire over the course of 2020/21, and in doing so highlights the ongoing importance of partnership working.

Impact of the Pandemic

- 1.4 The annual report is provided against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is now recognised as being the most significant challenge to have faced the international community in modern times. On 23 March 2020, the first national measures were introduced by the Scottish Government which placed restrictions on all non-essential travel, work and social contact out with the home. This had an immediate effect on service provision most of which moved to delivering an emergency response. Since this time, our understanding of COVID-19 has developed and the Scottish Government introduced a framework to guide decision making and latterly introduce a route map on how Scotland will transitioning out of lockdown.
- 1.5 Since the crisis unfolded, many local people, including our most vulnerable citizens, communities and businesses have been impacted, through for example bereavement, loss of income and isolation and loneliness and physical and mental health and wellbeing. Sadly since the beginning of the pandemic until 04 April 2021, 522 Renfrewshire residents died where COVID-19 was confirmed or suspected, of this 172 (33%) of these deaths occurred in a care home setting.
- 1.6 During these unprecedented times public services continue to be under significant pressure and it is widely acknowledged that many vulnerable individuals will be impacted significantly and for a considerable time by the pandemic and the unintended consequences of actions taken to control it. While the most vulnerable have been disproportionately affected, new vulnerabilities have been created amongst individuals and families as a result of a range of factors such as, loss of employment, school closures and shielding.
- 1.7 During the pandemic, the strength of partnership working within the Chief Officers Group has been evident and our approach has adapted and flexed in order to jointly address and respond to emerging issues. The introduction of special meetings of the Chief Officers Group provided a platform for short notice meetings to be arranged to tackle the most imminent issues and threats.

2. Renfrewshire Profile

- 2.1 Covering an area of some 270 square kilometres, the Renfrewshire area hosts major towns such as Paisley, Renfrew and Johnstone, and a number of attractive villages and settlements.
- 2.2 In terms of population, Renfrewshire is the 10th biggest local authority area in Scotland with a population of around 179,390. Over the 15-year period to 2010 the population did decline but has in recent years increased and is projected to increase steadily over the next 10 years. This brings challenges with a projected decline in the population under 16 in the region of 6% over the next 20 years coupled with 25% increase in the number of pension aged people over the same period.
- 2.3 Renfrewshire has lots to offer and many strengths and assets to build on. One of the most critical challenges for partners is addressing the gap that has emerged between different communities in Renfrewshire, with the life chances of some being negatively impacted by poverty, poor health, and unemployment. More than 1 in 5 children in Renfrewshire are growing up in poverty. According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, 12 areas (or datazones) are within the 5% most deprived in Scotland.
- 2.4 Alcohol and drug use are major elements of ill health in Renfrewshire, contributing to the fourth highest rate of drug related deaths in Scotland and the seventh highest rate in Scotland of hospital stays related to alcohol use. Parental neglect and harmful substance use have a significant impact on Renfrewshire's children. Over 600 children in Renfrewshire are looked after by the authority - the sixth highest in population terms in Scotland.
- 2.5 Renfrewshire is a thriving area for business and economic activity, with Glasgow Airport within its boundaries and excellent transport links across the West of Scotland, nationally and internationally. Employment levels in Renfrewshire had returned to levels experienced before the crash of 2008, with key sectors of employment being in the health and care sectors, transportation and manufacturing. Renfrewshire, as with all areas across the country, now faces the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic and is putting in place strategies to address the effect on jobs and investment.

3 Analysis of current trends

Child protection

- 3.1 Child protection work, as a critical function, continued throughout the periods of lockdown and ongoing restrictions. Activities remained stable over the course of 2020, with a slight drop-off in activity during July and August when schools were closed, and a subsequent increase in September.
 - There were 4020 child concern referrals received between 1 March 2020 and 31 March 2021 – 88% of these came from Police Scotland;
 - Domestic abuse was the largest single reason for a referral, with 1757 concern reports over the 13-month period;
 - Other reasons for referral include missing person reports (385 referrals);
 - Mental health issues being experienced by a carer (248 referrals);
 - Youth offending (272 referrals);
 - Alcohol/drug use by a child (148 referrals); and
 - Alcohol/drug use by a carer (138 referrals).

(It should be noted that these are distinct referrals and not the number of children who were the subject of a referral)

- 3.2 There were 462 Inter-agency Referral Discussions (IRD) between 1 March 2020 and 31 March 2021, with multiple IRDs being held for some children. Of these, 189 proceeded to a child protection investigation. At the time of writing, there are 79 children on the child protection register and 4 young people in secure care. A total of 8 young people have been placed in secure care since 1 April 2020.

Adult Support and Protection

- 3.3 Between April 2020 and March 2021, 3,483 adult welfare concern and adult protection referrals were received by Renfrewshire. Of these, 1,325 were adult protection concerns and 2,158 were adult welfare concerns. Following initial inquiries, 100 adult protection investigations were conducted, a slight rise from 96 the previous year. 51 of these investigations resulted in an Initial Adult Protection Case Conference.
- 3.4 The table below highlights that this is the largest number of adult welfare concerns and adult protection referrals since 2016/17.

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
2,578	2,829	2,719	3,106	3,482

- 3.5 The total referral number for 2020/2021 reflects a 12% increase in the referral rate as compared to the 2019/20 financial year, which was a 14% rise on the previous year. The 2020/21 figure is higher than in any previous years which is as a result of three Large Scale Investigations being carried out in care homes across Renfrewshire.
- 3.6 Across the year Police Scotland made 61% of all referrals. There is a long-term trend of a decrease in the ratio of referrals received by Police, though this figure has been stagnant over the past two years. The table below provides an overview of the percentage of referrals that were made by Police Scotland since 2016/17.

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
77%	70%	66%	61%	61%

- 3.7 This reflects an increase in referrals from other sources (Scottish Fire and Rescue Services; care homes; Housing; HSCP Health and Social Work staff; and GPs) throughout the year, leading to the proportion from Police Scotland remaining stable.

Adults with Incapacity (AWI)

- 3.8 Demand for AWI reports, which require to be completed by a qualified mental health officer (MHO), had risen steadily over recent years (mirroring increases across Scotland), but this year saw a reduction in such requests locally. However, the complexity of cases has increased; the demand of such reports subsequently has an impact on the service. Some such complexity includes cases referred following financial harm risks identified through adult support and protection processes. The local authority may become involved to pursue the removal of a financial proxy and to pursue alternative financial arrangements to safeguard an adult at risk of harm.
- 3.9 In 2019-2020 Renfrewshire received 131 requests for AWI mental health officer reports. In the previous year there were 196 such requests (and 208 in the 2017/2018 year). It is worth noting that 65% of all new orders granted are time-limited, which brings additional work pressure in respect of renewal reports required. Often such requests arrive with less than 4 weeks until the expiry of the existing order, putting pressure on the service.
- 3.10 At the end of the 2019/20 financial year, pandemic response measures included court closures and AWI work 'stalled' for a period. This will likely have an impact on MHO service pressures as courts resume AWI work.

Welfare Guardianships

- 3.11 Orders where the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is appointed Welfare Guardian rose in recent years, from 79 in March 2015 to 114 in 2019; on 31 March 2020 there were 116 such orders existent in Renfrewshire. Each order requires a qualified social worker to act as the “nominated officer” on behalf of the CSWO for day to day management of the case. In addition, there are in excess of approximately 435 private welfare guardianship orders running throughout Renfrewshire. These require a minimum of one statutory visit by a guardianship supervisor after being granted.

Gender Based Violence

- 3.12 A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a multi-agency victim-focussed meeting where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic abuse between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies such as local Police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Abuse Advocates (IDAA’s), probation and other specialists. There was a 7.2% reduction in the number of cases discussed at MARAC in 2020/21 compared to the previous year.

Cases Discussed at MARAC	
March 2019 to March 2020	157
March 2020 to March 2021	146

Renfrewshire Women’s Aid

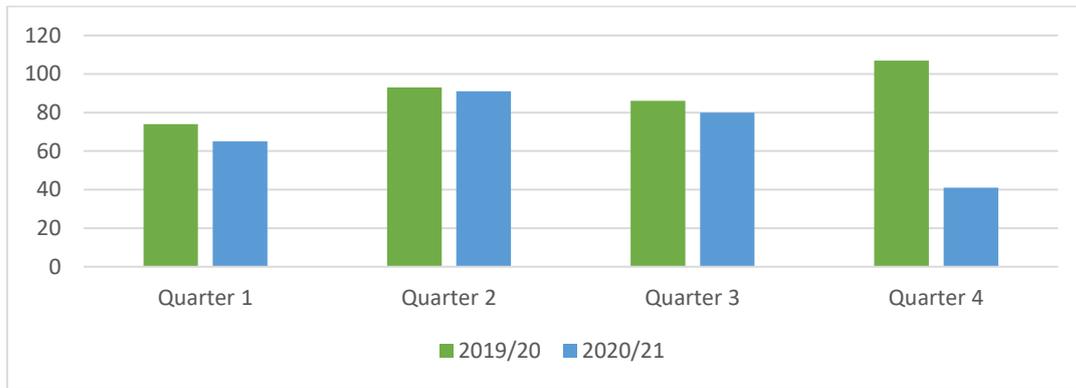
	Q1 19/20	Q1 20/21	Q2 19/20	Q2 20/21
Active cases in service	276	375	270	408
New referrals to service	51	52	68	61
Living in refuge	16 women 17 children / young people	19 women 17 children / young people	18 women 12 children / young people	21 women 16 children / young people

- 3.13 Renfrewshire Women’s Aid suspended in person support and reverted to telephone calls due to Renfrewshire’s Tier 4 status in October 2020. The drop-in service was suspended and in person support appointments offered for crisis support only (e.g. admission to refuge). The service continues to be able to provide crisis and therapeutic support via telephone at point of first contact. Support to women living in refuge is provided by telephone where possible and strict adherence to COVID-19 safe practice guidelines for in person refuge support. Funding was secured to upgrade Wi-Fi in all refuge accommodations and provide devices where required. Support to children and young people in refuge and outreach is delivered via video calls.
- 3.14 The number of domestic abuse incidents reported to Police Scotland reduced by 8% in 2020/21 compared to the previous year.

Period	Number of IVPD’s concern reports raised for Domestic Abuse
1 st April 2019 – 31 st March 2020	2281
1 st April 2020 – 31 st March 2021	2080

Referrals to Women and Children First:

- 3.15 The graph below provides a breakdown of the number of referrals to Women and Children First during 2019/20 and 2020/21.



- 3.16 The reduction in referrals to Women and Children First in 2020/21 quarter four is linked to joint work with partner agencies in relation to appropriate referrals and signposting to other services when domestic abuse is not the current, presenting concern. The direct work usually provided by the Reconnections service in terms of individual work with children and group work with women and children has been impacted upon by restrictions during the pandemic which has restricted the availability of appropriate safe spaces to carry this out.

Serious Organised Crime

- 3.17 Targeting serious and organised crime continues to be a priority for the division. One serious organised crime group (SOCG) which primarily impact on Renfrewshire is currently being managed by the Division. The SOCG is predominantly involved in drug supply. Drug supply detections have increased by 30% on the previous year, to a total of 143.

Missing Persons

- 3.18 Police Scotland reported that there have been 364 missing person incidents in Renfrewshire, compared to 391 in the previous year. 77% of incidents involved people aged under 19 years, and a third of all incidents originating from Young Persons Units. Repeat missing persons continue to be an issue, with the top five individuals accounting for 13% of all missing persons incidents.

Cyber Crime

- 3.19 There continues to be indications of an increasing trend in relation to cybercrime, with recent analysis undertaken within Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Division highlighting that recorded cybercrime increased by 65% in the 2020 calendar year (as compared to the previous calendar year). This included an increase in financially motivated cybercrime, cyber-enabled threats and harassment, and also cyber-enabled.

Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour

- 3.20 Between 1 April 2020 and February 2021 there were 242 Group 1 Crimes of Violence – a decrease of 11.4% on the previous year, equating to 31 fewer victims. Almost 58% of Group 1 crimes occurred in private spaces, compared to just under 44% in 2019/20.

1,425 common assaults have been recorded, compared to 1,676 in the previous year (15%). 229 assaults targeted emergency workers (17 fewer than the previous year), with all but 12 crimes targeting police officers. The Royal Alexandra Hospital continues to be the primary location for assaults on emergency workers.

101 serious assaults were recorded (26 fewer), with a detection rate of 81.2%, compared to 74.8% in the previous year. 57 robberies were recorded (16 fewer), with a detection rate of 80.7%, compared to 71.2% in the previous year. 42% of serious assaults, and 64% of robberies, occurred in private dwellings.

Sexual Crime

- 3.21 Recorded sexual crime is now following a decreasing trend, with 65 less crime reports in 2019/20 when compared to the previous year. During the current year 36.2% of sexual offences related to non-recent offences.
- 3.22 The detection rate for sexual crime in 2019/20 was 56.9% compared to the 65.0% recorded the year before. The 4.8% decrease in non-recent sexual reports is the main contributory factor in the overall reduction in sexual crimes such as rape, indecent assaults and lewd and libidinous practices. Renfrewshire's 2019/20 detection rate for rape and sexual offences was above that for the Force during the same period.

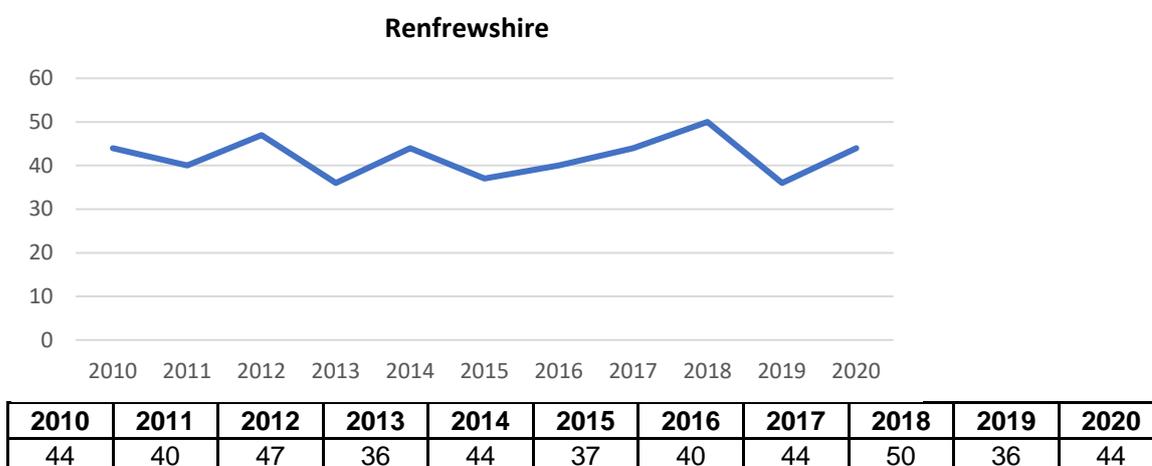
Fire and Rescue

- 3.23 The table below highlights the provisional data provided by Scottish Fire and Rescue in relation to the six areas of key demand reduction for the period 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021.

	Accidental Dwelling Fires	Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties	Unintentional Injury and Harm	Deliberate Fire Setting	Non-Domestic Fire Safety	Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals
Bishopton, Bridge of Weir and Langbank	2	0	4	7	1	16
Erskine and Inchinnan	2	0	2	12	0	30
Houston, Crosslee and Linwood	3	0	0	17	2	9
Johnstone North, Kilbarchan, Howwood, Lochwinnoch	4	0	1	7	1	9
Johnstone South and Elderslie	1	0	1	11	0	13
Paisley East and Central	3	1	2	9	3	19
Paisley Northeast and Ralston	2	0	0	2	0	4
Paisley Northwest	8	0	2	29	7	32
Paisley Southeast	3	0	0	6	0	9
Paisley Southwest	2	0	0	6	0	4
Renfrew North and Braehead	3	0	3	11	1	12
Renfrew South and Gallowhill	0	0	2	6	1	27
Total Incidents	33	1	17	123	16	184
Year on Year Change	● -18%	● -50%	● -11%	◆ 45%	● -36%	◆ 5%
3 Year Average Change	● -14%	● -45%	● -27%	◆ 21%	◆ 10%	● -6%

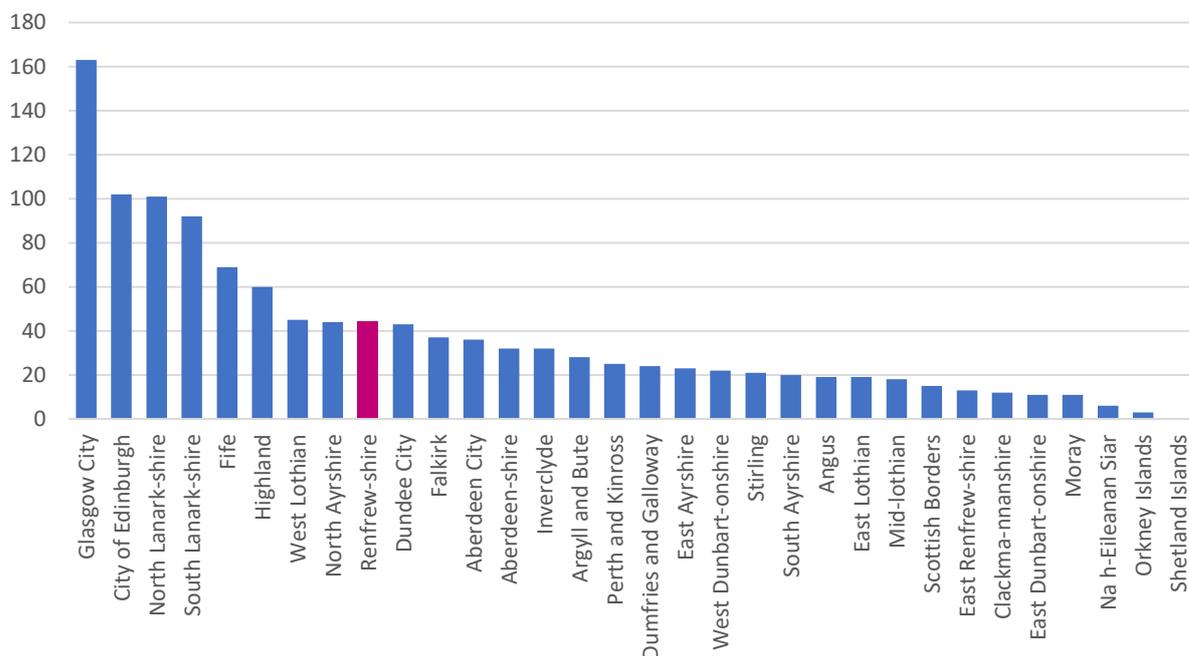
Alcohol and Drugs

- 3.24 There were 44 alcohol-specific deaths registered in Renfrewshire in 2020. This was an increase of 22% from 36 in 2019. This represents a rate of 23.6 per 100,000 population in Renfrewshire.



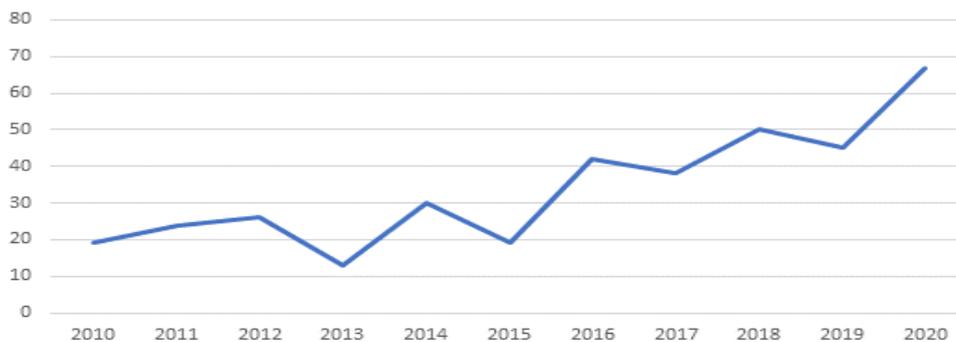
3.25 The highest numbers of alcohol-specific deaths recorded in 2020 were in Glasgow City (163), City of Edinburgh (102), North Lanarkshire (101), South Lanarkshire (92) and Fife (69).

Single year figures for alcohol-specific deaths and age-standardised rate by current Local Authority area, 2020



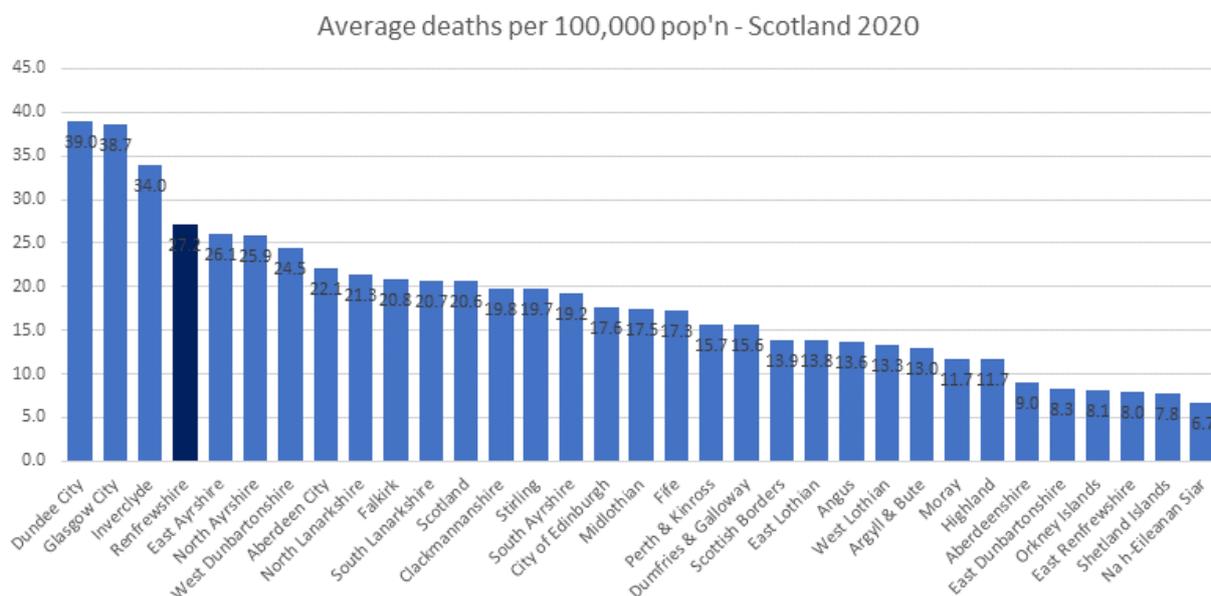
3.26 In Renfrewshire, there were 67 drug-related deaths in 2020 which represents a significant increase of 49% from 45 in 2019 and is the highest in the last decade.

Renfrewshire



2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
19	24	26	13	30	19	42	38	50	45	67

Renfrewshire had the fourth highest rate of deaths per 100,000 population and is above the Scottish average of 20.6.



3.27 Quick access to services is important in engaging individuals in treatment and recovery, enabling them to improve their overall health and wellbeing. In Renfrewshire, services have consistently achieved the referral to treatment waiting times' target of 91.5% since July 2019. Performance as at March 2021 shows that 99.6% of individuals waited no longer than the three week target. Waiting times have been maintained during the pandemic using telephone and Near Me video consultation assessments, with face to face support provided when appropriate.

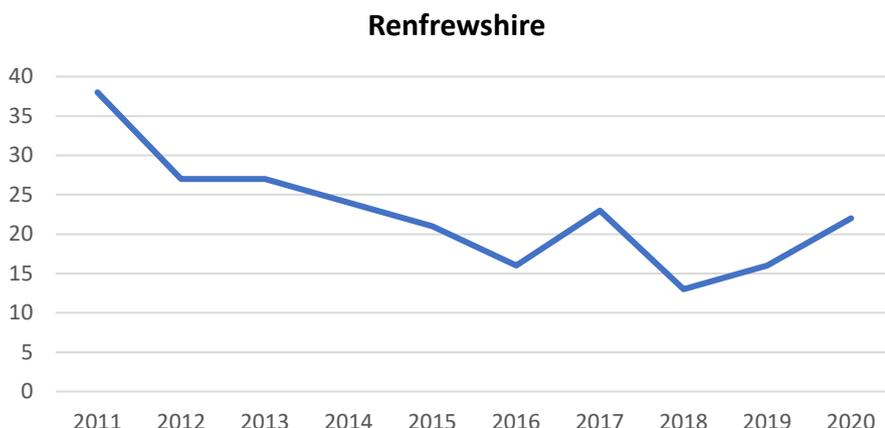
3.28 The rate per 100,000 population of drug related hospital stays (combined general acute and psychiatric hospitals) in Renfrewshire was 153.4 in 2015/16 rising to 180.0 in 2016/17 and showing a decrease in 2017/18 to 156.1. The most recent data is for the period 2018/19 and shows an increase in rate to 219.8. This was higher than the Scottish rate of 195.3 and lower than the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde rate of 251.4. Heroin use was responsible for the majority of drug related general acute hospital stays within Renfrewshire in 2018/19.

Drug Related Hospital Stays in Renfrewshire per 100,000 population

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Renfrewshire	153.4	180.0	156.1	219.8
GGC	197.3	238.1	241.6	251.4
Scotland	144.7	162.4	179.3	195.3

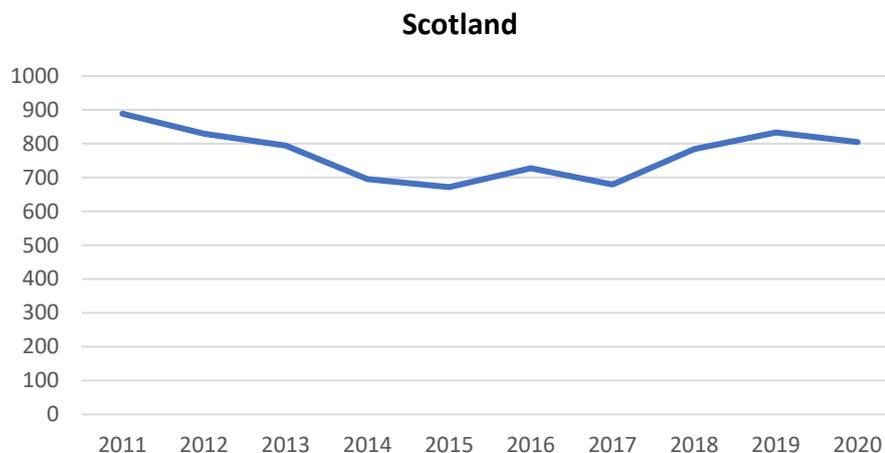
(Source: Information and Statistics Division)

3.29 There were 22 probable suicides registered in Renfrewshire in 2020, up from 16 in 2019. The overall rate for 2016-2020 is 9.9 deaths per 100,000 people - the second lowest of all 32 council areas. The Scotland-wide average is 14.1 per 100,000 people.



2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
38	27	27	24	21	16	23	13	16	22

3.30 There were 805 probable suicides registered in Scotland in 2020. This is a decrease of 28 (3%) since 2019. Suicides decreased between 2011 and 2014 but have generally risen again since then.



2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
889	830	795	696	672	728	680	784	833	805

The rate of suicides in the population had been falling between 2011 and 2015 (from 16.6 down to 12.6 suicide deaths per 100,000 people) but is now at a level similar to 2013 at 14.8 suicide deaths per 100,000 people.

- 4.1 Renfrewshire Chief Officers Group (COG) was established to provide leadership, governance, direction and oversight to ensure local accountability for all aspects of public protection. Chief officers are responsible for ensuring that their respective agencies, individually and collectively reflect national guidance, which directs local services to work in partnership to achieve public protection measures. These arrangements are comparable to chief officer group arrangements in other local authority areas throughout Scotland and have been subject to an independent review.
- 4.2 The key areas that are overseen by the Renfrewshire COG are:
- child protection;
 - adult protection;
 - offender management (MAPPA processes for sexual and violent offenders);
 - community protection;
 - Alcohol and Drug Partnership; and
 - Gender Based Violence Strategy Group.
- 4.3 It is recognised that these areas of protection are often inter-linked and can impact on each other. The COG aims to provide demonstrable consistency and coherence in terms of leadership and direction in all these areas. The COG also combines efforts in individual areas to ensure that decisions taken in one area have a positive impact on public protection and are not counter-productive to any other high risk area of business.
- 4.4 The COG takes an over-view approach to ensure that the needs of vulnerable people at risk are being met and that services are improving outcomes for vulnerable people in both the short and longer term. During the pandemic there has been greater flexibility with the COG, particularly in relation to the enhanced scrutiny arrangements for clinical and care governance of care homes and to consider a number of Large Scale Investigations and Initial Case Reviews etc.
- 4.5 The remit of the COG is to provide strategic leadership and oversight, and to scrutinise the work of the protection business areas on behalf of their respective agencies; to identify successes and areas for improvement, and in doing so learn from experience, monitor trends and examine local and national comparisons and take appropriate action in response to unsatisfactory performance.
- 4.6 The core membership of the Renfrewshire Chief Officers Group comprises of the following:
- Chief Executive of Renfrewshire Council or appropriate senior named depute;
 - Chief Executive of NHS or appropriate senior named depute; and
 - Chief Constable Police Scotland or appropriate senior named depute (note in practice this will be the Chief Superintendent Divisional Commander for Renfrewshire).
- 4.7 Those who will be in attendance includes:
- Chief Social Work Officer, Renfrewshire Council or appropriate senior nominee;
 - Chief Officer of the Integration Joint Board or the appropriate senior nominee;
 - Independent Chair of Renfrewshire Child and Adult Protection Committees;
 - Child Protection Committee lead officer
 - Adult Protection Committee lead officer
 - Head of Policy and Commission
 - NSCJA SOG or appropriate senior nominee.
 - Head of Public Protection or Director of Communities and Housing
 - Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 - Chair of the Gender Based Violence Strategy Group or appropriate senior nominee; and
 - Chair of the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership or senior nominee.

5. Member Officer Group

- 5.1 The purpose of the Member Officer Group is to provide senior elected members with the opportunity to formally and regularly discharge their strategic independent scrutiny and assurance role in relation to key activity and significant developments which have implications for public protection matters in Renfrewshire as they relate to:
- Adult Protection;
 - Child Protection;
 - MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements); and
 - Wider Community Safety and Public Protection matters including the Alcohol and Drug Partnership and Gender Based Violence Strategy Group.
- 5.2 The group is comprised of elected members on a cross party basis and key officers of the council as follows.
- Three senior members of the administration
 - Two members of the main opposition group
 - One other opposition member
 - Director of Children’s Services
 - Chief Social Work Officer
 - Director of Communities and Housing
 - Chief Officer, Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership
 - Health and Social Care Partnership (operational head of service)
 - Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice
 - Head of Communities and Public Protection
 - Child Protection Lead Officer
 - Adult Support and Protection Officer
 - Head of Policy and Commissioning, Chief Executive’s Service
 - Service Planning and Policy Development Manager, Chief Executive’s Service
- 5.3 Also in attendance as required:
- Independent Chair of the Child Protection and Adult Protection Committees
 - Divisional Commander, Police Scotland or appropriate senior nominee
- 5.4 The group will also invite the participation of other key individuals or agencies involved in the areas of concern of the Member Officer Group as required.

6. Strategic Partnership Activities

6.1 Child Protection

6.1.1 RCPC activity during Pandemic

The initial focus of RCPC activity at the beginning of the pandemic was to support services. Regular core meetings took place out with the scheduled committee cycle to establish the impact of the pandemic on service delivery had been. The information gathered was regular updated to the Chief Officers Group / Scottish Government, identifying the main areas of risk. However, as the situation continued, a decision was taken to return to ‘business as usual’ therefore sub groups and committees resumed on a virtual platform. RCPC interaction with national groups such as CPC Scotland and the West of Scotland Consortium has also continued in this way.

This new mode of working has been advantageous – in the sense that meetings are often better attended in the virtual world as travelling time and the availability of suitable meeting rooms is no longer a factor. However, it is also acknowledged that it is considerably more

challenging to hold some meetings virtually – for example, when dealing with sensitive issues such as case reviews.

Most recently, a virtual development session was held for RCPC members to help shape the RCPC Business Plan. This will focus on priorities such as: improving dialogue with stakeholders, children and families; making better use of data to shape planning; updating our policies and procedures in line with revised national guidance; and mitigating the effects of the pandemic.

6.1.2 Initial and Significant Case Reviews

During 2019-2020, RCPC received notification for 9 Initial Case Reviews (ICRs). This unprecedented number follows a period of several years where no reviews were required. The cases were drawn from a range of ages and circumstances and 2 have gone on to become Significant Case Reviews (SCRs).

There have been a number of lessons arising from both the individual cases and also in how ICRs are taken forward in Renfrewshire. Conducting ICRs during the pandemic has posed a significant challenge, as some agencies were unable to readily access files whilst working from home when these were held in paper form only. Furthermore, the unusually high volume of ICRs meant that the same group of people were often considering more than one case at the same time. These factors coupled with the challenges of people taking part in sensitive meetings remotely from home should not be underestimated. Additionally, obtaining post-mortem results is often a lengthy process and often the ICR or SCR is underway before the cause of death is known (where applicable).

The Scottish Government launched a consultation regarding the adoption of a new tiered approach to ICRs and SCRs, based upon the Child Practice Review model used in Wales. RCPC members responded positively to the proposals which would lead to guidance that reflects the learning culture we are trying to achieve, noting that a review is not about the apportionment of blame, but to support professional and organisational learning and to promote improvement. Once published, the new Learning Review Model will help inform the development of a revised local procedure for dealing with future cases. In the meantime, work is underway locally to streamline the length of taken to complete investigations.

6.1.3 Revised Child Protection Guidance

The consultation for the revised Child Protection Guidance opened on 21 October 2020 with the deadline being extended to 31 January 2021. A robust response was submitted by RCPC, which combined responses from all of the single agencies represented at committee. The revised guidance is expected to be published in the summer of 2021. This will have significant implications in terms of refreshing local procedures and updating and training staff accordingly. It will be a key focus of RCPC during the coming months.

6.1.4 Training

Training has been delivered online during the pandemic and its likely this will be the default position for several months to come. Core courses continue to be delivered virtually, supported by ilearn modules. A learning needs analysis was created and completed between November and December 2020, with a view to obtaining a measure of how the partnership workforce view the current provision of training, learning and development and future needs. 237 staff completed the survey. Key points included:

- people seemed confident in their own roles;
- 29% of respondents attended RCPC biennial conference;
- poor take up / awareness of job shadowing opportunities;

- key areas of Child Protection awareness, C.A.P.A.D.U, C.S.E and neglect continue to be very relevant to practice; and
- staff are less confident in identifying specific areas of concern such as forced marriage, FGM, honour based violence & trafficking.

Planning is now underway for the biennial RCPC Conference in the spring of 2022. It is likely to be an on-line event given ongoing restrictions on large gatherings.

6.1.5 Statistical Information

Child protection work, as a critical function, continued throughout the periods of lockdown and restriction. Activity levels remained broadly static, with a slight drop-off in activity during July and August when schools were closed, and a subsequent increase in September.

6.2 Trauma informed and responsive Renfrewshire

6.2.1 The COG recognises that trauma can affect any one of us at any time, but the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly increased and exacerbated both the risk and the impact of trauma, particularly for people already affected by inequalities and Adverse Childhood Experiences.

6.2.2 Renfrewshire Council has appointed a Trauma Informed Champion and work is underway with the Improvement Service to support Renfrewshire to become trauma informed and responsive.

6.3 Adult Support and Protection (ASP)

6.3.1 Impact of COVID

In our response to the potential impact of COVID-19 on adults at risk of harm in Renfrewshire, local ASP arrangements during the pandemic included:

- The development of local operational ASP guidance in light of COVID-19. This supplemented existent local Inter-agency ASP Guidance and Procedures and complemented national guidance from Scottish Government for Chief Officer Groups and Adult Protection Committees. There was an emphasis on continued commitment to meeting statutory responsibilities, while reflecting the need for flexibility in some circumstances, including where face-to-face interviews or meetings could not occur;
- Continuing to meet ASP statutory requirements to respond to referrals for adults at risk of harm by undertaking Section 4 inquiries;
- Fortnightly – then monthly – Renfrewshire Adult Protection Committee (RAPC) subgroup meetings were commenced in April 2020 and continued until August 2020 to ensure sufficient strategic and operational oversight of ASP activity across Renfrewshire. These subgroup meetings were arranged with key members of RAPC or delegated representatives in attendance. This group had greater operational remit than is typical of RAPC; it included inter-agency discussion with key partners to identify areas of risk from their service's perspective, in addition to mitigating factors; and
- The RAPC Lead Officer contributed to the HSCP's COVID Mobilisation Plan to ensure that statutory ASP protection duties continued

6.3.2 Due to the resource demands associated with the response to COVID-19 throughout 2020, delivering staff training became a challenge. However, webinars and e-learning were developed to cover some topics, particularly to ensure relevant training was available for those frontline practitioners undertaking ASP activity.

6.3.3 The repercussions of the virus on all levels continue to be felt and are acutely aware of the changes, locally and nationally, to: how we identify and respond to adults at risk of harm;

how we train a confident and competent workforce; how we raise awareness of adult protection across our communities; and how we collaborate across partners. The Adult Protection Committee's aims for the coming year, with the help of its partners, include recognition of new ways of working, supplemented by lessons learned and good practice evidence gathered during the pandemic.

Adults with Incapacity (AWI)

- 6.3.4 In 2020-2021 Renfrewshire received 176 requests for AWI mental health officer reports. It is worth noting that 65% of all new orders granted are time-limited, which brings additional work pressure in respect of renewal reports required. Often such requests arrive with less than 4 weeks until the expiry of the existing order, putting pressure on the service.
- 6.3.5 During the 2020/21 financial year, pandemic response measures included court closures and AWI work was paused' for a period. The impact of this was felt on MHO services when courts resumed AWI work, with increased pressure on the service.

Welfare Guardianships

- 6.3.6 Orders where the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is appointed Welfare Guardian rose in recent years, from 79 in March 2015 to 116 in 2020; on 31 March 2021 there were 108 such orders existent in Renfrewshire. Each order requires a qualified social worker to act as the "nominated officer" on behalf of the CSWO for day to day management of the case. In addition, there are in excess of approximately 435 private welfare guardianship orders running throughout Renfrewshire. These require a minimum of one statutory visit by a guardianship supervisor after being granted.

Large Scale Investigations

- 6.3.7 Three Large-Scale Investigation (LSI) were initiated in 2020. These LSIs involved two independent sector care homes for older people and an independent sector home for adults with learning disabilities. Contributions to these LSIs during the reporting period came from colleagues across the health service; Police Scotland; the Care Inspectorate; Scottish Fire and Rescue Services; commissioning staff; social work services and the third sector, leading to holistic assessment of risks and strengths within these care settings. The coordinated response to shared concerns enhanced the efficiency and efficacy of safeguarding measures undertaken.

Adult Protection National Significant Case Review (SCR) Framework

- 6.3.8 The Scottish Government formally launched the Adult Protection National Significant Case Review (SCR) Framework on 5th November 2019. The purpose of the framework is to provide a consistent approach to conducting Adult Protection Significant Case Reviews and to improve the dissemination and application of learning both locally and nationally. Renfrewshire's own SCR Guidance and Procedures update, building on the national framework, was due in 2020; this work was postponed due to the pandemic. The Renfrewshire guidance was completed in early 2021 and is now out for consultation amongst stakeholders. Local guidance includes recognition of governance arrangements for significant case reviews within Renfrewshire, including the role of Chief Officers.

Financial Harm

- 6.3.9 In order to provide the most thorough and effective response to new and emerging financial harm concerns, including bogus callers, rogue traders and Covid-related scams, steps have been taken to transfer The Renfrewshire Financial Harm Subgroup's chairing and governance arrangements to the Renfrewshire Public Protection Steering Group. This decision reflects the far-reaching scope of financial harm across the partnership area including, but not limited to, financial harm that meets the criteria for intervention under Adult Support and Protection legislation. A representative from RAPC will continue to contribute to the subgroup to ensure that adult protection-related concerns remain on the

financial harm agenda. The group will meet monthly and assume greater operational and strategic oversight of financial harm activity across the partnership area to promote collaboration and minimise duplication of efforts. The group is currently amending its Terms of Reference to take account of these changes and will continue to progress with its ambitious financial harm strategy and action plan for Renfrewshire.

ASP Continuous Improvement

- 6.3.10 The Continuous Improvement Subcommittee was established, which ensures fulfilment of RAPC's functions relating to quality assurance and self-evaluation activity. The subcommittee prompts single and inter-agency evaluation of adult protection activity via monthly small-scale audits based on themes arising through quarterly ASP data; topics raised by frontline staff and managers; and any concerns raised by senior managers across the partnership that warrant additional scrutiny. Audit themes have also arisen based on feedback provided by the Care Inspectorate following the ASP Joint Inspection 2020. This subcommittee will also oversee a biennial programme of larger-scale, multi-agency self-evaluation activity; the next larger-scale multi-agency self-evaluation will be undertaken in 2021.

Adults at risk of going missing

- 6.3.11 Throughout 2020/21, Renfrewshire participated in the National Missing Persons Framework Implementation Project, receiving support from Missing People that was tailored to our current processes and specific local needs. The aim was to develop good practice relating to people at risk of going missing. The project involved collaboration of several partners, including the Renfrewshire HSCP; Renfrewshire Communities, Housing and Planning (Public Protection); Renfrewshire Children's Services; the Community Safety Partnership; and K-Division of Police Scotland.
- 6.3.12 Following receipt of this direct support from Missing People, we have developed draft Renfrewshire Missing Persons Guidance and Procedures, which is inclusive of the response for adults who have experienced a missing episode. The development of this guidance demonstrates our commitment to embedding best practice around Return Discussions, aligned with the National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland. As soon as the procedures are finalised (anticipated in 2021), relevant frontline professionals working in this field will receive training sessions developed by Missing People. Missing People has also shared with us their Good Practice Toolkit for professionals to use day-to-day, and we will continue to build awareness of support services available from Missing People, which will allow our staff and partners to focus resources on the operational response to missing persons.

Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection

- 6.3.13 In January 2020, Renfrewshire was subject to the Joint ASP Inspection, which was undertaken by The Care Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) and Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS). The inspection is part of a national programme of scrutiny and assurance activity as requested by Scottish Ministers.
- 6.3.14 The focus of the joint inspection was to provide:
- Independent scrutiny and assurance of how partnerships ensure adults at risk of harm are kept safe, protected, and supported
 - Assurance to Scottish Ministers about how effectively Partnerships have implemented the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
 - An opportunity to identify good practice and support improvement more broadly across Scotland.
- 6.3.15 Due to COVID-19, the onsite phase of the inspection was paused and as a result not all inspection activities were completed. However, enough evidence was gathered by the Inspection Team to enable the Care Inspectorate to provide feedback on their findings.

The feedback highlighted key strengths and areas for improvement which have formed the basis of an Improvement Plan, this was subsequently amalgamated into an enhanced, overarching ASP Improvement Plan which is monitored and reviewed by the Renfrewshire Adult Protection Committee. The Improvement Plan reflects the collaborative approach being taken to improving outcomes for adults at risk of harm across the partnership.

6.4 Oversight of Care Homes and Care at Home Services

- 6.4.1 COVID-19 has had a significant impact on care homes and their residents. On 17 May 2020, the Scottish Government published national statutory COVID-19 guidance to provide granular scrutiny, support and oversight of care home and care at home services. The guidance required that from 18 May 2020, clinical and care professionals at NHS boards and local authorities will have a leading role in the oversight for care homes in their area.
- 6.4.2 This resulted in the following governance arrangements being introduced to strengthen clinical and care oversight of care homes across Renfrewshire:
- Daily Huddle (more recently moved to twice weekly): the huddle is 'responsible and accountable' for providing oversight, analysis and response to emerging issues; infection prevention and control; and for the clinical and care support provided to service users including testing and vaccinations.
 - Renfrewshire Clinical and Care Oversight Group weekly multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meeting: the group is responsible for analysing all aspects of COVID-19, infection control, testing, training and support; classifying each care home using the Scottish Government agreed rating and completing the local return to the Director of Public Health, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. There is also a requirement for the MDT to escalate issues via the Chief Officer / Director Nursing to the Chief Executives of the Council and NHS respectively.
 - Fortnightly Care Home Peer Support Meeting (initially held weekly): this meeting provides a forum for clinical and care advice and support to all registered homes in Renfrewshire. This meeting is well attended by all care homes and has been so successful that it is intended this meeting is continued beyond the pandemic.
- 6.4.3 Local strategic oversight of these arrangements continues to be provided by the COG who regular monitored performance, scrutinised reports and established special meetings of the grouped as and when required.
- 6.4.4 In addition, a Greater Glasgow and Clyde Care Home Assurance and Governance Group has been established and meets weekly to provide strategic oversight of support, testing, vaccination; infection control, staffing and care standards for care homes within the wider Health Board area. The group is led by the Directors of Nursing and Public Health and includes representation from the Care Inspectorate, Scottish Care, CSWO, Clinical Directors and HSCP commissioning managers and service managers.

6.5 Gender Based Violence

- 6.5.1 Equally Safe, is Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls, the aim of the strategy is to ensure partnership working across the public, private and third sector in order to create a 'strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and protected, and where women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes which perpetuate them.'
- 6.5.2 The implementation of Equally Safe is the responsibility of local Violence Against Women Partnerships. In Renfrewshire the local multi-agency Gender Based Violence (GBV) Strategy Group, jointly chaired by the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice, Renfrewshire Council (Chief Social Work Officer) and the Head of Health and Social Care,

Renfrewshire HSCP. An annual assessment against the Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework is submitted to the Scottish Government.

- 6.5.3 Significant progress against the strategic action plan and some key achievements included: the provision of robust MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference) and MATAC (multi-agency tasking and co-ordination); implementation of sensitive routine enquiry (SRE) and referral to MARAC in the HSCP Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs Recovery Service and Children's Services.
- 6.5.4 In communities across Scotland, women, children and young people experiencing gender-based violence are at significant increased risk of harm during the COVID-19 pandemic. International evidence reviews highlight that increased levels of domestic abuse during lockdown phases of the pandemic have been reported in China, Italy, Spain, France and Australia, with evidence from other epidemics and disasters suggesting that the risk of harm from all forms of gender based violence will continue to increase post-disaster. This includes domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, commercial sexual exploitation (CSE), trafficking, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).
- 6.5.5 The restrictions on movement in communities across Scotland created new risks to those suffering or recovering from domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence. These include: perception that statutory services, such as Police and homelessness services are not operating as normal; lack of physical access to routine social networks such as friends and extended family; reduced reach of interventions such as specialist and universal support services; sickness of frontline specialist service providers; barriers caused through increased use of digital or telephone enabled services; and financial dependencies and increased access by perpetrators to women, children and young people because of social distancing and lockdown measures.
- 6.5.6 The Renfrewshire MARAC moved to virtual meetings during 2020 due to the pandemic. and there were no gaps during this time. Partner agencies were asked to follow normal data protection procedures. If representatives were home working, agencies should follow their own organisational protocols/advice around confidentiality.
- 6.5.7 The delays in the court process due to the pandemic have brought additional challenges from both the perspective of support to victims and in progressing work with perpetrators. Women and children in refuge accommodation are experiencing longer than usual waits for housing provision due to the pandemic. The GBV Strategy Group will continue to work with key stakeholders to prepare a post COVID-19 plan to address some of these challenges.

16 Days of Action 2020

- 6.5.8 A number of local campaigns take place throughout the year to raise awareness of GBV related issues. The 16 Days of Action campaign – which runs from 25th of November to 10th of December – is a local version of the United Nations' campaign which promotes the elimination of GBV. Due to the pandemic, the 16 Days of Action in 2020 had to be adapted with the annual Reclaim the Night March unable to take place in its usual format. The Provost took part in the annual laying of the wreath service in Dunn Square with a small number of socially distanced participants. This was captured on video and released on social media channels along with information, statistics and sound bites aimed at raising awareness of GBV.

Safe Spaces Initiative and Code Word Scheme

- 6.5.9 There have been two community based responses which have been gathering some profile over the period of restrictions relating to COVID-19. These are the Safe Spaces Initiative and the Code Word Scheme. Safe Spaces enables victims of domestic abuse to access information on specialist services in a quiet, private space within pharmacies. This

is currently operational in Scotland and other parts of the UK. Safe Spaces is a scheme which is being achieved through the campaign UK Says No More, and the main charity contact is through Hestia. It is being run in Boots, Superdrug Pharmacy, Morrison's Pharmacy and some independent pharmacies.

- 6.5.10 The Code Word Scheme – which is named Ask Ani (Action Needed Immediately) – launched on 14th January 2021. It also operates in pharmacies and has a similar function in supporting people to access support but there is an emergency response attached if requested. The code word scheme operates by allowing someone to access a consultation room or private space. The pharmacy personnel will ask if they are in danger or in need of immediate help and want the police to be called. If yes, they will call 999 and inform the call handler that a codeword 'ANI' response is required. If no, they will share helpline details, offer a private space and a phone for the person to make calls as required themselves.

Equally Safe in Practice

- 6.5.11 The national Equally Safe in Practice project team at Scottish Women's Aid, in partnership with the Engender and Improvement Service, are developing a national framework to strengthen violence against women training and workforce development approaches. Particularly in the current context, it is more critical than ever that workforces are equipped with the knowledge, understanding and skill to address gender inequality, and to provide an informed, consistent response to women, children and young people experiencing violence and abuse. The project is working to ensure that the development of a workforce development framework initial learning approaches reflect the practice needs of workers across sectors, recognising that local authorities across Scotland are central to a response at local level.
- 6.5.12 The Equally Safe in Practice team are planning to test and evaluate new learning modules with a cross-section of the council workforce. In the coming months the team hope to work closely with a small number of councils to explore how existing workforce development approaches can be strengthened and, particularly in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, consider how this learning can be tested in ways that add value to and support local best practice. Renfrewshire GBV Strategy Group put forward a note of interest and have now been accepted as a pilot area to participate in this testing, which will both support existing training approaches, and contribute to ongoing the development of an Equally Safe aligned framework.

6.6 Community Safety and Public Protection

- 6.6.1 The main focus in 2020/21 related to assisting with the response to COVID-19. Staff from Communities and Public Protection were seconded onto NHS Test and Protect, and the creation of Local Assistance Teams for support including providing isolation calls for schools and welfare assistance.
- 6.6.2 Many staff continued to deliver front-line services to assist vulnerable residents throughout the pandemic including CCTV Operators monitoring public space CCTV, Renfrewshire Wardens dealing with anti-social behaviour, Pest Control Operatives tackling emergency calls (rodents in properties) and EHOs/TSOs liaising and working with businesses to ensure they were COVID compliant.
- 6.6.3 In particular, Environmental Health and Trading Standards spent most the year working on COVID related work including assisting businesses to comply with the ever-changing landscape of legislation and guidance. Alongside Police Scotland, they followed the 4 E's strategy (Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce). This also led to numerous proactive e-mails to assist. Renfrewshire is currently believed to one of only a few local authorities to assist businesses in this way.

- 6.6.4 Environmental Health worked closely with the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board to try and prevent transmission of the virus. This included chairing every Confirmed Case Assessment (CCA) within an educational establishment. By doing this, staff and pupils were isolated quickly to prevent onward spread of the virus. Daily/Weekly meetings for different topics (Clusters/Contact Tracing/Community Testing) were established and are still currently attended to minimise the spread of Covid-19.

Community Safety Partnership Hub

- 6.6.5 Over the COVID -19 lockdown period significant reductions in anti-social behaviour were identified, driven by the closure of the night-time economy in particular. Most instances of anti-social behaviour were identified within domestic environments during this period and a significant proportion related to non-compliance with COVID legislation and guidance. Over time patterns of behaviour returned to a more normal profile - albeit the ongoing restrictions in hospitality and night-time economy continue to have an impact throughout the period of this annual report.
- 6.6.6 Many operations on the hub continued to operate and migrated to online remote working where possible – Daily Tasking was supported by the introduction of monthly tasking meetings to tackle specific repeat cases and issues and fire safety assumed an increased prominence at these meetings to respond to patterns of fire incidents as anti-social behaviour began to return to more normal levels. MARAC continued to operate throughout the pandemic and unlike other areas saw a relatively consistent level of caseload which increased confidence in the work done prior to the pandemic to ensure that the relevant cases were being identified and brought forward for consideration through this process. CCTV cameras were in operation and additional cameras were brought online in key hotspot areas – including Robertson Park, Renfrew. The structural review of Community Protection was paused but has since recommenced and been progressed with Unions.

Daily Tasking

- 6.6.7 To ensure early intervention with regards to Community Protection, Daily Tasking moved on-line with partners to ensure that all issues from the previous 24/48 hours were still being discussed/raised/disposed. Partners met virtually at 9.30am (Mon – Fri) to allow discussion and action to be taken.
- 6.6.8 In January 2021, 2 fully trained Community Safety Nurses were recruited by the HSCP to work predominantly in response to Daily Tasking referrals. In particular, their expertise in mental health allowed repeat offenders or those with particular vulnerabilities to be assisted. This is a massive improvement in delivering a wrap-around service for the residents of Renfrewshire.

CONTEST

- 6.6.9 Work in relation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent continued throughout the COVID -19 period with the launch of a revised annual overview product replacing the previous ERTLP product. This has now been updated and presented at the meeting of the Divisional CONTEST / SOC Group for the second time. Over the period of this report additional guidance in relation to Prevent was also issued and brings with it additional expectations of local authorities – including the requirement to identify a single chair for PMAP (Prevent Multi Agency Panel) case conferences and a nominated depute – both required to attend mandatory Home Office Training. Renfrewshire continues to be fully compliant with the updated guidance. Consultation on the possible introduction of a Protect Duty is also currently ongoing and the Council response to this consultation was returned in line with the timescale.

SOC and Counter Fraud

- 6.6.10 Over the period of the lockdown Police Scotland saw indications of greater threats from cybercrime in particular the targeting of ransomware demands at smaller businesses with an increasingly disruptive impact on the local economy. Some major organisations including Councils and SEPA were also victims of cyber-attacks. Working from home has in some instances contributed to the success of these attacks with insecure connections being used to gain backdoor access to otherwise secure corporate systems.

Shut Out Scammers

- 6.6.11 Joint work has been undertaken by Police Scotland and Renfrewshire Council (Trading Standards) to try to raise awareness and tackle scams and bogus callers. In addition, the Community Safety Partnership has issued a leaflet on scams/Bogus Callers and Domestic Abuse to every household in Renfrewshire when people were engaged about Council tax. This partnership working is key in tackling vulnerabilities and ensuring people are aware of issues and signposting.

Regulatory Services

- 6.6.12 The impact of COVID-19 has had a significant bearing on the work of Regulatory Services – Environmental Health, Trading Standards with the development of significant new areas of work of regulatory governance and compliance that has required to be undertaken throughout the pandemic period to protect public health. As a consequence, a number of areas of work were deferred by national organisations and will require a recovery plan. Food Safety Inspection being a significant example. As the pandemic and associated levels restrictions have gone on there has been evidence of “compliance fatigue” amongst businesses – linked to a greater awareness of the distinction between legislative requirements and guidance – leading to a more significant number of businesses opting not to strictly follow areas of guidance. This has required ongoing partnership working with Police around enforcement expectations and consistency of approach.

COP 26

- 6.6.13 COP 26 was deferred during the COVID-19 pandemic and is now planned to take place in 2021. The scale of this event has still to be fully determined, however all indications are that there is now an intention to hold a very significant in person face to face element that is much closer to the original format than was initially thought likely at the point the date was revised. In these circumstances there will be significant deployment issues for Police Scotland and a knock-on impact for the Greater Glasgow City region, in particular Renfrewshire, with the airport as a key entry point for the event as well as a likely operational staging post for organisations supporting the delivery of the event.

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

- 6.6.14 The strategic arrangements in relation to MAPPA continue to be overseen by the MAPPA Strategic Oversight Group, which exists across the six local authorities, previously under North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority. Information in relation to the workings of MAPPA, statistics, annual aims and objectives and work undertaken are included in the MAPPA Annual report. The most recent report covers 2019/20 and can be found on the Renfrewshire criminal justice website.
- 6.6.15 Additional funding provided to MAPPA in 2020/21 has resulted in an additional part-time MAPPA co-ordinator being added to the team, and a decision to appoint an Independent Chair to lead the MAPPA Strategic Oversight Group. The recruitment process has commenced for implementation in 2021/22.
- 6.6.16 Operationally Moving Forward Making Changes, the national intervention to address the behaviours of those who commit sexual offences has continued throughout the pandemic.

This occurred technologically where safe to do so, and face to face and within small groups as offices were able to reopen and assessments dictated that this could be carried out safely.

6.7 Community Justice

6.7.1 Responding to the pandemic has meant that some planned actions within the Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan 2018-21 have been delayed, with focus diverting to maintaining services, and adapting to national changes. The Renfrewshire Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan 2018-2021 was due to be updated by 1 April 2021, however in recognition of the impact of the pandemic on taking forward actions, it was agreed by Community Justice Scotland (CJS) that these could continue until 31 December 2021.

6.7.2 In May 2021, the Scottish Government and CJS issued a joint statement in relation to the review of the National Strategy for Community Justice and Review of the Outcomes, Performance, and Improvement Framework. This is planned for March 2022. Given that local authorities must review their Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan after the publication, they have advised that it is pragmatic for local authorities in this position to delay publication.

Early Prisoner Release:

6.7.3 Renfrewshire signed up to a national Information Sharing Protocol with the Scottish Prison Service on 1 April 2020. This enabled a multi-agency group to be established and a process established, led by justice social work, to liaise with/offer and where agreed, provide support to the small number of individuals being released early.

Extension to Just Recovery

6.7.4 Invest in Renfrewshire provided continued funding for this initiative. This ensures specific support is in place for individuals with convictions in overcoming specific barriers to education, employment and training. During this year we also ensured that staff working in this area were provided with training as to the changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act to assist service users with appropriate disclosure. We also ensured that wider partners were made aware of the changes arising from the new legislation through the provision of staff events. Renfrewshire Community Justice remain active partners in the Renfrewshire Local employability Partnership.

Development of Pathways/processes for justice service users with addiction issues

6.7.5 The Scottish Government's Challenge Fund, managed by the CORRA Foundation, was made resources available to support activities that tackle harmful alcohol and drug use. Community Justice Renfrewshire was awarded £35,000 from the "Getting ready for Change" category, following the proposal of a project, Just Recovery, to carry out a mapping review of pathways into addiction services for people involved in the criminal justice system living in or returning to Renfrewshire. This includes young people and those who have committed serious and high risk offences.

6.8 Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP)

6.8.1 Renfrewshire ADP is a multi-agency strategic partnership, including membership from Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), Renfrewshire Council, Police Scotland, Scottish Prison Service and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. The ADP is tasked with implementing the national strategic frameworks ensuring that we improve the health of our local population and to prevent and reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs. Key priority areas for action have included:

- 6.8.2 Services have carried out significant work to ensure that individuals affected by alcohol and drugs continue to be supported during the pandemic. Although face to face contact has been reduced, a range of alternative measures have been implemented. Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service (ADRS) has continued to provide opiate replacement therapy (ORT) assessments and blood borne virus (BBV) testing with an emergency triage system in place to ensure individuals who use services have access to essential support, direction and harm reduction guidance. This has also included ADRS specifically targeting Renfrewshire's most vulnerable and high-risk service users by providing relevant treatment and support.

Drug Related Deaths

- 6.8.3 As part of the ADP's Drug Deaths Prevention Action Plan, there is a range of work currently underway with partners to prevent and reduce drug related deaths in Renfrewshire. This includes the provision of timely, evidence-based treatment and support to individuals attending ADRS and key third sector providers; the distribution of Naloxone (a drug that can reverse the effects of an overdose caused by opioids such as heroin or methadone) targeting individuals at risk of an opiate overdose, and their families and will continue to be driven through ADRS, needle exchanges and local pharmacists. In addition to this, the distribution of Naloxone has been extended as a result of the pandemic to include non-drug treatment services and enhanced recovery opportunities will continue to be provided with the establishment of a Recovery Hub which is planned to be opened in the summer of 2021. A Peer Support Network has also been created as a result of a successful funding application made to the Scottish Drug Deaths Task Force. This has led to the recruitment of additional peer support workers who have a unique role in engaging with hard to reach populations and connecting them with local services.

Medication Assisted Treatment Standards

- 6.8.4 Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards were published in November 2020 and have been developed to address issues related to treatment access, retention and quality of services across Scotland. There are ten standards in total which aim to address change in the service delivery landscape and the culture of services, both over the short and longer term. The Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service (ADRS) is currently implementing the MAT Standards with a focus on introducing same day prescribing and choice of treatment. Progress around the success of the MAT Standards will continue to be monitored by the ADP.

Residential Rehabilitation

- 6.8.5 In response to Scotland's drug deaths crisis, a key priority for the Scottish Government was to provide increased access to residential rehabilitation. In Renfrewshire, this was also echoed in the outcome of the Whole Systems Review and the findings from the Alcohol and Drug Commission. Residential rehabilitation is defined as providing support to individuals to 'attain an alcohol or drug free lifestyle and be re-integrated into society, and which provide intensive psycho-social support and a structured programme of daily activities which individuals are required to attend over a fixed period of time.' As a result of additional funding provided by the Scottish Government a Residential Rehabilitation Strategy is currently being developed in Renfrewshire. This will include not only the use of a residential placement for the purpose of abstinence-based treatment options but also for the purposes of crisis intervention and stabilisation.

Lived and Living Experience

- 6.8.6 The ADP has further embedded and strengthened their commitment to involving individuals with lived and living experience. Individuals with lived and living experience have been involved in key aspects of service planning and delivery including

representation on interview panels for recent management roles, representation on the Recovery Taskforce, and an enhanced Peer Support Network with the recruitment of additional Peer Support Workers. This will be enhanced further as a result of additional funding allocated through Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drugs Change Programme with plans to increase this further, including the recruitment of a Peer Support Coordinator. ADRS also secured 60 tablet devices from Scottish Government Connecting Scotland Fund to provide to individuals who use our services who do not have the IT kit to get online. This has provided options for video consultations and access to online recovery support and activities.

Harm Reduction

- 6.8.7 Plans are underway to develop a Mobile Harm Reduction Unit. The Unit will target areas in Renfrewshire to make it as easy as possible to engage with difficult to reach communities. This will provide crucial healthcare and harm reduction services – such as injecting equipment to reduce the incidence of blood-borne viruses (BBV), as well as testing of BBV in the community. In addition to this, the Mobile Unit will distribute Naloxone with the aim of engaging with individuals who wouldn't normally access support and care services into treatment.
- 6.8.8 Due to COVID restrictions Blood Borne Virus testing has been limited across Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Whilst ADRS proactive approach in Renfrewshire was commended by Public Health Scotland the Service will be participating in a dry blood spot self-testing pilot. The aim is to educate and normalise frequent testing across Renfrewshire by using a postal service to support the existing process.
- 6.8.9 The Naloxone programme is well established in Renfrewshire. Naloxone is a drug that temporarily reverses the effect of opiates, allowing time for someone to seek emergency help. Individuals who use drugs, their families, friends/carers are trained before being supplied with a Naloxone kit. As a result of the statement issued by the Lord Advocate, non-drug treatment services can provide Naloxone supply on a temporary basis during the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of Naloxone kits distributed in Renfrewshire as at March 2021 was 876; 7% above the target of 820.

6.9 Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drugs Commission

- 6.9.1 In late 2018, Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership Executive Group agreed to establish an independent Commission to consider the true impact of alcohol and drug use across Renfrewshire's communities.

The Commission was supported by officers within Renfrewshire Council, who worked to establish the Commission and to recruit a number of local and national experts and professionals. The Commission was chaired by Councillor Jacqueline Cameron.

- 6.9.2 It was originally anticipated that the Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drug Commission would meet and conclude its findings over a period of 12 months, with the first meeting of the Commission taking place on 19 March 2019. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 caused the Commission to pause its work, however this resumed in September 2020, with the final meeting held on 5 November 2020.
- 6.9.3 Following initial discussion, Commission members agreed a programme of work based around 3 key pillars or themes, which would ensure the Commission was able to come forward with recommendations which community planning partners would have the levers and resources to address:
- Supporting those with the highest need.
 - Early intervention and prevention.
 - Recovery.

- 6.9.4 The Commission undertook an extensive programme of engagement and evidence gathering to ensure that the impact of alcohol and drug use was considered as broadly as possible, rather than focusing solely on services which support treatment. Over 330 people were involved in the engagement programme itself.
- 6.9.5 In December 2020, the Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drugs Commission published its final report. The report sets out the Commission's main findings and provides 27 recommendations to guide the local response. Priority actions were identified in terms of:
- Urgently addressing issues in relation to mental health service provision, including provision for young people.
 - Considering trauma as part of everything that partners do in Renfrewshire – this is fundamental to reducing or preventing problems with alcohol and drug use and supporting recovery.
 - Introducing a whole system approach to supporting people with their alcohol and drug use.
 - Increasing the reach and capacity across the whole system of support for people using alcohol and drugs.
 - Making urgent changes to the buildings from which services are provided. • Reviewing the support that is available to families impacted by drug and alcohol use – at all stages of life.
 - Partners providing leadership around alcohol supply, promotion and availability.
 - Valuing lived experience as part of the approach to recover in Renfrewshire: - developing meaningful relationships with recovery organisations and building strong partnership peer support models.
 - Tackling stigma around alcohol and drug use and supporting opportunities for social connection across Renfrewshire to support recovery.
- 6.9.6 The report and its recommendations were endorsed by Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board and Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership Executive Group, with full support gained to respond to these recommendations on a collective basis.
- 6.9.7 On 9 March 2020, Renfrewshire Council allocated £2m of funding to support the emerging recommendations of the Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drugs Commission. Given both the impact that the pandemic has had on local people and communities and the urgent nature of some of recommendations identified within the Commission's report, officers worked with partners to bring forward an initial tranche of funding proposals which would target the priorities identified as being most urgent by the Commission.

Renfrewshire Council agreed to allocate £1.34m of the £2m allocated funding to support a range of projects which will aim to pilot new ways of working across the community planning partnership, with the opportunity to use this learning to transform the way in which people receive support across Renfrewshire in the medium to longer term.

- 6.9.8 As a result, the multi-agency Alcohol and Drugs Change Programme Board was established to drive forward the implementation of the response to the recommendations of the Commission. The recommendations provide clear direction to community planning partners on the action that must be taken to fundamentally address the impact of alcohol and drug use in Renfrewshire. They are bold and ambitious and focus on what needs to change to support:
- People who use alcohol and drugs
 - Families impacted by alcohol and drug use
 - Young people experiencing issues in relation to alcohol and drug use and mental health issues, and
 - Local communities that are impacted by alcohol and drug use.

The role and remit of the programme board is to:

- Ensure ongoing oversight of the Alcohol and Drugs Change Programme and Action Plan which is being developed to respond to the Commission’s findings.
- Review and agree all activities and funding proposals identified to support the implementation of the Change Programme and Action Plan.
- Ensure ongoing updates are provided on all related activities through appropriate governance structures with 6 monthly updates provided to the Leadership Board on progress achieved.
- Ensure that there continues to be meaningful engagement with local people and families with lived experience, as planned projects and initiatives are developed.

The Programme Board recognises the range of ongoing work to mitigate the impact of alcohol and drugs in Renfrewshire and across Scotland – including the whole system review, the national Drug Deaths Taskforce and Scottish Government funded activities – and will ensure activities are aligned across all of these areas.

6.9.9 The voice of individuals with lived/living experience was central to the recommendations of the Commission. Work is underway to ensure that those with lived/living experience of the impact of alcohol and/or drug use are meaningfully involved in the work of the programme board and that lived experience is at the heart of the Alcohol and Drugs Change Programme.

The projects outlined below have been approved by the programme board and are currently underway.

<p>Assertive Outreach: An Outreach Crisis Response Team will be commissioned for Renfrewshire. This will involve the service providing short, focused periods of support, maintaining contact through various means including telephone and digital as well as face to face engagement. The primary purpose of the service will be to provide an out of hours response (evening and weekends) with some overlap to facilitate follow up engagement and referrals to mainstream services.</p>
<p>Significantly Expand and Develop a Peer Support Model in Renfrewshire: The aim will be to build on the work already underway by recruiting additional peer workers and a Peer Co-ordinator to oversee the project. This will provide an enhanced service to connect with individuals within their own homes and communities to empower individuals to achieve their goals and aspirations by connecting them with their personal recovery journey.</p>
<p>Crisis Based Mental Health Service: The aim of the project will be to commission a crisis-based mental health service as a test of change for a period of 18 months, with a view to considering opportunities to provide support through mainstream support services if issues such as barriers to access and stigma can be addressed successfully.</p>
<p>Independent Research into Hidden Harm: Commission independent research into the hidden harm of alcohol and drugs in Renfrewshire and following this undertake a robust joint assessment of the level and nature of harm and how this is changing over time which will be used to inform the development of services at a local level.</p>
<p>Recovery Change Fund: Proposals are currently being developed to launch a Recovery Change Fund which will support innovative community based responses to the gaps identified by the Commission.</p>
<p>Whole Family Review of Support: An independent review of existing family support provision Renfrewshire will be commissioned, in order to inform and shape a new family support model for Renfrewshire which addressed the Commission's key recommendations and findings.</p>
<p>Revised Policies and Practices: A targeted programme of work with community planning partners will be undertaken, gaining commitment from partners to demonstrate leadership and to introduce revised policies and practices which</p>

recognise the impact of alcohol promotion and supply across communities and workplaces.

Partners will work through the programme board to develop further proposals in relation to the £0.6m balance of funding that is available to support actions against all remaining recommendations.

6.10 Suicide Prevention

6.10.1 Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the implementation of Renfrewshire's suicide prevention action plan has continued. The action plan focuses on:

- developing a wide range of services and practical support;
- raising awareness; and
- undertaking research to improve knowledge about suicide.

6.10.2 As part of this, suicide prevention training has continued to be rolled out to significant numbers. Renfrewshire's Choose Life Service Coordinator has developed a suite of "A Conversation About" sessions which are delivered remotely online via MS Teams. This has enabled training to be delivered despite the current pause on face to face in person training. Topics covered within the workshops include Mental Health, Anxiety, Depression, Psychosis, Suicide & Staying Safe, Self-Harm and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training). Demand has resulted in additional sessions being added to the programme. There have been over 300 applications for the courses since the programme was launched last year. A third cycle of the programme is expected to be rolled out over the summer months.

Mental Health Services during COVID-19

6.10.3 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health services have been categorised as critical and have continued to deliver services throughout. However increased demand for clinical and statutory services during the pandemic has meant that teams have had to reconsider and review care needs-based on level of risk. There were significant pressures on in-patient services due to the need to prevent outbreaks and there was a shift in care towards community services, this has partly been achieved by the introduction of the Action 15 posts.

Teams have adapted quickly to deliver services in different ways. Patients have been risk assessed to identify the level of risk and need involved and to ensure the most appropriate method of support and treatment is provided. Face to face provision has remained available to those most at risk. NHS Near Me (Attend Anywhere) has been implemented, providing a platform for video calling between patient and staff. This has proven to be an essential means of communication which will continue to be used post pandemic. In April 2021, over 500 patient consultations took place on the platform in Renfrewshire.

6.11 Collaborative Leadership Programme

6.11.1 To enhance the provision of leadership programmes available across the partnership, the Collaborative Leadership Programme was launched in 2019 and was aimed at first and second line managers who had been identified as having potential for advancement. During the initial pilot programme 17 participants from multiple agencies within Renfrewshire took part with the purpose of enhancing collaborative working and learning.

6.11.2 During 2020/21, the programme was independently evaluated by Renfrewshire Council's Organisational Development team who had no prior input or knowledge of the programme.

- 6.11.3 Participants and their line managers were surveyed following completion of the programme. The evaluation highlighted the following key benefits to participation in the programme:
- Provided an alternative leadership and management development opportunity.
 - Provided opportunities to network, share experience, gain alternative perspectives and peer mentor with managers from an alternative organisational setting.
 - Enhanced the confidence and abilities of our leaders and managers to meet the organisational challenges ahead, in particular, areas of change and strategic leadership in a community setting.
 - Supported talent planning and future succession planning and identifying career pathways.
 - Shift in appreciation for collaboration with levels of collaboration having increased
 - Positive shift in leadership skills and style.
 - Learning has been successfully implemented into participants' day-to-day working lives
 - Shift in leadership behaviours in key areas such as:
 - decision making
 - service and organisational boundaries being removed
 - increase in personal growth and confidence
 - increased and adapted communications both across boundaries and internally
 - mutual support increased
 - resilience and motivation improved
 - cascade of learning and behaviours.

6.12 Independent Review of the Chief Officers Group

- 6.12.1 The COG commissioned an independent review of the oversight and governance arrangements for public protection which was undertaken between January 2020 and July 2020. The key recommendations from the review included updating the terms of reference and membership (including deputed) of COG and adult and child protection committees; develop local procedures for conducting both initial and significant case reviews in child protection; consider including non-executive directors from NHS in the Member Officer Group; include a term of office for the independent chair of Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee. The review also suggested that COG should discuss reporting arrangements for the ADP and give consideration to the suggestion that the ADP could report to COG on an exception basis.
- 6.12.2 In January 2020, the Chief Officer Group agreed an action plan to support the implementation of the recommendations. Work to progress the action plan is well underway and will be completed by September 2021.

7. Strategic Focus

- 7.1 Renfrewshire Community Protection Chief Officers Group is responsible for leadership, strategic oversight and scrutiny in relation to multi-agency public protection activity and practice in Renfrewshire. During the pandemic, it has had an enhanced role in terms of the scrutiny of care homes and ensuring our most vulnerable citizens are cared for and protected. This will continue as we move forward and plan for recovery and renewal.
- 7.2 COG will continue to regularly scrutinise and monitor performance across all areas of community protection activity, focusing in on areas where there are ratings are poor, there's changes in referrals, incidents or concerns reported, or where national research or legislation suggests improvements or change to practice or multi agency working.
- 7.3 The Chief Officers Group will seek to ensure that performance and practice are scrutinised at a strategic level, to identify what works well, to highlight any areas for improvement, and

to consider where further opportunities for early intervention and prevention activity would achieve improved outcomes for local people.

7.4 The strategic focus for the Chief Officers Group and the Member Officers Group for 2021/22 will be discussed and agreed at this meeting of COG, however the following areas are recommended:

- Collectively monitor the impact of COVID-19 on those most vulnerable across communities, including the impact of demand pressures being experienced by all local partners, and considering opportunities for joint working in relation to any new areas of concern or harm identified.
- Continue to provide scrutiny, support and oversight of activity in relation to care homes, with a particular focus on the safety and wellbeing of residents and staff;
- Robustly respond to increasing levels of alcohol and drug related harm in Renfrewshire, providing strategic leadership and support for the local response to the recent findings of Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drugs Commission.
- Provide leadership to support the implementation of trauma informed and responsive practice across all services and partners in Renfrewshire;
- Promote learning and improvements to practice identified through initial and significant case reviews undertaken within Renfrewshire and from other areas;
- Review cyber crime activity across Renfrewshire, identifying joint action which can be taken to reduce or prevent levels of crime and harm.
- Support positive mental health and wellbeing with a focus on suicide prevention and people presenting to agencies in distress; and
- Have oversight of the Care Inspectorate Thematic review of Justice Social Work Throughcare arrangements in Renfrewshire and implement any findings from inspection activity.



To: Council

On: 30 September 2021

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: National Care Service Consultation

1. Summary

- 1.1 In March 2021, Council considered the initial findings of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care which was led by Derek Feeley during Winter 2020. The recommendations of the independent review were recognised at that time as having potentially very significant implications for the delivery of adult social care, particularly in relation to the proposed development of a National Care Service whereby the accountability for these services would transfer from local authorities to a national body accountable to Scottish Ministers.
- 1.2 In August 2021, Scottish Government launched a consultation on the establishment of a National Care Service in Scotland. Whilst the consultation seeks views on a number of other aspects of improvement to the delivery of social care services, it specifically focuses on the role and scope of the proposed National Care Service.
- 1.3 Elected members are asked to note that the proposed scope of the National Care Service set out within the consultation, exceeds that recommended initially within the Feeley review, and it is proposed that services such as children and families and criminal justice social work are included within a National Care Service, with adult social care services included as a minimum.
- 1.4 Whilst there is a range of proposals within the consultation that are focused on improving outcomes and support for service users and carers, it is important to highlight to elected members that the structural changes being proposed to manage the delivery of social care are significant for the Council. Many of the proposals outlined within the paper will need to be implemented or enabled

through new or significant changes to existing legislation, and the governance, financial and workforce implications for the organisation would be substantial. A range of professional organisations including SOLACE, SOLAR and CIPFA are currently considering the implications of the proposed changes and will respond to the consultation in due course.

- 1.5 A response outlining the view of the Council to the consultation is attached as Appendix 1 for consideration by elected members. Subject to approval, the response will be submitted to the Scottish Government by the deadline of 2 November 2021.
- 1.6 Further updates on the consultation and any agreed next steps, will be provided to elected members as soon as this information becomes available.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to:
 - Approve the response to the National Care Service consultation for submission by 2 November 2021.

3. Background

- 3.1 In September 2020 the Scottish Government announced that it intended to commission an independent review of adult social care in Scotland. The review was identified as a key element of the 2020 Programme for Government, and was expedited in order that key findings could be published in early 2021.
- 3.2 The review was led by Derek Feeley, a former Scottish Government Director General for Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland, who was supported by an Advisory Panel comprising of a range of experts. The principal aim of the review was to recommend improvements to adult social care in Scotland, particularly as the country moves forward from the pandemic.
- 3.3 Following a process of engagement and consultation, the final report from the independent review was published on 3 February 2021. The key findings were considered in a report to full Council on 4 March 2021, which noted the potentially significant implications that the recommendations could have for the Council if implemented. These included recommendations that:
 - The accountability for social care support should move from local authorities to Scottish Ministers, and that a Minister should be appointed with specific responsibility for Social Care.

- A national care service with its own board should be created and Integration Joint Boards should be reformed and operate as “local delivery agencies” of the new National Care Service.
- Local authorities should no longer be responsible for commissioning and procuring adult social care support but could continue to provide social care services procured by reformed Integration Joint Boards.
- Integration Joint Boards should be directly funded by Scottish Government, and local authorities would no longer be involved in decision making in relation to the allocation of funding to adult social care. The National Care Service would be responsible for distribution of resources based on a new funding methodology.
- Access to social care support would be made easier with the potential removal of eligibility criteria and aspects of charging.

3.4 The paper to Council highlighted that the review did not make it clear as to whether the Council would have a role in the delivery of adult social care services going forward as a commissioned service provider (although this is identified as a possibility), or whether services would be required to be transferred formally to the reformed Integration Joint Boards. The report noted the significant financial, risk, legal, procurement and staffing issues which would arise in relation to either scenario.

4. National Care Service consultation

- 4.1 Following the publication of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care, the Scottish Government made a commitment to implement key recommendations, including the creation of a National Care Service. The establishment of a national care service is a key element of the 2021 Programme for Government which was published by the Scottish Government in early September 2021. Within the Programme for Government, it is noted that a legislative bill to establish the National Care Service, will be laid in the Scottish Parliament before the end of this year, with a view to the National Care Service being established by the end of the current parliamentary term in 2026.
- 4.2 On 9 August 2021, the Scottish Government published “ A National Care Service for Scotland” consultation document, which sets out proposals to change the way in which social care is delivered in Scotland through the establishment of a national care service. The deadline for consultation responses is 2 November 2021.
- 4.3 This is the single model of service delivery for adult social care which is being consulted on at present, and it is important for elected members to note that the scope of the proposed national care service under consideration goes significantly beyond the recommendations of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care with children’s social work and criminal justice services also being considered for inclusion.

- 4.4 The consultation document includes a number of wider proposals to improve the delivery services, including in relation to social care assessments, eligibility criteria, support for carers, and charging mechanisms. The consultation also seeks views on proposals to improve the support and professional development of the social care workforce, with a key aim of ensuring that the vital role that frontline staff have in supporting vulnerable people is recognised and valued across society.
- 4.5 In summary, there are a number of key points within the consultation document which elected members are asked to note:

National Care Service

- It is proposed that a National Care Service is established which will have the responsibility for the delivery of adult social care services as a minimum, but should be extended to include other services areas such as children and families social work and criminal justice social work. A Getting It Right for Everyone approach is recommended to deliver cohesive services and supports to services users and carers.
- Accountability for the delivery of social care services would transfer from local authorities to Scottish Ministers.
- Integration Joint Boards would be reformed into Community Health and Social Care Boards, which would act as the local delivery mechanism for services on behalf of the National Care Service. It is anticipated that these would be in line with current local authority boundaries and would commission and procure all services required.
- Funding to support the delivery of social care would flow directly through the National Care Service to Community Health and Social Care Boards. Each board would appoint a Chief Executive and required staff to plan and deliver all services, and would report to the Chief Executive of the National Care Service.
- It is proposed that elected members continue as members on the new boards, with the membership extended further to include greater representation of service users and carers.
- The duties and responsibilities for “social work” would also be located within a national care service, and professional standards, qualifications and development would be supported through the creation of a new National Social Work Agency.

Improving Care for people

- Eligibility criteria in their current form will be removed, ensuring that people can receive the support and care they need when they need it.
- Prevention and early intervention will be prioritised within the model, supported by a single assessment and planning process.
- The consultation considers options to make sure carers have a right to breaks from caring, balancing the need for longer term intensive support for some carers with preventative support for others.

- Changes are proposed to current charging arrangements for the provision of residential care.

Commissioning of services

- The consultation proposes that all social care commissioning and procurement will be managed through a national approach, with greater focus on the achievement of outcomes.

Regulation and scrutiny

- The consultation recognises that scrutiny, inspection and regulation of care services and the workforce should be undertaken independently of the national care service and seeks views on how this should work in the future and the role that the Care Inspectorate, Health Improvement Scotland should have.

- 4.6 The full consultation documents can be accessed by elected members through the following link:- [A National Care Service for Scotland: consultation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot).
- 4.7 The proposals within the consultation document have significant implications for the delivery of social care services in Renfrewshire going forward and for the nature of the care and support that local people receive. It is clear that many of the proposals being consulted upon will require significant legislative change to enable these to be implemented, and the financial, governance and workforce implications of the proposed changes are substantial. Professional organisations and groups such as SOLACE, SOLAR, CIPFA and Chief Officer and Chief Social Work Officers will also provide technical views on the changes being proposed.
- 4.8 Renfrewshire Council's response to the National Care Service is attached as Appendix 1 to this report for the consideration of elected members. This provides a high level response to the consultation document, and sets out a number of more detailed points in relation to specific proposals included within the consultation document.
- 4.8 Subject to approval by Council, the response will be submitted to the Scottish Government ahead of the deadline set of 2 November 2021.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The recommendations set out in consultation, if implemented, could have a significant impact on the financial resources available to the Council, with funding flowing directly from Scottish Government to Community Health and Social Care boards. It is also

unclear whether services would continue to be provided by the Council through some form of commissioning arrangement.

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – If implemented, the recommendations within the consultation could have significant implications for the Council’s workforce, and there is no clarity at present on the service delivery role that a Council may have or whether staff would be required to transfer to the new governance arrangements.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – The recommendations within the independent review and the consultation advocate for greater engagement with local people and communities in relation to the provision of care.
4. **Legal** - The report recommends that new legislation should be enacted to reform Integration Joint Boards. The new Community Health and Social Care Boards would then have responsibility for procuring health and social care support locally, funded directly by the Scottish Government.

If implemented, local authorities would no longer have an active role in making decisions in relation to the allocation of adult social care funding, however elected members would still be represented on local Community Health and Social Care Boards. This could create a conflict of interest if the Community Health and Social Care Board chooses to commission services from the Council.

5. **Property/Assets** - *None*
6. **Information Technology** - *None*
7. **Equality & Human Rights** –

- (a) 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. 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.

- (b) The independent review report and its recommendations identify the need to shift adult social care provision to a rights based approach where barriers to access are reduced and fairness and equity are established in approach.
8. **Health & Safety** - *None*
9. **Procurement** –The recommendations set out within the consultation are likely to have a significant impact on the procurement of social care support in the future with a shift to an outcomes focused through a national managed approach
10. **Risk** – If implemented there are potentially significant risks to the Council in terms of finance, HR, procurement and governance.
11. **Privacy Impact** – Not applicable
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – COSLA Leaders noted significant concern with the nature and scope of the consultation proposals and have engaged with Scottish Government in relation to these concerns.
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List of Background Papers

- (a) n/a
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National Care Service Consultation

Renfrewshire Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the National Care Service consultation. The proposals outlined within the consultation document are complex and significant for people living across Renfrewshire, and therefore the Council has chosen to submit a response which covers all key issues and points which require to be addressed through this consultation exercise, rather than responding to the consultation questions alone.

The first section of the response below provides an overview of the Council's response to the key proposals contained within the consultation, with specific commentary provided within further sub-sections below.

Renfrewshire Council does not support proposals to create a National Care Service and to transfer accountability of adult social care from the local authority. There is no evidence that the structural changes proposed within the consultation would deliver on the outcomes local people, carers and social care workers want to see change now. Like the NHS, social care services need to rebuild and recover from the response to the pandemic and focus on tackling widening inequalities and levels of harm across communities – this needs to be the primary focus of local health and social services and not the distraction and disruption of unnecessary structural reform.

Renfrewshire Council is disappointed that the national consultation focuses on structural integration as the only solution by which improvements to adult social care services can be made.

Whilst there is support for the national co-ordination of particular aspects of social care such as assessment, eligibility criteria and workforce planning, more engagement is required with local partners on the options to improve outcomes at a local level.

There is also no evidence base which supports the transfer of children and families, and justice social work to a national care service, and it is very concerning that the proposed scope of the National Care Service has been widened without prior engagement with local authorities.

Social care and social work are statutory functions of a local authority and should remain so. Services should be designed and delivered as close as possible to the people that use them, with local democratic accountability ensuring that high quality services are provided and that resources are targeted in the most flexible and effective way to meet the needs of local people.

Additional investment in the delivery of adult social care services, could achieve significant improvements very quickly, if supported by national approaches to assessment, eligibility criteria and workforce planning and development.

Key points of Renfrewshire Council's response:

The independent review of adult social care undertaken by Derek Feeley and published in February 2021, represents a significant opportunity to build on the strengths of the existing adult social care system in Renfrewshire and across Scotland.

The opportunity to improve adult health and social care services must not be missed, and the critical role that these services play across communities needs to be recognised and valued.

Staff working across all care services have demonstrated unwavering commitment and professionalism during the pandemic, ensuring that lifeline care and support was delivered. Adult health and social care services remain under significant pressure, and as with health services provided across acute and primary care settings, all of our focus must now be on rebuilding the capacity of these services and supporting our staff, service users and carers to recover from impact of the pandemic.

The reform of adult social care proposed within this consultation document will detract effort and focus from the recovery of these services, and to date no evidence has been provided that the National Care Service model will achieve the core outcomes that service users and carers and social care staff told the Feeley review they wanted to see:

CHOICE – FLEXIBILITY – QUALITY

It is disappointing that rather than consulting on how these outcomes can be achieved, a national consultation has been launched on one proposed solution. By focusing on structural change, there is a significant risk that change will not be delivered quickly or in the way that those who responded to the Feeley review consultation want to see. The development of the National Care Service is likely to shift the focus away from improving services and outcomes, to delivering on significant governance and legislative change which could take many years to progress. People who use services and their carers want to see improvements now.

The consultation notes that health and social care integration has not delivered the scale of change required. Partners have spent 6 years implementing complex governance and financial arrangements required to support integration, and given the maturity of these relationships now, are better placed than ever to deliver the improvements to the adult social care system identified within the Feeley review. The resilience that local health boards, local authorities and integration authorities gain from working together was evidenced strongly during the pandemic, and should be seen as a strength to build improvement from.

Further structural integration is not required to implement some of the core recommendations made within the Feeley review: - these can be delivered through existing arrangements if supported by significant additional investment. Within the Feeley review it is estimated that further funding of over £600m is required, however this is likely to be a significant under-estimation given the proposals to remove eligibility criteria and charging from the provision of services. This is recognised in a recent briefing produced by the Fraser of Allander Institute which noted “ an underfunded national care service is unlikely to any better than system it seeks to replace” .

Supported by this additional investment, integration authorities could focus more extensively on improvement, learning and collaboration. Council agrees that some of the proposals within the consultation could be successfully progressed at a national level including: -

- Nationally agreed service criteria and assessments
- National workforce development arrangements
- National frameworks in relation to self directed support and support for carers
- National changes to strengthen scrutiny, inspection and learning

This national programme of improvement could be formalised through a formal agreement or concordat, with partners agreeing to deliver on specific outcomes agreed between the Scottish Government, health boards and local authorities.

Given the scale of governance change required, it is vital that engagement with professional organisations such as SOLAR, SOLACE and CIPFA is undertaken to understand the implications of the proposed National Care Service. There are significant governance and legislative implications for almost all proposals set out within the consultation.

Further engagement should also be undertaken in relation to the commissioning role of the National Care Service. The consultation document does not specifically refer to Scotland Excel and the range of national frameworks and contracts that are developed and managed by the organisation on behalf of local authorities. The skills and market knowledge that Scotland Excel offers should be recognised and there is little consideration given to the complexity of the social care market, with thousands of providers across Scotland being commissioned to deliver services every year.

A fundamental issue is that the consultation does not fully recognise the difference between social work and social care functions, and that support and protection may be required through a statutory rather than a voluntary basis. The statutory role of the Chief Social Work officer is not considered at all within the document which is a significant concern, given the vital role that this officer fulfils at local authority level, driving improvement in practice and as the main conduit for professional decision making.

It is right that the role of social care is recognised and valued, however the role of the professional social work service must be considered more fully within the context of these proposals.

In terms of final remarks, Renfrewshire Council believes that this consultation process must fundamentally consider what will be lost through the creation of a National Care Service and new reformed Health and Social Care Boards, as well as what some feel may be gained.

Local democratic accountability is a vital to the provision of adult social care, as it ensures that local resources are directed to meet the needs of local people and that standards and quality of service are high. This was never more important than during the pandemic, with local authorities bringing all partners together to provide support to service users and families. Early intervention and prevention starts within local communities, with local groups and organisations often being trusted and bets placed to support people with lower level needs. Local authorities play a critical role in ensuring all of the resources available within a community can be brought together to support service users and carers.

2. Improving quality

It is vital that people who use social care services are able to access high quality support. Whilst national standards, criteria and assessments could create greater consistency across Scotland, it will not prevent service users from experiencing significant variation in quality of care. There are thousands of social care providers, including local authorities, across Scotland. All operate with different service models and support different needs.

Whilst improved commissioning arrangements, regulation and scrutiny may improve this to some extent, service users will invariably have different experiences in terms of quality of care, and local

flexibility and oversight of these arrangements is vital to ensuring people are being supported appropriately.

A national improvement programme would be welcome to support Health and Social Care Partnerships and wider partners, to drive improvements at a local level by sharing learning and improving practice.

Prior to integration, this support was provided through the Joint Improvement Team, with programmes such as the Reshaping Care for Older People programme in place to support learning and collaboration across adult care services. National improvement support following integration has been limited.

2. Access to care and support

Social care services are not universal services, and are accessed through a shared assessment which has been jointly developed between health and social partners. In Renfrewshire, these assessments are outcomes based and undertaken in line with existing national policy in relation to self-directed support. The focus on outcomes and self directed support has been a journey for health and social care partners both pre and post integration, with further progress to be made to fully embed this approach locally.

Many of the frustrations that were expressed during the Feeley review are linked to the resources available to support people at a local level. Difficult decisions have required to be made around eligibility and the way in which services are provided to ensure those with highest level of need receive support and remain safe in their homes or other care settings. Those decisions will still have to be taken by the new CHCBs proposed unless services are fully funded to meet local needs.

In addition, service users and carers can also experience inflexibility in terms of the health services which form part of their care plan. There is no evidence within the Feeley review or the consultation document, that this issue would be addressed through the national care service.

It is agreed that a review of eligibility criteria should be undertaken, with potential to develop national standards and criteria that could be implemented by existing integration authorities. The Council is strongly supportive of improvement work that could support a greater shift towards early intervention. These types of approaches are being developed in Renfrewshire, with very well developed partnership working in place through the Strategic Planning Group to progress specific programmes of work around early years, social isolation and mental health and wellbeing amongst others.

The human rights based approach set out within the consultation document is also welcomed and it is agreed that we should be ambitious about access to services in order to meet a range of needs. However, it is important that proposals in terms of access and eligibility are achievable in practice in order that further frustration and disappointment is not created for local people and carers, if expectations cant be met within the resources available.

Recognising that lower levels of support can be provided within local communities by other groups and organisations, tests of change have been supported through funding from the HSCP. Additional funding could accelerate the progress of this local work.

The consultation also fails to recognise that care and support is not always provided on a voluntary basis, and that statutory intervention undertaken by registered social workers and mental health officers is also a vital component of keeping people safe and well.

The consultation refers to a new approach “ Getting it Right for Everyone” – whereby integration of a wider range of services would support people and families throughout all stages of life. The concept of Getting it Right for Everyone is supported, however there is real concern that transferring the accountability for adult, children’s and criminal justice social work to the new CHCBs will break the vital link that statutory services such as schools, advice and housing services have in supporting individuals and families.

4. Using data to improve outcomes

The Council supports proposals to improve the sharing of information and data as part of assessment and care management arrangements. Sharing data at an aggregate level on outcomes, service requirements and need could be useful in supporting service improvement, and the development of shared information systems would be supported. The consultation does not make it clear how this would be tackled given the variety of different systems that are in place across the country in respect of health and social care services, and it is likely that this would be an extremely lengthy and costly process to achieve at a national level.

Progress in terms of developing shared systems and sharing information has been very challenging over the last decade, with many different views across partner organisations around what is appropriate to share. This is because the sharing of information relates to individual information rather than data, which should only be shared where it is appropriate to do so. Primary legislation would be required to support national data sharing arrangements to operate most effectively.

5. Workforce

Local authority and partner organisation staff working across social care services have been at the heart and on the frontline of the local and national response to the pandemic, ensuring that people and their families receive the care and protection they need in unprecedented circumstances. Council agrees with the consultation that it is vital that the social care workforce is recognised and valued for the contribution that they make to society and to the lives of individuals.

There are high levels of staff turnover and vacancies across many social care roles across all sectors, and the proposed work at a national level to review levels of pay, role standardisation and improved support for workforce training and practice, would be welcomed. This is a key area of collaboration that could be progressed through a national improvement programme, which if prioritised could deliver improved outcomes for the social care workforce much more quickly and sustainably than the proposed national care service.

There is no detail provided in the consultation in relation to the role that a National Care Service would play in terms of addressing workforce challenges. It is important to note that there are examples of national workforce agreements in place across other aspects of public service which do not require to be implemented through a national agency or service eg teachers.

6. National care service / structural change

The Feeley review stated the strong belief that current structures have not fully delivered the improvements intended to be achieved by integration of health and social care and recommended the creation of a National Care Service, with Scottish Ministers being accountable for adult social care support.

At local levels, partners have worked together to implement the complex governance and financial arrangements that underpin integration authorities, including workforce development, management arrangements and planning arrangements. This has been exceptionally challenging and it is recognised that more needs to be done to maximise the potential value of integration and to improve outcomes for people that need to use adult social care services.

It is disappointing that rather than focusing on the actions that can be taken at both a local and national level to improve quality, choice and accessibility, that the proposed solution to improving adult social care rests on further structural integration.

As set out in the overview section of this response, this Council believes that any improvements to adult social care must focus on delivering the outcomes that service users, carers and the social care workforce want to see and not on structural integration. Given the pandemic and the impact on local people and communities, it is more important than ever that partners work at a local levels to make sure people receive the support they need, ensuring that the resources of all partners and sectors are maximised to achieve this. Further structural change will slow this process down, and again take the focus away from people who use social care services.

It must be recognised that structural changes to the delivery of services do not guarantee improvement. Often the decision to change structures results in a deterioration of service quality for a period due to the uncertainty it causes. This cannot be allowed to happen at a time when COVID recovery needs to be the top priority.

Within the Feeley review and the national care service consultation, no alternative options for improving adult social care are provided. A national care service is determined to be the sole option under consideration. There is therefore a missed opportunity to build on the strength of existing partnership and governance arrangements through COVID recovery plans and to implement:

- **Nationally agreed service criteria and assessments**
- **National workforce development arrangements**
- **National frameworks in relation to self directed support and support for carers**
- **National changes to strengthen scrutiny, inspection and learning**

There is also an opportunity at NHS board level, for integration authorities to work closer together to progress data and information sharing agreements and joint commissioning or service provision options. The maturity of the relationships which now exists between Health boards, local authorities and HSCPs is such that these opportunities could be progressed if improvement support was co-ordinated by Scottish Government. A national programme could deliver the outcomes and change required, potentially through some type of formal agreement or concordat. The allocation of funding to deliver on the aspirations and improvements required to the social care system, will be fundamental, whether this is achieved through a national care service or a national improvement programme.

The delivery of social care support is currently the statutory responsibility of local government under the 1968 Social Work (Scotland) Act. The provision of social care works best when it is delivered as part of a wider system of support that can be provided through local authorities and partner organisations, and there a range of different programmes of work that we are progressing in Renfrewshire, such as through our Alcohol and Drugs Programme, which seek to wrap this support around local people, families and carers.

Proposed Scope

The proposals within the consultation, suggest that a range of additional local authority services should be formally transferred to the new Community Health and Social Care boards, with full accountability on the provision of these services to Ministers. Some of the services listed within the consultation document such as alcohol and drug services and mental health services are already delegated to integration authorities, therefore it is unclear why these are being identified within the consultation.

The proposed transfer of children and families and criminal justice to the national care service is not supported by the Council. The Getting it Right for everyone approach and aim to ensure services are joined up and easy to access for children and families is supported, however formally transferring accountability for these services will fracture the link between schools, social work and families and with wider services to support people experience issues in relation to poverty, inequality, housing and homelessness etc. This is a significant concern in light of the pandemic and it is absolutely vital schools and social work services work as closely as possible with partners to support vulnerable families.

The failure to consult on the proposed additional scope of the National Care Service is a concern. There is no evidence provided that the transfer of children and family and criminal justice social work would improve public protection or reduce the rate of re-offending. These types of outcomes should be the driver for any improvements made to services and the way they are delivered, and it is suggested that the inclusion of children and family social work would in particular undermine the vital work being undertaken to raise attainment, tackle inequality and reduce child poverty levels.

At a local and national level, good progress is being made to respond to The Promise, and it would be concerning if the National Care Service and its proposed scope, impacted negatively on the progress being achieved.

In terms of wider policy implications, local authorities have increasingly been focusing on strengthening mechanisms and opportunities for engagement and collaboration with local partners and communities, in response to for example the recommendations of the Christie Commission, recent community empowerment legislation and new policy developments such as 20 minute neighbourhoods. The pandemic has proven that integration at a local level can provide some of the most successful solutions for communities. The move to establish a national care service is in direct opposition to the principles of localism.

7. Governance

Under the proposals set out within the consultation, accountability for the delivery of adult and potential wider aspects of social care would transfer to a national care service. This is the most

significant reform of public services proposed in many years, representing a significant loss of influence at a local level as to how social care is delivered to meet the needs of local people.

IJBs would be reformed into Community Health and Social Care Boards, which would act as local delivery mechanisms for the national care service. A Chief Executive would be appointed for each CHSC Board, with the postholder reporting to the Chief Executive of the National Care service, with accountability to Ministers.

In operational terms, it is inconceivable that the Chief Executive will be able to provide strategic leadership and support to the 32 Chief Executive's of the CHSCBs, and this would therefore greatly limit the ability of the national care service to ensure consistent standards of quality and practice across all CHCBs and services being provided. Local resilience and flexibility to respond would be fractured by the proposed governance arrangements. The resilience that local health boards, local authorities and integration authorities gain from working together was evidenced strongly during the pandemic, and should be seen as a strength to build improvement from, rather than seeing integration as having achieved limited progress.

In terms of democratic accountability, the consultation indicates that elected members would sit on CHCBs but does not provide sufficient detail on the proposed level of representation within a new board with an expanded membership. Whilst the inclusion of greater service user and carer representation within board arrangements is vital, there is also potential for significant erosion of local democratic accountability. The consultation also does not specify whether the Council would retain the right to appoint a Chair to the Board every two years.

Provision of services by the Council

If the legislation removes the statutory role of the council in the provision of social work services as is proposed within the consultation, the Council will no longer have the ability to employ staff to provide those services. Sec 64 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 only allows the Council to appoint such officers as they think necessary for the proper discharge by the authority of their functions. Unless the legislation allows it, the Council cannot employ staff to offer to undertake work which isn't within one of the council's statutory functions.

At various points in both the Feeley review and the consultation document, there is a specific lack of detail on what the role of government will be going forward. At points there is an inference that local government will have no specific role, which raises the assumption that under a new national care service, all employee and financial resources will transfer to the new CHSC Board. In other sections, there is a different position, with a suggestion that CHSC Boards may wish to commission care services from local authorities, who would then become a contracted supplier or provider of a service.

There is a fundamental lack of clarity on these issues within the consultation document which requires to be addressed, given the significant financial and organisational risks which these models would introduce for local authorities.

The consultation document does not address the role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO). The oversight in terms of professional leadership and governance is a key responsibility of the CSWO. At present the CSWO has direct access to the Chief Executive of the local authority and senior elected members as well as to the Chief Officer in the health and social care partnership. The role of CSWO is also a statutory requirement for local government and is a designated proper

officer. The consultation being silent on this role raises questions on the overall governance and leadership of the national care service.

8. Financial implications

The consultation proposes that accountability and resources to deliver adult social care are transferred to the new CHSC Boards. This would represent a transfer of a very significant levels of local government funding, and would involve a very complex process to agree the quantum of funding to be transferred including consideration of TUPE, asset ownership, pension liabilities, VAT issues etc.

The current system has adapted to fit the resources that have been made available to deliver social care services, and is underpinned by assessment and the application of eligibility criteria. Within the Feeley review it is estimated that additional investment of in excess of £600m would be required to meet what is termed as “unmet need”, based on the current range of service offerings. Under the National Care Service proposals, Health and Social Care Partnerships would not have the opportunity to improve service provision and outcomes in light of the significant additional investment that is being proposed in the system. Changes to eligibility and charges, even if nationally directed, could be delivered through current arrangements.

It is important that proposals in terms of access and eligibility are achievable in practice in order that further frustration and disappointment is not created for local people and carers, if this can't be delivered within the resources available.

9. Commissioning

The consultation notes that a shift in commissioning and procurement practice is required across Scotland to support more outcome focused delivery of service and collaboration with suppliers across sectors. Good progress has been made in terms of social care procurement at both a national and local level in recent years, with an increasing focus on service quality and outcomes being delivered through commissioning arrangements, and on the achievement of shared objectives such as the provision of fair work across the social care workforce.

Through Scotland Excel, a range of national contracts and frameworks have been established which secure better outcomes and better value for local residents. The consultation document does not specifically refer to Scotland Excel and the range of national frameworks and contracts that are developed and managed by the organisation on behalf of local authorities. The skills and market knowledge that Scotland Excel offers is not mentioned at all within the consultation and there is little consideration given to the complexity of the social care market, with thousands of providers across Scotland being commissioned to deliver services every year.

The consultation indicates that the national care service would be responsible for the commissioning, procurement and contract management for the most complex services, which in addition to duplicating the role of Scotland Excel, would also lead to a loss of specialist

procurement knowledge and expertise within local authorities to take on roles within the national care service.

10. Regulation and scrutiny

Council agrees that the scrutiny, inspection, and regulation of care services and the workforce should continue be undertaken independently of local authorities and integration authorities, and that these arrangements need to be strengthened to support greater improvement and increased standards of care across local communities.

During the pandemic local authorities and HSCPs have worked very closely with the Care Inspectorate to ensure local people received high levels of care and protection within care settings, and have provided additional support to support providers to make improvements required by the Care Inspectorate. The legal powers of the Care Inspectorate can at times be constrained in terms of taking appropriate enforcement action, and it is important that these powers are reviewed as part of any proposed regulatory reform.

