

Department of Business Operations and Partnerships

Director: Louise Pringle

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Date: 18 October 2024

When calling please ask for: Barry Tudhope (Tel: 0141 577 3023)

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TO: Provost Montague; Deputy Provost Campbell; and Councillors Anderson, Bamforth, Buchanan, Convery, Cunningham, Devlin, Edlin, Ireland, Lunday, Macdonald, McLean, Merrick, Morrison, O'Donnell, Pragnell and Wallace.

MEETING OF EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

A meeting of the East Renfrewshire Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Eastwood Park, Giffnock, G46 6UG on **Wednesday 23 October 2024 at 5.00 p.m.**

The agenda of business is as listed below.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Provost will make a statement that the meeting will be webcast live and recorded for later, publicly accessible archive viewing.

Yours faithfully

Louise Pringle

**LOUISE PRINGLE
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are requested to give notice of any declarations of interest in respect of items of business on the Agenda.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Submit for approval as a correct record and signature the Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on (a) 11 September 2024 and (b) 26 September 2024 (copies attached, pages 5 – 16).

4. MINUTE VOLUME (Issued Under Separate Cover)

Submit for approval as a correct record the Minutes of Meetings for the period 11 September 2024 to 8 October 2024.

5. STATEMENTS BY CONVENERS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

6. PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS

Report by Director of Business Operations and Partnerships (copy attached, pages 17 – 18).

7. ITEMS REMITTED TO THE COUNCIL

(i) Interim (Quarter 1) Treasury Management Report For 2024/25

Report by Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) (copy attached, pages 19 – 32) (Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 26 September 2024).

Audit & Scrutiny Committee Recommendation:

That the organisations for investment of surplus funds be approved in accordance with Appendix 8 to the report.

(ii) General Fund Capital Programme

Report by Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) (copy attached, pages 33 – 38) (Cabinet 3 October 2024).

Cabinet Recommendation:

That Council:

- note and approve the movements within the 2024/25 programme; and
- approve the use of Developer Contributions to fully fund the estimated £0.526m increase in the total budget for the Maidenhill Primary School Extension; and
- note the shortfall of £0.215m and that income and expenditure on the programme will be managed and reported on a regular basis.

(iii) Housing Capital Programme

Report by Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) (copy attached, pages 39 – 44) (Cabinet 3 October 2024).

Cabinet Recommendation:

That Council:

- note and approve the movements within the programme; and
- note the shortfall of £0.101m and that income and expenditure on the programme will be managed and reported on a regular basis.

- 8. THE NEW EAST RENFREWSHIRE PROMISE BOARD AND DELIVERING OUR CORPORATE PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES**
Report by Head of Children's Services and Criminal Justice (copy attached, pages 45 – 60)
- 9. CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**
Report by the Chief Social Work Officer (copy attached, pages 61 – 102).
- 10. BROWN BIN (GARDEN / FOOD WASTE) COLLECTION PROPOSAL** Report
by the Director of Environment (copy attached, pages 103 – 106).
- 11. CHANGES TO ORGANISATIONAL REMITS - ENVIRONMENT**
Report by Director of Business Operations and Partnerships (copy attached, pages 107 – 112).
- 12. ARMED FORCES COVENANT AND SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES**
Report by Director of Business Operations and Partnerships (copy attached, pages 113 – 118).

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

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MINUTE

of

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Minute of meeting held at 5.00pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 11 September 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson	Councillor Chris Lunday
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor David Macdonald*
Councillor Tony Buchanan	Councillor Jim McLean*
Deputy Provost Kate Campbell	Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Angela Convery	Provost Mary Montague
Councillor Betty Cunningham*	Councillor Andrew Morrison
Councillor Danny Devlin*	Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)
Councillor Paul Edlin	Councillor Katie Pragnell
Councillor Annette Ireland	Councillor Gordon Wallace

Provost Montague in the Chair

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Julie Murray, Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP); Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal & Procurement); Andy Corry, Head of Operations (Environment); Jamie Reid, Head of Communities and Transformation; Mark Rogers, Head of Housing and Property; Kirsty Stanners, Head of Finance; Michaela Sullivan, Head of Place; Richard Greenwood, Principal Strategy Officer; Barry Tudhope, Democratic Services Manager; Jennifer Graham, Democratic Services Officer; and Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

(*) indicates remote attendance.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

931. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 26 JUNE 2024

932. The Council considered Minute of the meeting held on 26 June 2024.

Councillor Morrison advised that the item relating to the General Fund Capital Programme in the minute did not reflect answers provided to questions from Members and proposed, seconded by Councillor Wallace, that the minute be amended to reflect these responses. Provost Montague proposed that the minute contained within the minute volume be approved

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but, as no seconder could be found, the motion fell and the amendment was subsequently approved.

Thereafter, the minute was approved subject to the undernoted comments being added:

General Fund Capital Programme (Page 896, item 893 refers) – In response to questions, the Director of Education advised that, in relation to the Crookfur Primary School Extension project, pupil numbers were constantly being monitored and, referring to pupil numbers in P1 for 2024, and the number of 3 and 4 year olds expected to register at the school in the next few years, it was expected that an extension would no longer be required at this stage but would remain in the capital plan for possible future provision. He advised that, should the project be required in future years, he expected the tender process to be completed quickly, as designs for the extension were already in place, with the project thereafter being completed within 12 months. In response to a further question about the Dams to Darnley Country Park project, the Director of Environment confirmed that the roadworks currently underway at Aurs Road, Barrhead should be completed within the original timescale.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

933. The Council considered and approved the Minutes of the meetings of the undernoted:-

- (a) Appointments Committee – 18 June 2024;
- (b) Appeals Committee – 1 August 2024;
- (c) Licensing Committee – 6 August 2024;
- (d) Local Review Body – 7 August 2024;
- (e) Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 8 August 2024;
- (f) Cabinet – 15 August 2024;
- (g) Education Committee – 22 August 2024;
- (h) Licensing Committee – 3 September 2024;
- (i) Cabinet – 5 September 2024;

STATEMENTS BY CONVENERS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT BODIES AND COMMITTEES

934. Two statements had been received and summarised as follows:

- (a) Councillor Anderson – Convener for Education and Equalities

Councillor Anderson advised that the Culture and Leisure Trust had welcomed local school pupils, volunteers and community leaders to the opening of Thornliebank Community Garden at Thornliebank Library. School pupils had submitted design ideas for the garden which included fruit trees; seating areas; planters for fruit and veg; and a bug hotel. This project was part of a wider initiative “The Root Cause Project” which arranged events, programmes and activities to raise awareness of sustainability and green issues at a local level.

He reported that the Culture and Leisure Trust had again delivered successful school summer holiday camps at Barrhead and Williamwood High Schools which included age appropriate outdoor/indoor activities for 5-14 year olds and lunches each day. The Trust had also supported an activity programme at Isobel Mair school during the holiday period which included arts and crafts; parachute games; author events; and sports. He advised that the Leisure Trust would build on the success of the summer programme with a term time out of school activity programme at Isobel Mair school provided by the active schools team.

Councillor Anderson concluded by providing an update on his attendance at the recent Community and Leisure Trust Board meeting when the final accounts for the year had been signed off. He advised that progress in all Trust programmes had been extremely positive with attendance at libraries, gyms, swimming pools, and Eastwood Theatre all reporting a rise on previous years. He wished to commend and thank everyone involved for their achievements.

(b) Councillor Pragnell – Convener for Social Work and Health

Councillor Pragnell reported on the recent meeting of the Integration Joint Board when, amongst other things, members received a presentation on Adult Services; received an updated on financial matters; and were provided with an overview of an Audit Scotland report. The report highlighted local issues and challenges which had previously been discussed at the IJB and it was acknowledged that significant and complex challenges would require all partners to work together collaboratively. An overall projected overspend of £1.241m was expected, although there had been an underspend in social work and social care activities. She advised that a report on changes to community alarm and Bonnyton House charges had been delayed due to the recent Parliamentary General Election and would now be submitted to Cabinet in October. Further updates had also been provided on the Blood and Go Service and on the health and care experience survey results.

PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS

935. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships, providing details of civic engagements attended and civic duties performed by Provost Montague since the meeting on 24 April 2024.

Having heard the Provost thank Councillor Campbell for deputising at some events, the Council noted the report.

FINAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR 2023-24

936. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of 8 August 2024 (Page 906, Item 907 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy seeking approval for the investment of surplus funds to the organisations listed in Appendix 8 to the report.

The report explained that delays impacting on some major projects during the year meant that the council had borrowed less than planned in 2023/24 to support the capital programme. However, as projects would still require to be delivered at some point in the future, the borrowing would be delayed and would not be noted as a saving.

The Council agreed to: -

- (a) note the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2023/24; and
- (b) approve the list of organisations at Appendix 8 for investment of surplus funds.

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STRATEGIC END YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT AND ANNUAL COMMUNITY PLANNING AND FAIRER EAST REN REPORT FOR 2023-24

937. The Council considered a report by the Chief Executive on the performance of the Council and Community Planning Partnership and demonstrating how the Council was meeting its strategic outcomes.

The report summarised the Council's strategic performance at end-year 2023-24 based on performance indicators in the Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) including the annual update on complaints handling; the 2023-24 annual progress report on the Community Plan, including Fairer East Ren; and included a short video of the annual highlights across the Council and Community Planning Partnership.

The Director of Business Operations and Partnerships advised that some of the comments contained in the report had been amended and the updated information had been circulated to members. The amended comments related to quality of life for carers; and reduced care need following reablement/rehabilitation.

In response to questions from members, the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership advised that the numbers relating to the percentage of drug users moving from treatment to recovery were extremely small and even small fluctuations could have a significant impact on the percentages noted. She added that a number of factors had influenced these figures including speed of recovery and ill health; the HSCP hoped to develop a recovery hub in the future; and further information on recovery encouragement could be provided in due course. She advised that completion of Community Payback Order surveys were entirely voluntary, and reasons for non-completion included literacy issues. She added that an action plan to tackle this had been developed.

The Director of Education advised that a decrease in Primary 1 pupils meeting targets had been discussed at the Education Committee as part of an early years report submitted in June 2024 and although no firm explanation for this could be provided, this trend would be monitored closely.

The Head of Operations (Environment) advised that recycling rates had fallen recently as a number of initiatives were no longer being funded and savings had been required in some areas. However, he added that East Renfrewshire continued to be one of the top performing councils in this area.

The Council noted:-

- (a) the summary of the Council's strategic performance at end year 2023/24 and associated comments made;
- (b) the Community Plan and Fairer East Ren Annual Progress Report for 2023-24;
- (c) the complaints handling report 2023-24; and
- (d) the annual highlights video.

LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT: YEAR 6

938. The Council considered a joint report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships and Chief Officer HSCP on the annual East Renfrewshire Local Child Poverty Action Report required under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.

The report provided a summary of progress made in relation to child poverty focussing on critical indicators; income from employment; income from social security; costs of living; and mitigating the impact of poverty. Approaches to tackling family poverty were provided together with action plans and progress measures for 2024-27 including improved understanding of the circumstances of families in, or at risk, of poverty; improved income from employment for parents; enhanced gains for families from income maximisation and social security; and reduced costs of living.

In response to questions, the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships reported that the council continued to assist residents with energy and debt applications, and a fuel/benefits advisor had been appointed until 2025 to give further information on accessing support. She added that a poverty awareness training course had been developed for front line staff and a presentation had also been given to primary and secondary Head Teachers.

The Head of Housing and Property explained that many different types of emergency accommodation were used by the Council, including hotels and B&Bs, but there were rules around how long this type of accommodation could be used for. He added that the council's own stock was also used as temporary accommodation, with families and vulnerable people being prioritised for this type of accommodation. He clarified that families who presented as homeless on an emergency basis could be accommodated in hotels or B&Bs which were not specifically designated for family use, but their stay there would be minimised.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to note the Local Child Poverty Action Report as required under the Child Poverty Act 2017 and associated comments made; and
- (b) to approve the report for publication, subject to IJB and NHSGGC Population Health and Wellbeing Committee approval.

A PLACE TO GROW STRATEGIC VISION AND COMMUNITY PLAN

939. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships on the long-term strategic vision and Community Plan for East Renfrewshire "A Place to Grow".

The report explained that "A Place to Grow" the strategic vision and community plan for East Renfrewshire would be the bedrock of all future planning and partnership work and the interdependent pillars would inform the council's strategic intent and direction for the next 15 years. It was highlighted that the vision would only be achieved through a shared commitment across the Community Planning Partnership and unequivocal cross-party support.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to note the "A Place to Grow" strategic vision;
- (b) to approve the strategic vision as East Renfrewshire's Community Plan, subject to adoption by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board;
- (c) to delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with Council elected members on the CPP Board, to implement any minor changes to the strategic vision to secure adoption by the Board;
- (d) to note the key priorities laid out for each pillar and make a cross-party commitment to deliver these;

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- (e) to note the continued development of the CPP leadership and governance structures to oversee the strategic vision;
- (f) that more detailed three-year delivery plans with measures would be brought to Council for the start of the 2025/26 cycle; and
- (g) to note the ongoing planning work involved in organising a community conference.

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2025

940. The Council considered a report by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships seeking approval of the calendar of Council/committee meetings for 2025.

The Council agreed to:-

- (a) approve the Calendar of Meetings for 2025 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (b) note the provisional dates of meeting of the East Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board.

CAPELRIG HOUSE PROGRAMME UPDATE

941. The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment providing an update on works taking place at Capelrig House and outlining options being explored to utilise the building following completion of improvements and renovations.

The report explained that restorative works had been identified through surveying as being essential to protect Capelrig House. Further information on the renovations and improvements which had taken place were provided, which included ensuring the building remained wind and watertight while conserving the original fabric of the building as much as possible. It was reported that Children First had previously expressed an interest in the building as a "Bairn's Hoose" facility, but they were no longer able to progress with this due to budgetary constraints. Discussions were ongoing regarding how to utilise the space in the future and suggestions included provision of flexible learning spaces; introduction of a social enterprise café; provision of flexible meeting spaces; and storage space for voluntary groups.

In response to questions, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Council was under obligation to ensure that the building was adequately maintained and the contract for external work had come in on budget. He advised that no internal work had yet been carried out as further discussion on possible uses would be required prior to any internal fitting costs being estimated. He added that some community groups had asked previously about using the building as a storage facility and this proposal would form part of the discussions around future use in due course. Community use at evenings and weekends would also be considered as part of the ongoing discussions and option appraisals would be submitted to members in due course.

The Council noted:-

- (a) the improvement and renovation work that had taken place at Capelrig House; and
- (b) the ongoing process to determine a future use for Capelrig House.

OUTLINE OF PRESSURES FACING HOMELESSNESS

942. The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment advising on the challenges and issues facing East Renfrewshire Council Homelessness Services and seeking approval to declare a local housing emergency.

The report explained that East Renfrewshire had received a significant increase in homelessness applications since 2019 which had impacted on demand for services and how they were being delivered. The Scottish Housing Regulator had stated that several Councils in Scotland, including East Renfrewshire, were facing systemic failure of their homelessness services mainly due to the use of hotel accommodation. Further information was provided on the local housing market; data relating to the increase in homelessness; and actions being taken to address increased homelessness including doubling the provision of temporary accommodation; increasing the percentage of lets to homeless households; reviewing existing agreements with local Registered Social Landlords; and reviewing internal processes to focus on a prevention approach.

In response to comments Councillor O'Donnell advised that he had written to the First Minister regarding new measures funding and would share this correspondence with all Members. He added that officers were working extremely hard to deliver a credible action plan relating to homelessness but this issue wouldn't be solved quickly and would require continued lobbying from the Council to address cuts in funding which had impacted on projects being delivered.

The Head of Housing and Property advised that this issue would require more than one solution, and a number of possible options could be considered including using modular units, shipping containers, flatted developments, etc. However, these would always be subject to the necessary consents, warrants and ward member conversations. He added that discussions would continue with local housing providers and to expand mid-market rentals.

The Council agreed:-

- (a) to approve the declaration of a local housing emergency and note the actions being taken to mitigate the impact;
- (b) to approve the use of £1m Capital Reserve to support the costs of developing increased supply of temporary accommodation including the purchase of additional housing units and other measures as set out in the report; and
- (c) that a six month update report be presented to Council on levels of homelessness within East Renfrewshire and measures being put in place to address a local housing emergency.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 3 EVIDENCE REPORT

943. The Council considered a report by the Director of Environment seeking approval to submit the Evidence Report for the next Local Development Plan (LDP3) to Scottish Ministers for the process known as "Gate Check".

The report explained that the first stage in preparing LDP3 was a process of evidence gathering to inform production of an Evidence Report. The Strategic Planning team had worked collaboratively with a range of internal and external stakeholders to prepare the Evidence Report and the topic papers had been open for public consultation between 12th April and 10th May 2024. Disputes over the sufficiency of the evidence related to identification and review of Green Belt boundaries; housing requirements and existing housing need; education analysis and projection methodology; scope for development contributions towards healthcare and infrastructure; and site assessment methodology. The new Gate Check

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process would provide an independent assessment of the evidence and disputes prior to preparation of the new LDP for consultation, examination and adoption.

In response to questions the Head of Place advised that the plan was expected to be adopted by 2027 and any review of school catchment areas as a result of housebuilding would take place between now and the adoption date. The Director of Education added that officers were experienced in dealing with this process, as they had done so previously for St. Clare's and Calderwood Lodge Primary Schools, and would ensure that proper notice was given for any review.

Having heard the Provost, on behalf of the Council, thank all officers for the work which had been put in to producing this report, the Council agreed:-

- (a) to note the findings of the Evidence Report;
- (b) that officers submit the Evidence Report to Scottish Ministers for the Gate Check; and
- (c) to delegate the Director of Environment to approve any minor changes to the Evidence Report, in line with Council policy, prior to submission to Scottish Ministers.

PROVOST

MINUTE

of

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Minute of meeting held at 4.30pm in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 26 September 2024.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson	Councillor Chris Lunday
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Councillor David Macdonald*
Councillor Tony Buchanan	Councillor Jim McLean
Deputy Provost Kate Campbell	Councillor Colm Merrick
Councillor Betty Cunningham*	Provost Mary Montague
Councillor Angela Convery	Councillor Andrew Morrison
Councillor Danny Devlin*	Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)
Councillor Paul Edlin	Councillor Katie Pragnell
Councillor Annette Ireland*	Councillor Gordon Wallace

Provost Montague in the Chair

Attending:

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive; Caitriona McAuley, Director of Environment; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships*; Julie Murray, Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP); Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Gerry Mahon, Chief Officer (Legal & Procurement); Andy Corry, Head of Environment (Operations); Graeme Smith, Communications Manager; Barbara Clark, Chief Accountant; Barry Tudhope, Democratic Services Manager; Linda Hutchison, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

(*) indicates remote attendance.

Also Attending:

Rob Jones, Ernst and Young.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

971. Referring to the forthcoming retirement of the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) and Head of Environment (Operations), Provost Montague confirmed that there would be an opportunity for Elected Members to make remarks to them regarding their service following the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

972. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

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ANNUAL STATEMENT ON ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

973. The Council considered a report by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, providing an annual statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control systems operating within the Council during 2023/24.

Councillor Morrison, Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, referred to the requirement for the Committee to review the control environment and make an annual statement to the Council on its evaluation of internal controls. To assist with that, the Chief Auditor required to provide the Committee with an annual statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control systems operating within the Council, the statement for the year ending 31 March 2024 having been considered by the Committee immediately prior to the Council meeting as an Appendix to the Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24. It concluded that it was the opinion of the Chief Auditor that reasonable assurance could be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of these controls for the year ending 31 March 2024.

The Council agreed to note the annual statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control systems operating within the Council during 2023/24.

2023/24 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE COUNCIL'S CHARITABLE TRUSTS

974. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held earlier that day (Page 950, Item 961 refers), the Council considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) regarding the amalgamated 2023/24 Annual Accounts for the six charitable trusts for which the Council acted as Trustee, and submitting a copy for consideration. A copy of a related Independent Examiner's Report was included.

Councillor Morrison, Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, commented on the Annual Accounts which had been awarded a clean Independent Examiner's Report. He clarified that following a change in Regulations, the charitable trusts' Annual Accounts had been subjected to an independent check by an Internal Auditor in another Council under a reciprocal agreement, rather than a full audit requiring to be carried out by the Council's External Auditor. This had allowed the Council to avoid annual External Audit fees of around £9,000.

In reply to Councillor Pragnell, the Chief Accountant confirmed that, to help raise awareness of the Trusts, information on them was available on the Council's website. Councillor Ireland commented that she had checked but been unable to find information on the Netherlee School 1937 Endowment Trust on the website.

Further in response to Councillor Pragnell, the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) confirmed that arrangements had already been made, in light of her forthcoming retirement, to appoint the Head of Finance as a Trustee to replace her.

Councillor Edlin reported that it had been noted by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee that it would be explored if the Provost's Community Defibrillator Fund could become a Charitable Trust, to allow it to take advantage of tax provisions relating to charities.

The Council:-

- (a) agreed that it be checked if information on the Netherlee School 1937 Endowment Trust remained accessible on the Council's website; and

- (b) otherwise, approved the Annual Accounts.

2023/24 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND DRAFT ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT FOR EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

975. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held earlier that day (Page 950, Item 962 refers), the Committee considered a report by the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) regarding the Annual Accounts for 2023/24; the associated draft Annual Audit Report prepared by the External Auditor which provided an overview of the main issues arising from the 2023/24 audit and would be issued in final form after the financial statements had been certified; and the associated Letter of Representation from the Council to the External Auditor.

The Council had received an audit certificate which was unqualified. It had operated within its operational budget, returning departmental surpluses totalling £6.844m due mainly to various one-off variances, including improved income of £2.5m; a £2.7m recovery from HMRC relating to a successful VAT appeal and various underspends. These had been partly offset by various items, including increased homelessness pressures.

Transfers totalling £6.2m had been made to various specific reserves, with £0.644m retained in the non-earmarked reserve resulting in a closing balance of £7.302m. This equated to 2.3% of the overall net budgeted revenue expenditure which was in accordance with the Council's reserves policy to hold a minimum level of around 2%, the upper target being 4%.

The Council's overall General Fund reserve balances at 31 March 2024 totalled £41.766m, this being a decrease of £10.348m from the previous year, the reasons for which were summarised. In total £34.5m of General Fund reserve balances were earmarked for specific purposes.

Capital expenditure of £46.485m had been invested, and there had been an operating deficit of £146k on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), thus decreasing the accumulated surplus balance to carry forward on that Account to £1.652m.

Finally the report commented on the draft Annual Audit Report which made reference to International Standard of Auditing (ISA) 260 matters to those charged with governance, and the Letter of Representation, copies of both of which were appended to the report.

Councillor Morrison highlighted that an unqualified audit certificate had again been awarded, and was delighted to report that the External Auditors and Council officers had again managed to complete the Annual Accounts exercise in line with the required deadline of 30 September. He emphasised that this was an extremely demanding annual exercise, thanking all those involved in the Accountancy and Valuation Teams, as well as the External Auditors, for this tremendous achievement.

He commented that the Accounts showed that the Council operated within budget, benefitting in particular from increased investment income and a large one-off historic VAT refund, and closely controlled budgets to produce additional flexibility in addressing anticipated budget challenges in 2024/25 and beyond. He also summarised the position regarding reserves and related issues.

Councillor Morrison stated that the Auditors' report was largely positive but, as always, various audit findings had been listed as referred to in Appendix E of the Annual Audit Report which also included an Action Plan completed by Council officers to address all of the points raised.

Councillor O'Donnell, supported by the Provost, echoed the comments made by Councillor Morrison, thanking the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), the Chief Accountant

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and all those involved for completing the Accounts on time, especially given the complexities involved.

The Council agreed to:-

- (a) approved the Council's Annual Accounts for 2023/24, including the Management Commentary, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Policies and Audit Certificate, for signature on behalf of the Council;
- (b) noted the draft 2023/24 Annual Audit Report, including the related Action Plan, the finalised copy of which would be circulated to Elected Members; and
- (c) approved for signature the Letter of Representation to be sent from the Council to Ernst & Young.

CHANGE TO SCHEME OF ADMINISTRATION – LICENSING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

976. The Council considered a report by the Chief Officer (Legal & Procurement), explaining that a member of the Licensing Committee had resigned due to a conflict of interest, and proposing that a new Elected Member be appointed as a replacement. The report also recommended that the Council's Scheme of Administration be changed to provide for an increased membership of the Committee from 5 to 7 Elected Members. This was to ensure that business it required to transact was not disrupted due to the unexpected absence or unavailability of Members.

It was clarified that training on relevant licensing matters would be provided to all those newly appointed to the Committee to ensure they had the relevant knowledge required prior to sitting on it. It was also confirmed that members of the Committee were, by implication, members of the Licensing Board, and that newly appointed members of the Board were expected to undertake duties in that capacity having passed an examination administered by Alcohol Focus Scotland.

The Council:-

- (a) agreed to amend Paragraph 2 of the Scheme of Administration to change the membership of the Licensing Committee from "5 Elected Members" to "7 Elected Members"; and
- (b) approved the appointment of Councillors Campbell, Merrick and Lundy as further members of the Committee.

PROVOST

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

23 October 2024

Report by Director of Business Operations and Partnerships

PROVOST'S ENGAGEMENTS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To advise the Council of the civic engagements carried out by Provost Montague since the meeting of the Council on 11 September 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

2. It is recommended that the Council notes the report.

REPORT

3. Since the Council meeting on 11 September 2024, Provost Montague has carried out the civic engagements as listed below:-

- 22 September Attended Mother Earth Hindu Temple Glasgow's Green Consumer Day Celebration, Newton Mearns
- 24 September Photographed with constituents relating to Jewish New Year, Council Headquarters
- 25 September Attended a preview of "Surviving October 7th - We will Dance Again", Clarkston
- 27 September Attended a Macmillan Coffee Morning, Barrhead
- 28 September Attended 25th Anniversary of the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh
- 28 September Attended IncludeMe2 15th Anniversary Gala Ball and Awards Night, Glasgow
- 5 October Attended Garba Event, Clarkston
- 7 October Attended "Remembering October 7th" Event, Giffnock
- 16 October Hosted a Citizenship Ceremony, Council Headquarters
- 18 October Attended a Health and Social Care Partnership Family Fun Day, Barrhead
- 22 October Attended Restart a Heart, Barrhead Community Fire Station
- 22 October Attended Restart a Heart, Clarkston Community Fire Station

RECOMMENDATION

4. It is recommended that the Council notes the report.

Louise Pringle
Director of Business Operations and Partnerships

Report Author

Linda Hutchison, Senior Democratic Services Officer (Tel 0141 577 8388)

E-mail linda.hutchison@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Background papers - None

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 September 2024

Report by Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer)

INTERIM (QUARTER 1) TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR 2024/25

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To advise the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on the Treasury Management activities for the Quarter ending 30 June 2024. The figures reported below may be subject to change during the current audit process.

RECOMMENDATION

2. It is recommended that the Committee: -
- a) note the Interim Treasury Management Report for Quarter 1 2024/25; and
 - b) recommend to the Council that the attached organisations for investment of surplus funds be approved.

BACKGROUND

3. In line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Audit & Scrutiny Committee is responsible for ensuring effective inspection of treasury management activities and this report is submitted in accordance with this requirement.

SUMMARY

4. Overall the report demonstrates a well-managed treasury function within the Council. The average interest rate on long-term borrowing has remained the same from that reported in August. The Council continues to adopt a prudent approach to treasury management and in particular 7.38% of loans held as at 30 June 2024 had variable interest rates, which is well below the Council's approved upper limit of 15%. The resulting stability in borrowing assists the Council in responding to the current national economic pressures.

RECOMMENDATION

5. It is recommended that the Committee: -
- a) note the Interim Treasury Management Report for Quarter 1 2024/25; and
 - b) recommend to the Council that the attached organisations for investment of surplus funds be approved.

REPORT AUTHOR

Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer): Margaret McCrossan

Chief Accountant: Barbara Clark

Telephone Number: 0141 577 3068

E-mail: barbara.clark@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Report Date: 4 September 2024

INTERIM TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT QUARTER 1 2024/25

Table 1

1. Actual External Debt

	Borrowing 01/04/24 £M	Average Interest %	Borrowing 30/06/24 £M	Average Interest %	Change in year £M
<u>Long Term Borrowing</u>					
Public Works Loan Board	112.49	3.29	112.49	3.29	0.00
Local Authority Bonds	14.40	4.60	14.40	4.60	0.00
PFI / PPP Finance Leases	68.13	7.17	68.13	7.17	0.00
Total Long Term	195.02	4.74	195.02	4.74	0.00
<u>Short Term Investments</u>					
Temporary Investments	(25.74)	5.28	(27.01)	5.42	(1.27)

NOTES

- (i) For the purposes of this report long-term borrowing means loans taken on a long-term basis. This differs from the Annual Accounts, which have to categorise long-term loans with less than a year until repayment as short-term loans. Loans above totalling £0.003 million come into this category.
- (ii) The Treasury Strategy approved by the Council on 28th February 2024, ratified external borrowing of £62m from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) to be undertaken. However at present no new borrowing has been undertaken due to a recommendation by the Head of Accountancy to defer long term borrowing, where possible, until the current high interest rates come down. During the quarter there were no loan repayments.
- (iii) There has been no change to the average interest rate on long-term borrowing from that reported previously.
- (iv) The Council's net external borrowing position has decreased in total by £1.27 million during the quarter due to both revenue and capital cash flows.
- (v) The Council's activity in the temporary investments market is shown along with the corresponding interest rate movements in Appendices 2 – 5. In response to difficulties in the financial markets and as part of a risk managed process designed to protect the principal of the sums invested, the maximum period of investment was restricted to 6 months.
- (vi) At 30 June 2024, the Council had 7.38% of its total debt outstanding in variable rate loans. For the Council to gain a high level of stability in overall borrowing costs the Council's Treasury Policy Statement requires the exposure to variable rate loans to be less than 15% of the total debt outstanding.
- (vii) Appendix 6 shows the Bank of England MPC base rate covering the period April 2022 to the date of this report.

2. PWLB

The primary source of medium/long term borrowing is from the UK Government through the PWLB. The PWLB provides loans to local authorities at rates, which are in general more attractive than loans available from other sources.

3. DEBT MATURITY PROFILE

The Council's debt maturity profile at 30 June 2024 is shown both below and in Graph format at Appendix 7.

It is a requirement of the Council's Treasury Policy Statement that the maximum amount of long-term debt maturing in any one year should be no more than 15% of the Council's long-term debt outstanding, at the time of borrowing.

The Council's Debt Maturity Profile as at 30 June 2024 was within the agreed limits.

Long Term Debt Maturity Profile as at 30 June 2024

	PWLB £M	Local Authority Bond £M	Total £M	%
24/25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
25/26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
26/27	5.01	0.00	5.01	3.95
27/28	2.01	0.00	2.01	1.58
28/29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
29/30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
30/31	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
31/32	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
32/33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
33/34	0.00			
After 2034/35	105.47	14.40	119.87	94.47
Total	112.49	14.40	126.89	100.00

4. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

In line with the agreed monitoring arrangements for the Prudential Indicators, listed below there is a table showing all the prudential indicators comparing the approved indicator, as reported to the Council on 28 February 2024 along with the actual figures recorded at 30 June 2024, demonstrating that the Council is operating well within the limits set.

Prudential Indicator	Approved indicator	Actual	COMMENT
1. Capital Expenditure	£75,740,000	£77,738,000	Movement from the approved indicator is due to the revised planning of capital projects within both the Housing and General Fund Capital Programmes. In particular the acceleration of affordable house acquisition has resulted in an increase in the projected capital expenditure within Housing.

2. Capital Financing Requirement	£312,313,000	£296,331,000	Movement from the approved indicator is due to a reduction in net capital expenditure in both previous and current years.
3. Operational Boundary for External Debt	£317,144,000	£301,163,000	Movement is due to a reduction in permitted borrowing from that approved due to a reduction in capital spend in both the previous and current year.
4. Authorised Limit For External Debt	£354,496,000	£336,116,000	In addition to the variance explanation for the Operational Boundary for External Debt above, the Authorised limit for External Debt also includes a further allowance to cover any unexpected temporary movements.
5. Gross Debt	£262,188,000	£237,688,000	Movement is due to the re-profile of capital expenditure to future years and to deferral of borrowing, if possible, until rates come down.
6. Gross Borrowing to CFR (Under)/Over	(£50,125,000)	(£58,643,000)	Movement is due to a reduced net borrowing requirement as a result of a reduction in net capital expenditure in both previous and current years.
7. Financing to Net Revenue Stream Non – HRA HRA	6.3% 35.1%	5.9% 35.0%	Movements from the approved indicator relates to variations in financing costs, as well as movements in revenue funding.
8. HRA - Ratio of Debt to Revenue	334.8%	324.0%	The movement from the approved indicator relates to a reduction in debt and revenue funding
9. HRA – Debt Per Dwelling £	16,891	16,575	The movement from the approved indicator relates to a reduction in debt and a reduction in the number of dwellings.
10. Code of Practice For Treasury Management	The Council has adopted the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes	All of the approved activities within the Council Treasury Management Policy Statement have been complied with.	

The movement between the Capital Financing Requirement and the Gross Debt indicates the amount of internal borrowing required. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement), has not been fully funded by external loan debt as the cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This

strategy remains both prudent and cost effective as borrowing costs are currently relatively high and the Head of Accountancy has requested that borrowing, where possible, is not undertaken until interest rates come down from their current level.

	Approved Indicator	Actual
Capital Financing Requirement	£312,313,000	£296,331,000
Gross Debt	£262,188,000	£237,688,000
Internal Borrowing Required	£50,125,000	£58,643,000

5. DEBT PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

The Treasury Strategy set out the following debt performance indicators

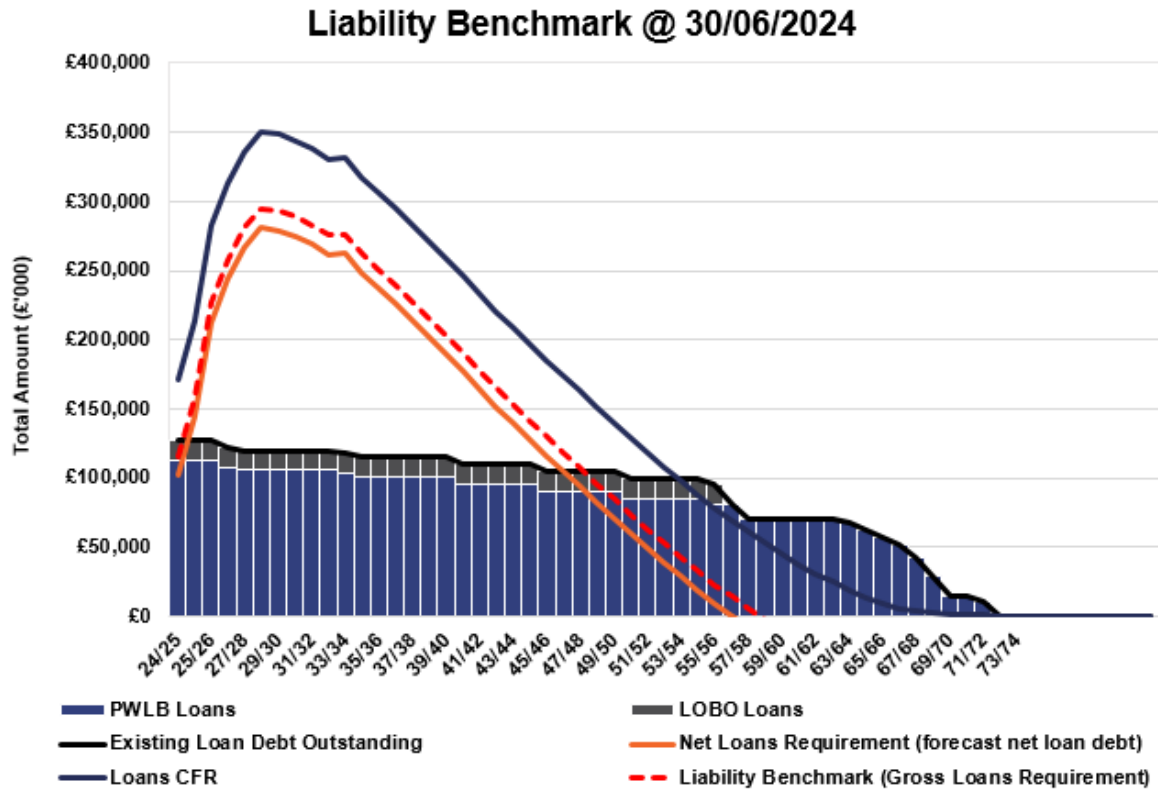
- i) Average "pool rate" compared to Scottish average:
This information is only available after the year end.

6. LIABILITY BENCHMARK

The Council is required to estimate and measure the LB for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years, as a minimum. It is a projection of the amount of loan debt outstanding that the Council needs to fund its existing debt liabilities, planned prudential borrowing and other cashflows.

There are four components to the LB: -

1. **Existing loan debt outstanding:** the Authority's existing loans that are still outstanding in future years.
2. **Loans CFR:** this is calculated in accordance with the loans CFR definition in the Prudential Code and projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing and planned Loans Fund principal repayments.
3. **Net loans requirement:** this shows the Authority's gross loan debt less treasury management investments at the last financial year-end, projected into the future and based on its approved prudential borrowing, planned Loans Fund principal repayments and any other major cash flows forecast.
4. **Liability benchmark** (or gross loans requirement): this equals net loans requirement plus short-term liquidity allowance.



7. APPROVED ORGANISATIONS FOR INVESTMENT

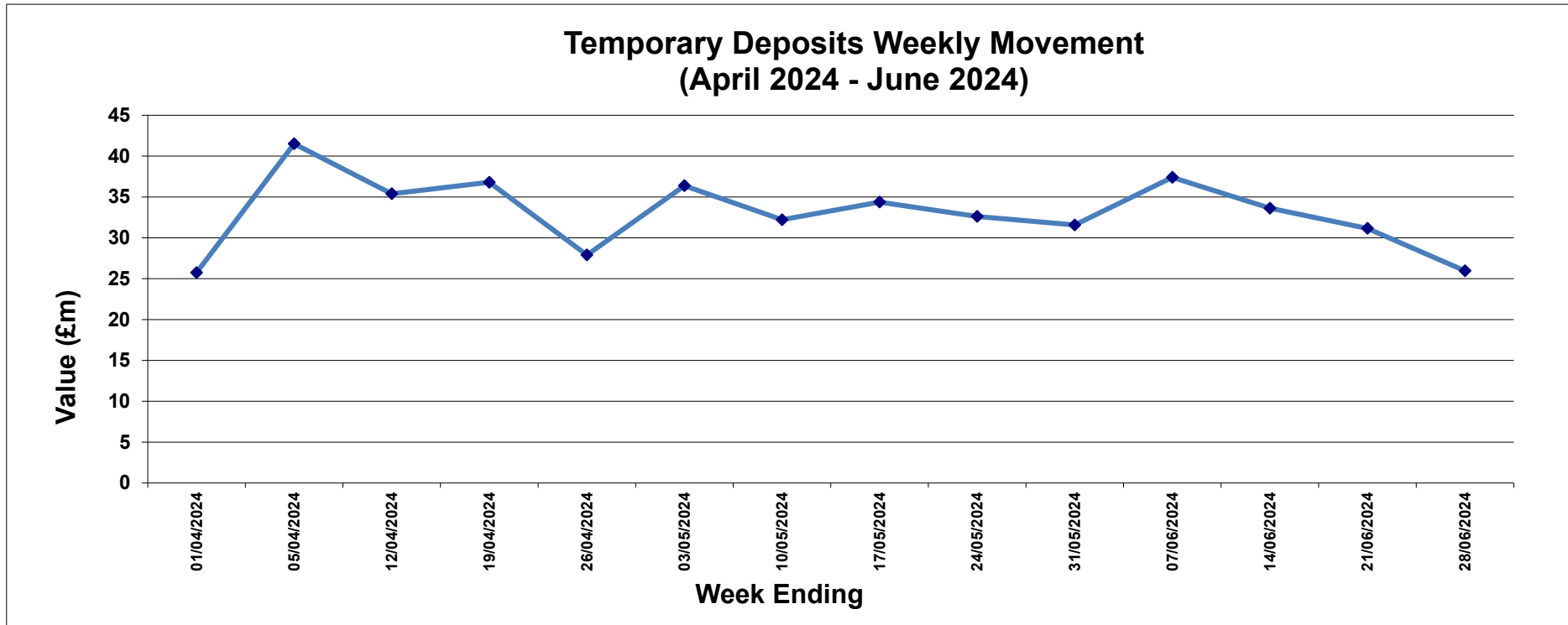
In line with normal practice the status of all Banks and Building Societies has been reviewed in order to amend the current list of approved organisations for investment (see appendix 8). No changes have been made to the list since last reported on 8 August 2024. All lending is in line with the permitted methods of investment which were approved by Council on 28 February 2024 as part of the Treasury Management Strategy report.

As a result of the banking crisis and in line with prudent financial management, investments have been restricted to UK organisations with high credit ratings. Also, the maximum period of investment was restricted to 6 months, in line with advice from our Treasury Advisers, Link Asset Services. These measures have been taken as part of a risk managed process designed to protect the principal of the sums invested.

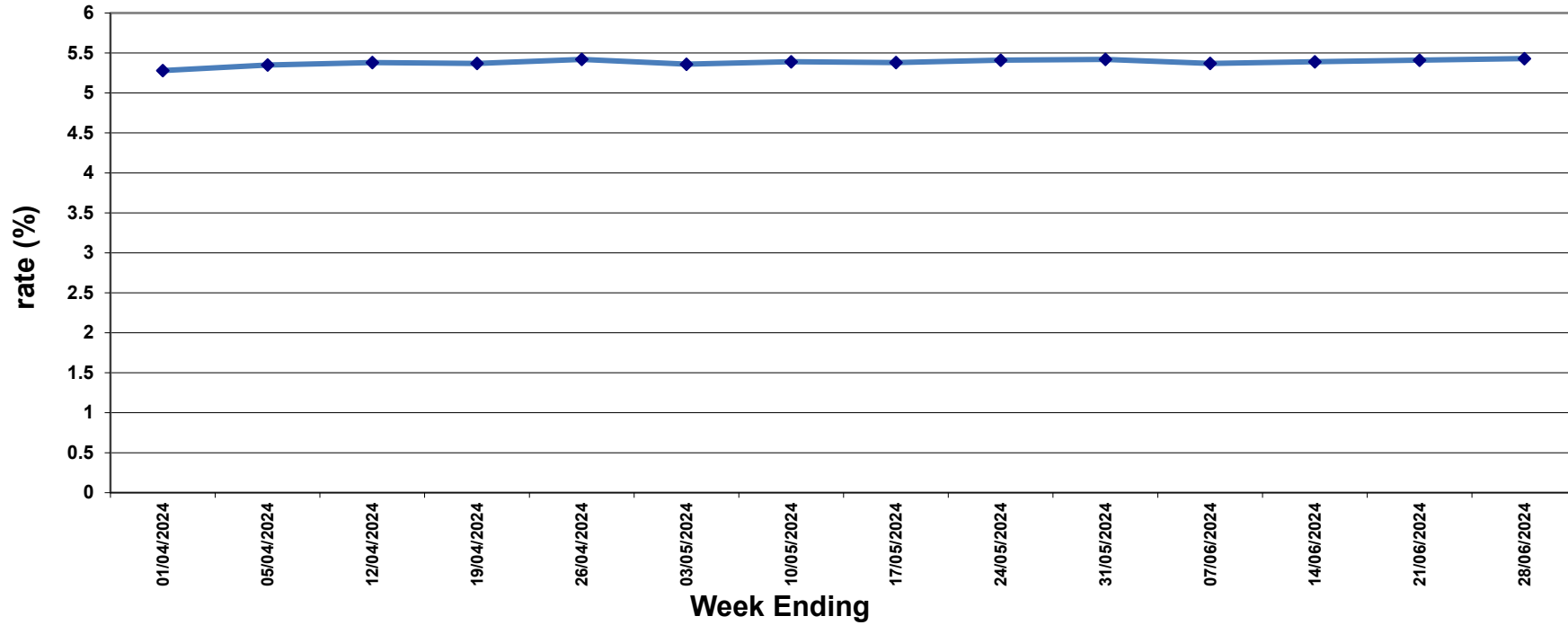
Credit ratings of organisations on the counter-party list are subject to continuous monitoring and review to ensure that subject to available professional advice, approved organisations remain sound for investment purposes.

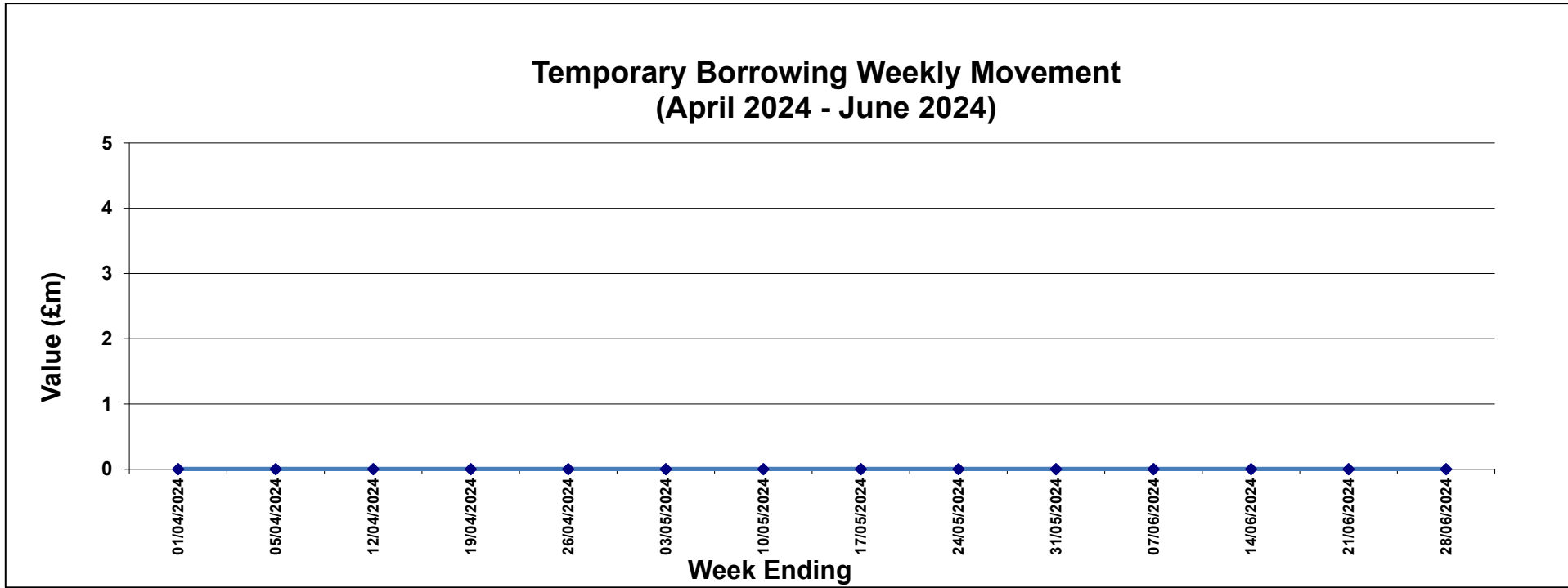
8. TREASURY MANAGEMENT RISK

Within the Operational Risk Register for Accountancy Services there is a risk listed that highlights the difficulty in obtaining sufficient institutions, that meet the Council's criteria, to invest surplus funds with. To minimise this risk the Council has six Money Market Funds which provide highly diversified investments.

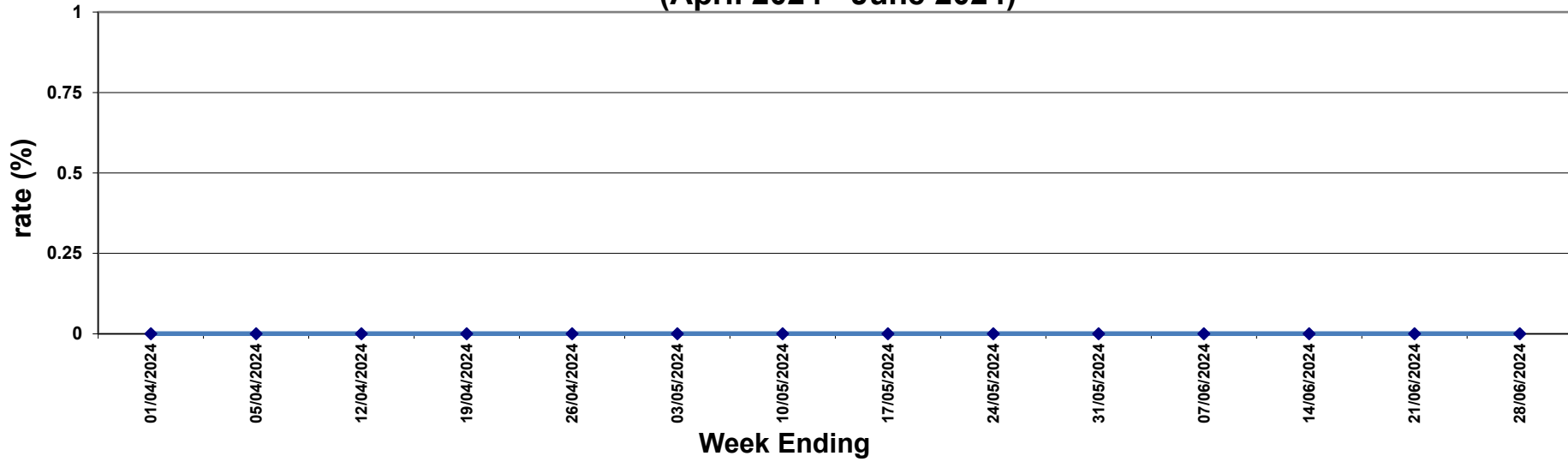


Temporary Deposit Interest Rate Movements (April 2024 - June 2024)

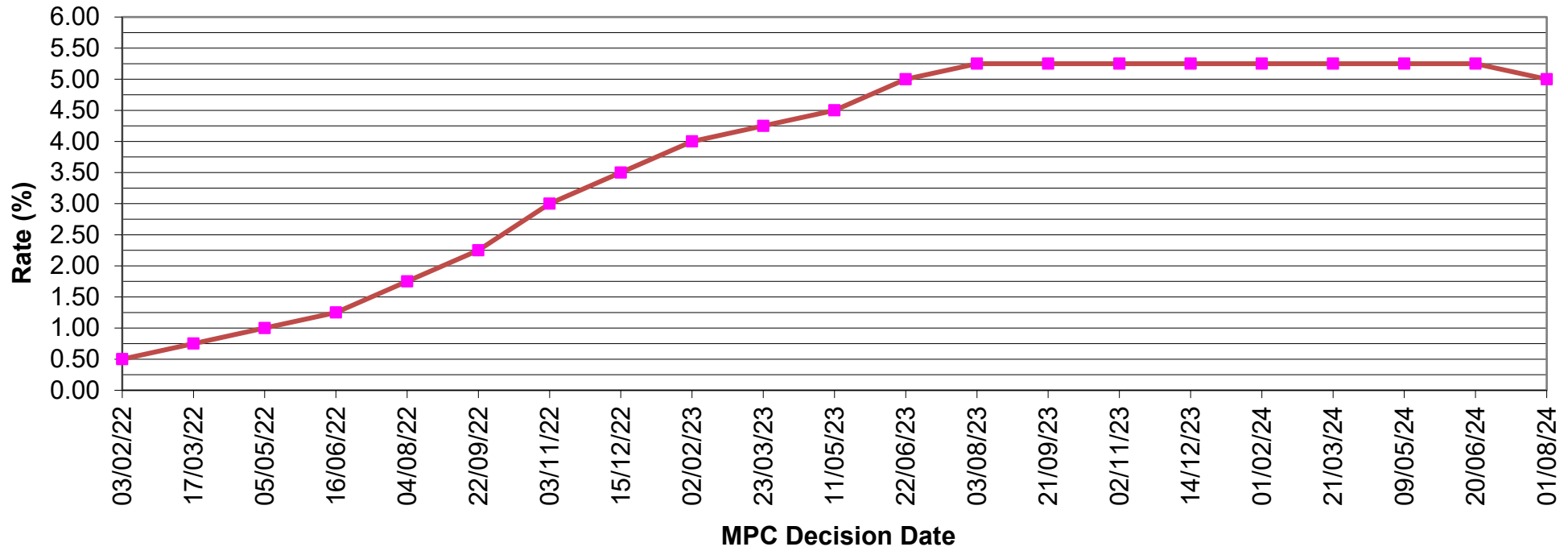




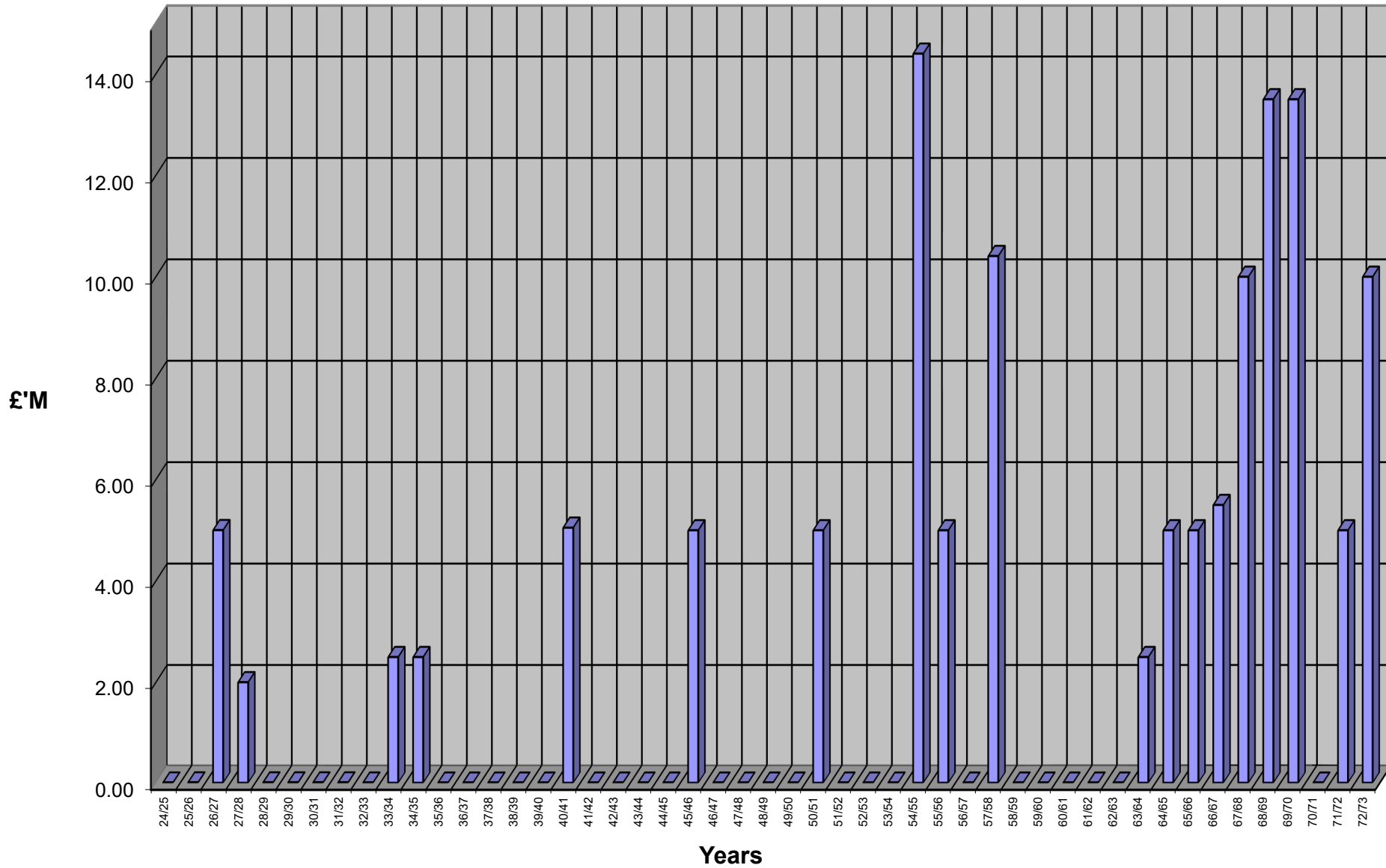
Temporary Borrowing Interest Rate Movements (April 2024 - June 2024)



Bank of England Base Rate Movements (April 2022 to August 2024)



Long Term Debt Maturity Profile as at 30/06/2024



EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

ORGANISATIONS APPROVED FOR THE INVESTMENT OF SURPLUS FUNDS
Limits

Banking Group	Individual Counterparty	Deposit	Transaction
Bank of England	Debt Management Office	£30m	£10m
	UK Treasury Bills	£5m	£5m
Barclays Banking Group	Barclays Bank plc	£5m	£5m
Goldman Sachs International Bank		£10m	£10m
Lloyds Banking Group:	Bank of Scotland plc	£5m	£5m
	Lloyds Bank Corporate Mkt (NRF)	£5m	£5m
Royal Bank of Scotland Group:	Royal Bank of Scotland plc	} £5m	£5m
	National Westminster Bank		
Santander Group	Santander UK plc	£10m	£10m
Standard Chartered Bank		£10m	£10m
Clydesdale Bank		£5m	£5m
Building Societies			
Nationwide		£10m	£10m
Local Authorities			
All Local Authorities including Police & Fire		£5m	£5m
Money Market Funds and Ultra-Short Dated Bond funds			
Maximum limit of £10m per fund		£60m	£10m

Credit Ratings

	Fitch		Moody's		S&P	
	LT	ST	LT	ST	LT	ST
Minimum Criteria (unless Government backed) (please note credit ratings are not the sole method of selecting counterparty)	A-	F1	A3	P-1/P-2	A	A-1/A-2

Limit

Investment of surplus funds is permitted in each of the above organisations, limits can only be exceeded or another organisation approved with written permission of the Chief Financial Officer.

Deposit Periods

The maximum period for any deposit is based on the Link Asset Services suggested Duration matrix with a maximum of 6 months. These limits can only be exceeded with the written permission of the Chief Financial Officer.

Hub scheme deposit periods are dependent on the lifetime of the associated scheme.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Cabinet

3 October 2024

Report by the Chief Financial Officer

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to monitor both income and expenditure as at 30 June 2024 against the approved General Fund Capital Programme and to recommend adjustments where possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Cabinet is asked to recommend that Council:
 - note and approve the movements within the 2024/25 programme; and
 - approve the use of Developer Contributions to fully fund the estimated £0.526m increase in the total budget for the Maidenhill Primary School Extension; and
 - note the shortfall of £0.215m and that income and expenditure on the programme will be managed and reported on a regular basis.

BACKGROUND

3. The General Fund Capital Programme for 2024-2034 was approved by Council on 28 February 2024.
4. Movements on the 2024/25 programme were approved by Council on 26 June 2024, including a number of changes resulting from the finalisation of the outturn position for the previous financial year.
5. This report updates project costs and phasings based on progress to date and anticipated to 31 March 2025.
6. The programme is being constantly monitored to ensure any additional cost pressures on key projects can be covered by deferring or reducing other projects to compensate. Where there is general provision for regular capital expenditure (such as on ICT, Roads, or Schools Major Works) officers are expected to prioritise spend on such schemes to remain within the budgeted level. It is recognised that this may mean that fewer such schemes will progress in the year.

CURRENT POSITION

7.	Total anticipated expenditure (Appendix A)	£53.468m
	Total anticipated resources (Appendix B)	<u>£53.253m</u>
	Shortfall	<u>£ 0.215m</u>

INCOME MOVEMENTS

8. The main income movements are as follows: -

- **Borrowing**
Since the last monitoring report submitted to Council on 26 June 2024, borrowing has been reduced by £1.725m due to timing variances in expenditure and other adjustments noted below.
- **Capital Reserve**
On 11 September 2024, Council approved the use of £1.000m from the Capital Reserve to support the costs of developing increased supply of temporary accommodation units. The income and corresponding expenditure have been added to the programme.
- **Grant - Active Travel Infrastructure Fund**
Tier 1 grant funding of £0.672m has been confirmed by Transport Scotland and has been added to the programme. This fund replaces the Cycling Walking Safer Routes (CWSR) grant awarded in previous years.
- **Grant - Road Safety Improvement Fund**
Grant of £0.129m has been secured from the Scottish Government to further support road safety measures. The income and corresponding expenditure have been added to the programme.
- **Grant – Placed Based Improvement Programme**
The Scottish Government has suspended current year funding for this initiative. The grant income available during the current year has been reduced by £0.385m. This issue is the subject of a separate report to this Cabinet meeting.
- **Developer Contributions**
On 15th August 2024, Cabinet approved the installation of a hard games court at Crookfur Primary School and the provision of additional dining facilities at Eastwood High School. Both projects are funded by Developer Contributions, which have been received. In line with this decision, the drawdown of Developer Contributions to support the programme in the current year has been increased by £0.260m.

EXPENDITURE MOVEMENTS

9. The estimated expenditure has reduced by £0.039m below the level reported to Council on 26 June 2024. The main expenditure movements are as follows:

Property, Schools

- **Mearns Castle High School Extension**
This is a large project which will span a number of years covering internal alterations to the existing building, as well as an extension. Work in the current year is limited to the internal alterations and fees on the extension work. Based on the latest information, expenditure in the current year has been reduced by £0.150m. The total cost remains unchanged.
- **Maidenhill Primary School Extension**
This project is progressing through the various design stages. Based on latest information, the estimated total cost of the project has been increased by £0.526m. The increased cost will be fully funded by Developer Contributions. Estimated expenditure in the current year is unchanged.
- **Crookfur Primary School Games Area**
On 15 August 2024, Cabinet approved a hard games court at the school which will be fully funded from Developer Contributions already received. In line with this decision, expenditure of £0.180m has been added to the programme.
- **Eastwood High School Dining Area**
On 15 August 2024, Cabinet approved additional dining provision at the school which will be fully funded from Developer Contributions already received. In line with this decision, a total expenditure provision of £0.600m has been added to the programme. Estimated expenditure in the current year is £0.080m.

Property, Culture & Leisure

- **Eastwood Park Leisure**
Within the monitoring report submitted to Council on 26 June, 2024, the projected outturn for this project was reduced by £2.666m. Based on the information available, the projected outturn has been reassessed and revised to £1.810m, an increase of £0.310m. The revised forecast remains lower than the original approved budget for the current year of £4.166m and the total cost remains unchanged.

Property, Other

- **Purchase of Additional Housing Units (Homelessness)**
As noted in paragraph 8 of this report, expenditure of £1.000m for this project was approved by Council on 11 September 2024. This will be funded from the Capital Reserve. The income and expenditure have been added to the programme in the current year.
- **Property Maintenance – Ventilation Works**
In order to minimise disruption to the Education service, this work needs to be rescheduled around the school term. While a number of projects will be progressed this year, future contracts will, in the main, be deferred to next year. As such, costs in the current year have been reduced by £1.000m. Total costs remain unchanged.

- Thornliebank Depot Sub Station
Expenditure in the current year is likely to be limited to preliminary and survey works, with the main installation works deferred to next year. Expenditure in the current year has been reduced by £0.375m.

Open Spaces

- Place Based Investment Programme
As outlined in paragraph 8 of this report, the Scottish Government has suspended current year funding for this initiative. Consequently, projected expenditure in the current year has been reduced by £0.385m.
- Artificial Pitch Improvements
Two large schemes at Eastwood and St Luke's High Schools have been delivered this year. These schemes were originally planned for 2023/24 but deferred in light of the constraints of the revised annual budget (now £0.400m per annum). Unused budgets in previous years have been combined with the current provision to progress this work. Planned expenditure in the current year has been reduced by £0.383m and this will be carried forward to assist with next year's schemes.

Roads

- Road Safety Improvement Funds
As outlined in paragraph 8 of this report, new funding of £0.129m has been secured to support road safety measures in the area. A corresponding expenditure provision has been added to the programme.
- Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (formerly Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets)
As noted in paragraph 8 of this report, grant funding of £0.672m has been awarded as part of the general capital grant. A corresponding expenditure provision has been added to the programme.

Council Wide ICT

- IT General Provision
The migration to the new Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN2) is scheduled to start during February 2025 and continue into the next financial year. The revised provision reflects both this timescale and the estimated IT work plan for the year ahead. Expenditure in the current year has been reduced by £0.200m. This provision will be required during 2025/26 to fund the works on the SWAN2 project.

Fleet

- Education Vehicles
Following a review of the condition and age of the current vehicles, and taking into account service requirements, two further buses have been ordered. Delivery is expected this financial year and projected expenditure has been increased by £0.127m. The revised level of expenditure during the current year is within the original approved estimate and the total cost remains unchanged.

COMMENT

10. The projected shortfall of £0.215m represents 0.4% of the resources available and is within manageable limits.
11. The projected expenditure figure of £53.468m significantly exceeds the actual outturn achieved during the previous financial year (£42.446m). A number of projects are scheduled to start on site later this financial year and the actual expenditure is dependent on the completion of the procurement process and the progress achieved by the successful contractors, which itself may be impacted by weather conditions. The projected outturn of £53.468m is an ambitious target given the programme is being managed by a similarly constrained level of staff resource as in previous years. Also, recent experience of tender returns has necessitated several re-tendering exercises and review of scheme designs. Consequently, further reductions in the projected outturn are possible as the year progresses and more clarity is provided on individual projects.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

12. This report has been prepared following consultation with appropriate staff from various departments within the Council, including Property and Technical Services and Information Technology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The Cabinet is asked to recommend that Council:
 - note and approve the movements within the 2024/25 programme; and
 - approve the use of Developer Contributions to fully fund the estimated £0.526m increase in the total budget for the Maidenhill Primary School Extension; and
 - note the shortfall of £0.215m and that income and expenditure on the programme will be managed and reported on a regular basis.

Further information is available from Paul Parsons, Principal Accountant – Capital, telephone 07741 701 451.

Kirsty Stanners
Head of Finance
KS/PP
16 October, 2024

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMMEPROGRESS REPORT2024/2025

	ANNUAL COSTS £'000			TOTAL COST £'000		
	CURRENT YEAR APPROVED COUNCIL 26.06.24	PROJECTED OUTTURN FOR CURRENT YEAR	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE TO 30 JUNE 2024	SPENT PRIOR TO 31.03.24	PREVIOUS TOTAL COST	REVISED TOTAL COST
Property - Schools	9,779	9,889	716	69,948	91,655	92,961
Property - Culture & Leisure	2,217	2,527	777	5,208	76,673	76,673
Property - Other	8,645	8,330	1,301	13,922	44,432	45,432
Open Spaces	4,011	3,265	105	8,050	13,907	13,929
Roads	20,997	21,754	3,481	6,016	28,687	29,488
Corporate Wide - ICT	5,379	5,139	736	6,909	13,104	13,104
Fleet	2,479	2,564	0	10	3,270	3,270
TOTAL	53,507	53,468	7,116	110,063	271,728	274,857

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Cabinet

3 October 2024

Report by the Chief Financial Officer and Director of Environment

HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to monitor both income and expenditure as at 30 June 2024 against the approved Housing Capital Programme and to recommend adjustments where required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Cabinet is asked to recommend that Council:
 - note and approve the movements within the programme; and
 - note the shortfall of £0.101m and that income and expenditure on the programme will be managed and reported on a regular basis.

BACKGROUND

3. The Housing Capital Programme for 2024-2034 was approved by Council on 28 February 2024.
4. Movements on the 2024/25 programme were approved by Council on 26 June 2024, including a number of changes resulting from the finalisation of the outturn position for the previous financial year.
5. This report updates project costs and phasings based on progress to date and anticipated to 31 March 2025.
6. The programme is being constantly monitored to ensure any additional cost pressures on key projects can be covered by deferring or reducing other projects to compensate.

CURRENT POSITION

7. Total anticipated expenditure (Appendix A)	£ 24.189m
Total anticipated resources (Appendix B)	£ <u>24.088m</u>
Shortfall	£ <u>0.101m</u>

EXPENDITURE

8. The estimated expenditure has reduced by £0.042m below the level reported to Council on 26 June 2024.

9. The expenditure reduction relates solely to the rewiring works. This project covers a range of electrical works including electrical installation condition reports. The progress on this aspect of the works has been unsatisfactory and the current contract is now subject to review. Expenditure in the current year has been reduced by £0.042m.

INCOME

10. There has been no adjustment to resources supporting the capital programme since the monitoring position was reported to Council on 26 June 2024.

COMMENT

11. The projected shortfall of £0.101m represents 0.4% of the resources available and is within manageable limits.
12. While the reduction in the projected expenditure has only reduced by 0.2% from the previous reported position, a number of projects have been subject to significant cost increases. These projects include external structural works and bathrooms. Consequently, progress on these projects has been limited while the revised costs were investigated, scope of works reduced or where possible revised procurement arrangements implemented. Despite this delay, the projects are anticipated to be completed before the end of the financial year.
13. The purchase of the 105 new build units at the Maidenhill site commenced during July 2024. As at the end of August, 21 properties have been purchased with the remaining 84 properties to be purchased in phased handovers this financial year.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

14. This report has been prepared following consultation with appropriate staff from Housing Services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. The Cabinet is asked to recommend that Council:
 - note and approve the movements within the programme; and
 - note the shortfall of £0.101m and that income and expenditure on the programme will be managed and reported on a regular basis.

Further information is available from Paul Parsons, Principal Accountant – Capital, telephone 07741 701 451.

Kirsty Stanners
Head of Finance
KS/PP
16 October, 2024

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME****PROGRESS REPORT****2024/25**

COST CODE	PROJECT NAME	ANNUAL COSTS £'000			COMMENT	TOTAL COST £'000		
		CURRENT YEAR APPROVED 26.06.24	PROJECTED OUTTURN FOR CURRENT YEAR	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE TO 30 JUNE 2024		SPENT PRIOR TO 31.03.23	PREVIOUS TOTAL COST	REVISED TOTAL COST
835000002	Renewal of Heating Systems	300	300	21	Work in progress	0	300	300
832000001	Rewiring (including smoke/carbon monoxide detectors)	342	300	28	Work in progress	0	342	342
831000002	External Structural Works	1,000	1,000	148	Main works programmed	0	1,000	1,000
835000008	Estate Works	100	100		Works as required	0	100	100
835000006	Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing	125	125	3	Works to be programmed	0	125	125
835000010	Aids and Adaptations	350	350	34	Work in progress	0	350	350
831500001	Internal Element Renewals (including kitchens, bathrooms and doors)	1,250	1,250	200	Work in progress	0	1,250	1,250
835000005	Communal Door Entry Systems	150	150		Work to be programmed	137	287	287
835000012	Sheltered Housing	634	634	101	Work in progress	168	1,702	1,702
830500003	Purchase of Property (CPO/Mortgage to Rent Acquisition)	50	50		Work to be programmed	0	50	50
835000003	IT Systems	170	170	2	Work to be programmed	0	170	170

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILHOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMMEPROGRESS REPORT2024/25

COST CODE	PROJECT NAME	ANNUAL COSTS £'000			COMMENT	TOTAL COST £'000		
		CURRENT YEAR APPROVED 26.06.24	PROJECTED OUTTURN FOR CURRENT YEAR	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE TO 30 JUNE 2024		SPENT PRIOR TO 31.03.23	PREVIOUS TOTAL COST	REVISED TOTAL COST
	Maidenhill Areas A1-A3 (Estimate 105 units)	19,337	19,337		In progress		19,337	19,337
	Site Investigations	413	413		Work in progress	0	413	413
N/A	Retentions	10	10			0	10	10
		24,231	24,189	537		305	25,436	25,436

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILHOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25PROGRESS REPORTRESOURCES

	£'000	
Borrowing		8,800
Commuted Sums - New Build		1,350
Grant - New Build		
- 2024/25 Allocation	4,791	
- 2025/26 Allocation	4,257	
- 2026/27 Allocation	<u>790</u>	9,838
Recharges to Owner Occupiers (including HEEPS grant)		50
Capital Receipts/Use of Capital Reserve		4,000
Purchase of Property/Rental off the Shelf		50
Total		<u>24,088</u>

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East Renfrewshire Council**23 October 2024****Report by HSCP Head of Children's Services and Criminal Justice****The new East Renfrewshire Promise Board and Delivering Our Corporate Parenting Responsibilities****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. In 2020 Scotland made a promise to care experienced children and young people: "*You will grow up loved, safe and respected. And by 2030, that promise must be kept*". The Promise was made following the Independent Care Review, which found that the current "care system" in Scotland isn't working. The Promise and its accompanying 10 Year Plan, launched in 2020, is underpinned by [5 foundations](#) – *Voice, Family, Care, People, and Scaffolding* (see appendix).
2. To ensure that at the highest level children and young people are heard and engaged, and that they and their families are at the centre of everything that we do, this report recommends the development of a new East Renfrewshire Promise Board and outlines the composition of the Board, its purpose, and how it will function. Crucially, the Promise Board and overall approach of the Promise work encompasses all departments of the council and not just those of children's services, social work and education.
3. To accompany the creation of the Board a three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme has been devised in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland and the wider Corporate Parents network locally. This will ensure fuller commitment from all Corporate Parents as well as an increase in the skills and knowledge of the workforce.

RECOMMENDATION

4. Council are asked to :
 - approve the proposed East Renfrewshire Promise Board model;
 - delegate authority to the Chief Social Work officer as set out in paragraph thirteen to determine Board membership in the event of a surplus of nominations from the Council's elected members; and
 - agree to the new three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme and promote attendance and engagement across the partnership in East Renfrewshire.

BACKGROUND

The Promise

5. On 5th February 2020 a promise was made to the infants, children, young people, adults and families who have experience of the care system in Scotland. The Promise and its commitments were clear that by 2030 the following would be delivered:
 - Love will no longer be the casualty of the ‘care system,’ but the value around which it operates.
 - Wherever safe to do so, Scotland will make sure children stay with their families and families will be actively supported to stay together.
 - Children, young people, and their families will be listened to, respected, involved and heard in every decision that affects them.
6. The Scottish Government and the national Promise Team reinforced that this work is **“immediate and urgent work - what can change now must change now”** and that implementation of The Promise must not be delayed. In East Renfrewshire we have made the same commitment to our current looked after children and young people, those who we previously looked after, and for those who will experience care in the future. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic we sought opportunities to drive forward The Promise believing that during this extraordinarily challenging time children and young people in our care needed to be loved, safe, and listened to more than ever.

Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

7. Over this time local Corporate Parents have demonstrated a commitment to improving the life chances of our looked after and care experienced children and young people but all are aware that individually and collectively more has to be done in East Renfrewshire to enable us to achieve our goal of being the best possible parent we can be in line with The Promise.
8. It is now more understood that when a child or young person becomes looked after – at home or away from home - the local authority, health board, and a number of other public bodies take on the role of Corporate Parent. Corporate Parenting is the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and the other key partner agencies, to provide the best possible care and protection for our looked after children. This also means that each specified public body has the statutory responsibility to act for a looked after child in the same way that every parent wants to act.
9. In East Renfrewshire this has meant we want the best for our children, to see them flourish with good health, to be safe and happy, to do well in education and enjoy healthy relationships with family, carers and friends. Similarly, we want them to make the most of the available cultural and leisure opportunities, and to develop towards adulthood fully prepared to lead independent lives. Importantly, we want young people to progress into a positive post school destination, whether this be further or higher education, or employment, and to be financially secure.
10. The key to delivering on these aspirations is for all Corporate Parents to commit themselves to full implementation of all aspects of **The Promise 10 Year Plan** and the foundations of **Voice, Family, Care, People, Scaffolding**, which underpin it.

Context

Promise Plan 2020-2030

11. We are now over four years into the Promise's ten-year plan with the period from 2020 until 2024 having just ended. On 21st December 2023 the Chair of The Promise, Fiona Duncan, wrote to local authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships requesting a progress update on implementation, as well as plans going forward over the next period. The content of the new national Promise Plan for 2024-2030 recently published in June 2024, has been informed by the responses to Ms Duncan's letter.
12. The five priority areas of the Promise and the actions contained within are reflected in the new East Renfrewshire's Children's Services Plan 2023-2026 titled "*At Our Heart – The Next Steps*". Progress with implementation is reported through the Children's Plan annual review process, which is a statutory duty. The Promise also indicates five foundations to drive systems and cultural change across Scotland. The foundations will be important to the creation and purpose of the new Promise Board as they will support us to evaluate the impact of this important development.

REPORT

13. In order to ensure we meet our obligations as outlined in The Promise we will establish an East Renfrewshire Promise Board. The proposed model for the Board attached as appendix 1 to the report will aid discussion among senior officers and builds on the previous work of the Champions Board. The Young Champions will continue to meet as an established group representing the views of Care Experienced Young People and will feed in directly to the Promise Board. The Promise Board will be an expansion of the Champions Board model and will strive to include the voices of wider participation groups. This proposal attempts to describe a way of working that is meaningful and accessible for both children, their families and those in receipt of services. It will be reviewed during the first year to ensure it is fit for purpose and is having the desired impact. Board membership includes a number of Council elected members. It is proposed that the Chief Social Work Officer will liaise with group leaders and independent members to seek nominations to fill these positions by 8th November 2024. It is important that the make up of the board is proportional across all relevant groups and if it is felt there is a surplus of members, further discussion would take place with group leaders and members who have intimated an interest.
14. To accompany this a three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme has been devised to support the Promise Champions, their workforce and all Corporate Parents to understand purpose and intent. This programme is also attached.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

15. Implementation of the Promise takes place within the wider context of Children's Services Planning in East Renfrewshire. As such the production of this model and learning programme has over the last six months involved a process of extensive collaborative working between children's services partners as well as the important wider engagement that has taken place with children, young people, and families / carers.
16. The Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People Partnership is the principal multi agency group that has responsibility for The Promise in East Renfrewshire. The

partnership fulfils this role through oversight of the statutory Children's Services Plan. The Partnership oversees the work of the four multi agency thematic planning sub-groups in relation to the plan itself and its annual reports. These are Additional Support Needs Group, Early Years Group, Corporate Parenting Group, and Young People's Group.

17. All children's services and most of the related services are represented on the strategic high level partnership including East Renfrewshire Council, the Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Police Scotland, and a range of other agencies including East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, Skills Development Scotland, Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire, and partners in local and national voluntary organisations. A recent review of membership took place to ensure the necessary partners are represented on the Improving Outcomes for Children and Young Partnership and that the representation is sufficiently senior in grade to participate fully.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

Finance

18. There will be running costs associated with the Board meetings and fun events. A dedicated Promise Rights and Participation Officer is in post to support the functioning of the Promise Board and to ensure the Mini Champs, Champions Board, and families are engaged and supported to participate at a range of different levels and ways. This post is funded via The Promise Whole Family Wellbeing fund.

Workforce

19. None

Equalities

20. An Equalities, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment of the new model will be undertaken and the report will be issued once complete. This will be considered by the Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People's Partnership and Corporate Parenting Sub-group.

CONCLUSIONS

21. The Promise is required to be delivered throughout Scotland by 2030. In order to meet this timescale East Renfrewshire Council, HSCP and the wider Corporate Parenting family must listen to children, young people and families about what works for them and what needs to change. To do this in a meaningful way we will set up a Promise Board and use a co-production approach to listening and acting.

RECOMMENDATION

22. Council are asked that:
 - approve the proposed East Renfrewshire Promise Board model;

- delegate authority to the Chief Social Work officer as set out in paragraph thirteen to determine Board membership in the event of a surplus of nominations from the Council's elected members; and
- agree to the new three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme and promote attendance and engagement across the partnership in East Renfrewshire.

REPORT AUTHOR AND PERSON TO CONTACT

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1 October 2024

BACKGROUND PAPERS

<https://thepromise.scot/what-is-the-promise/foundations>

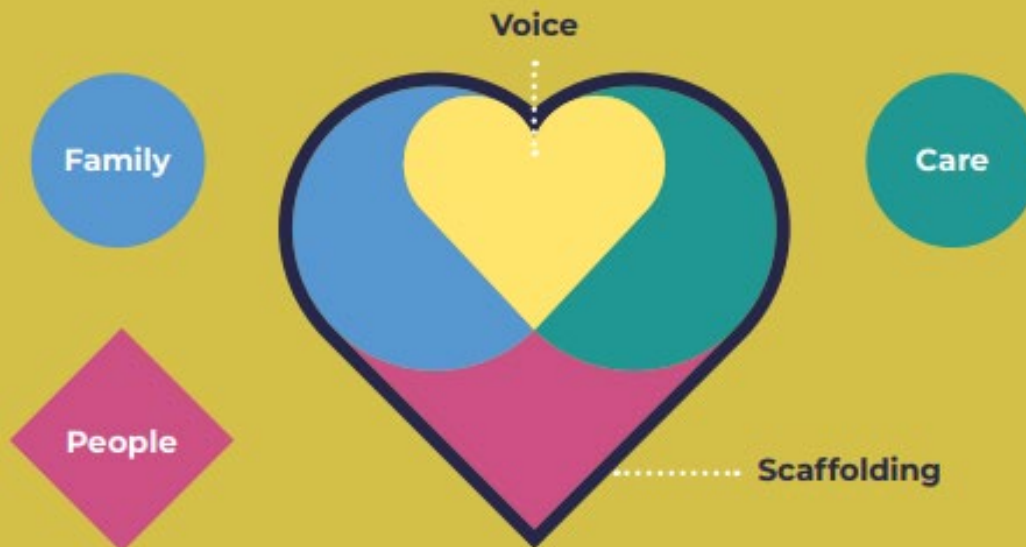
<https://thepromise.scot/what-must-change/plan-21-24>

[Welcome to Plan 24-30, Scotland's route map to keeping the promise by 2030 \(plan2430.scot\)](#)

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The Promise will be built on these foundations.

These foundations must be at the heart of a reorganisation of how Scotland thinks, plans and prioritises for children and their families.



Voice: Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what children want and need. There must be a compassionate, caring, decision-making culture focussed on children and those they trust.

Family: Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

Care: Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.

People: The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.

Scaffolding: Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required.

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East Renfrewshire's Promise Board
Proposed Model

East Renfrewshire's Promise Board Model

This paper outlines who will be involved, why the Board is to be established, what purpose it will fulfil, and when, where and how often it will meet.

- 1) Who
The Promise Board Composition
- 2) Why
Purpose, Remit, and Strategic Links
- 3) When
Nature of Engagement, How Often and Where

1.) Who

The Promise Board Composition

1. Expert Co Production Reference Group - Children, Young People, and Families with Lived Experience
2. Council Membership– Chief Officers, Community Planning Partners, and Elected Members

1. Expert Co-Production Reference Group - Children, Young People, and Families with lived experience

Lived Experience Promise Champions

- Young Person(s) from Champions Board (**Co Chair alongside Chief Executive**)
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young person
- Parent
- Kinship Carer
- Foster Carer
- Additional representatives with Lived Experience will be invited dependant on agenda.

2. Council Membership

A. East Renfrewshire Council and HSCP Promise Champions:

- Chief Executive (East Renfrewshire Council) **Board Co Chair alongside a member of the Champions Board.**
- Chief Officer (East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership)
- Director of Education (East Renfrewshire Council)
- Director Of Environment (East Renfrewshire Council)
- Chief Social Work Officer (East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership)
- Other members of the Leadership Team will be invited dependant on agenda.

B. East Renfrewshire's Community Planning Partnership Promise Champions:

- Chief Executive (East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Ltd)
- Scottish Children's Reporters Administration - Principal Reporter
- Children's Hearing Scotland – Tribunal Delivery Manager
- Police Scotland – Area Commander
- Chief Executive- Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire

C. East Renfrewshire Council Elected Members Promise Champions:

- Elected members with interest and commitment to the Promise Board

Support to Children, Young People, and Families to Participate

East Renfrewshire's Champions Board has been supported by a core group of young people over an 8 year period who have used their lived experience to inform practice and help develop services across East Renfrewshire. The young champions will be an integral part of creating a Promise Board, using their skills and experience to shape its development. A member of the Champions Board would have a role as co-chair of the Promise Board and would link in with the wider group of care experienced young people. As an established group our Champions Board will continue to meet to offer support to each other and develop ideas and themes to take forward to the Promise Board. The intent is that the Promise Board will be the decision making and dynamic forum where young people and their adult champions come together to heed the actions to keep the Promise. The Champions Board young people request that a senior member of staff, such as the Chief Executive, share the chair of the Promise Board to reflect the importance and status of the position.

In line with The Promise, we must ensure that we are inclusive and consider the experiences of younger children, those with additional support needs, parents and carers. Staff across East Renfrewshire Council and the wider partnership support children, young people, and families with lived experience through a variety of successful and inclusive participation groups. We will utilise these existing groups and ensure that their voices are represented by asking a member of each group to be part of the Expert Co Production Reference Group. This would be supported by the Participation and Rights Lead and the Transformation and Redesign Programme Lead. These two posts are the crucial drivers in supporting the work of the Promise Board and members. This will ensure that a wide variety of views and experiences are considered as we take action to ensure we keep The Promise in East Renfrewshire.

Preparing the Promise Champions

The three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme will be ready prior to the launch of the Board. Tier 1 is available to the general workforce across East Renfrewshire Council via an e learning module. Tier 2 will be available to senior leaders and all elected members and will take place as a full day event in February 2025. Tier 3 will be a bespoke session for members of the Promise Board which will be crucial to ensure members are prepared and understanding of their role as Promise Champions.

2.) Why - Purpose, Remit, and Strategic Links

Board Purpose

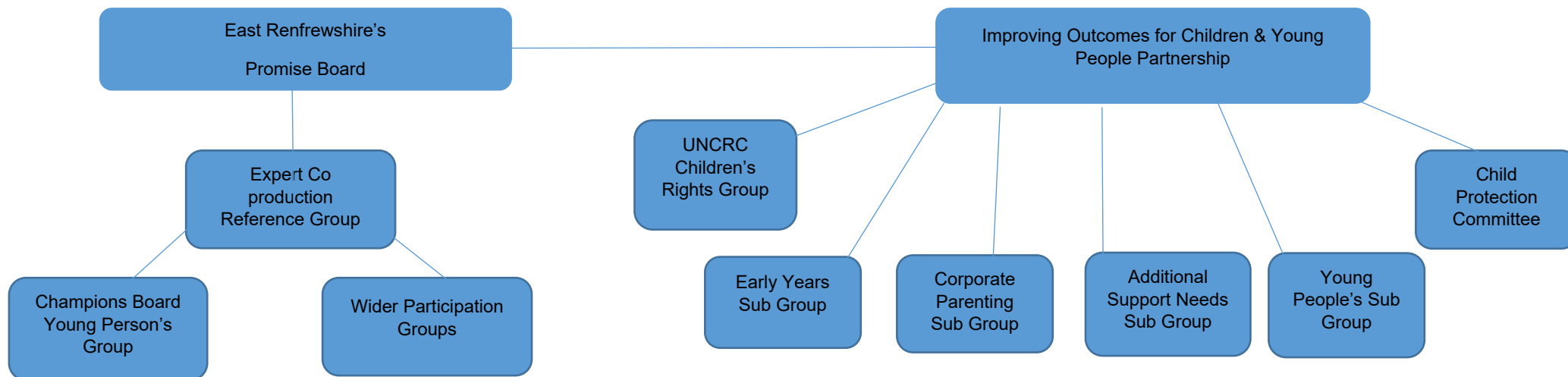
1. Ensure East Renfrewshire keeps The Promise by 2030.
2. Enable the voice of children and young people with lived experience of the care system, to be at the centre of decision-making and service design.
3. To create an environment where those with lived experience can work in partnership with decision makers to progress The Promise in a meaningful and effective way.

Remit

1. Those with lived experience will represent their peers and work in partnership with Promise Champions to ensure that their voices are integral to the implementation of the Promise.
2. The Promise Board members will steer strategic and operational direction of the Council to deliver on The Promise.

Strategic Links

The new Board activity will be linked to the overall work of the East Renfrewshire Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People Partnership Structure and will report through the East Renfrewshire Children’s Plan statutory Annual Report arrangements.



3) When - Nature of Engagement, How Often and Where

Formal Launch Event

It is proposed that the new Board be formally launched in early 2025.

Get To Know You Sessions

The Promise Board *Get to Know You* Development Sessions: The Promise Champions will have an opportunity to meet the Expert Co-Production Reference Group - Children, Young People, and Families with Lived Experience in order to better get to know each other and facilitate understanding.

Board Meetings

The Promise Board will meet every six months. The meetings will be at strategically important times of the year that link to higher level strategic reporting across the Council, HSCP, and Community Planning Partnership in order that progress updates on local implementation of The Promise can be considered by the new Board.

The planning, coordination and facilitation of the meetings will be supported by the Participation and Rights Lead.

Fun Participation Events

Children and young people's fun events spread throughout the year will take place where the corporate parenting family will have a chance to meet a wider groups of people with lived experience.



East Renfrewshire's Promise Workforce Learning Programme Proposal 2024-2026

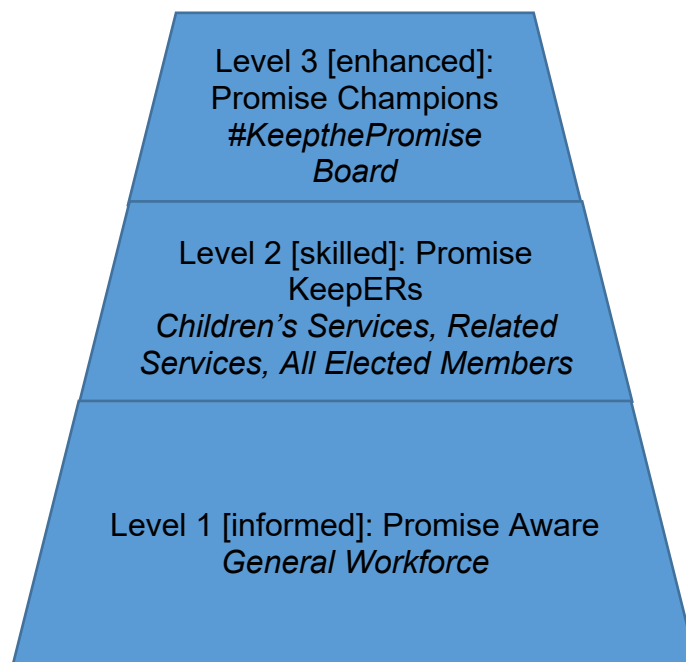
Objective

As part of East Renfrewshire's commitment to #KeepThePromise we are committed to upskilling the workforce, to understand the role they could play in achieving this ambition by 2030; the date by which the Promise should be implemented by. The Promise requires building capacity in the children's services workforce and other relevant services, to raise awareness of the changes required, to act upon these changes in practice and to champion The Promise in all aspects of our work.

Tiered Approach to Delivery of the Promise Workforce Learning Programme

Who Cares? Scotland have been funded by the Scottish Government to develop learning opportunities and offer support for corporate parents in their efforts to deliver The Promise. Over recent months we have worked collaboratively with them to do this. They are able to assist with the development of the training materials and intend to use a combination of existing resources and East Renfrewshire specific content to make a bespoke package.

Training opportunities will be targeted as follows:



Multi Agency Access and Delivery

In addition to collaboration with Who Cares? Scotland the programme will be shaped by those with lived experience of the care system who will assist with content and delivery where appropriate. The engagement of young people in this way will be particularly important in terms of the development and understanding of the Promise Champions and their role in leading the new #KeepthePromise Board.

The training that will be made available is not mandatory. However, tier 1 will be regarded as recommended for all and tier 2 recommended for those who work in HSCP Children Services, Adult Services, ERC services including Education, Housing, Employability, Young Persons Services, and HR. The e-learning module will be implemented first and uptake and completion of this tier will be monitored and reviewed. Tiers 2 and 3, to be implemented next with a 'tried and tested' approach, before full implementation and consideration for 'training for trainer' approach. NHSGGC training systems will be utilised to ensure health colleagues can access the e-learning module.

Running parallel ERC Education Services will be introducing the Keeping The Promise Awards programme that will involve the roll out of a bespoke learning programme across early years settings and schools for teachers, support staff and establishment leaders.

Evaluation and Future Development

Feedback from participants and those that deliver will be evaluated to determine how useful the training materials are and ensure that content is current and relevant and the right staff are accessing the levels available to them. As the Promise nationally publish their next plan we will cross check to ensure our learning programme is revised accordingly.

October 2024

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**23rd October 2024****Report by Chief Social Work Officer****Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report 2023/24****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The report presented to elected members is the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report for 2023/24. The report is attached at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

BACKGROUND

3. In compliance with Chief Social Work Officers statutory functions under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, they are required to produce an Annual Report. This is based on a template agreed with the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser. This report was presented to the Integration Joint Board on 25th September 2024.
4. The report provides a narrative of statutory social work and social care activity. The template outlines the current pressures being experienced across the service and describes:
 - Governance and Accountability arrangements
 - Service Quality and Performance
 - Challenges and Improvements
 - Resources
 - Workforce
 - Looking ahead
5. Performance data and analysis is set throughout the report and reflects the operational delivery of services for childrens services, criminal justice, mental health and adult services including social care.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

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

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

Finance

7. There are no financial implications arising from this report, however the report does refer to the significant financial challenges facing the delivery of social work and social care services for the Health and Social Care Partnership.

CONCLUSIONS

8. This report provides an overview of the professional activity for social work and social care within East Renfrewshire for 2023/24 through the delivery of the statutory functions and responsibilities held by the Chief Social Work Officer.
9. The report highlights the high standard of work undertaken across the reporting period but recognises there continues to be a number of significant challenges and risks facing social work and social care within East Renfrewshire, financial instability and uncertainty being core pressures. We are unable to meet these challenges without the continued commitment and dedication of our social work and social care staff.
10. The experience of many in our communities continues to be challenging with added complications and pressures. This has involved responding to higher demands for support and increased complexity in continued unpredictable times.
11. At the heart of the social work profession lies a commitment to enabling and supporting vulnerable individuals to make positive, sustainable changes to their lives to achieve the best outcomes for them, their families and communities as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

REPORT AUTHOR

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Chief Social Work Officer
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0141 451 0748

October 2024

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2022-23](#)
[Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2021-22](#)



**EAST RENFREWSHIRE
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP**

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

1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024



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Introduction – Reflection on the Past Year

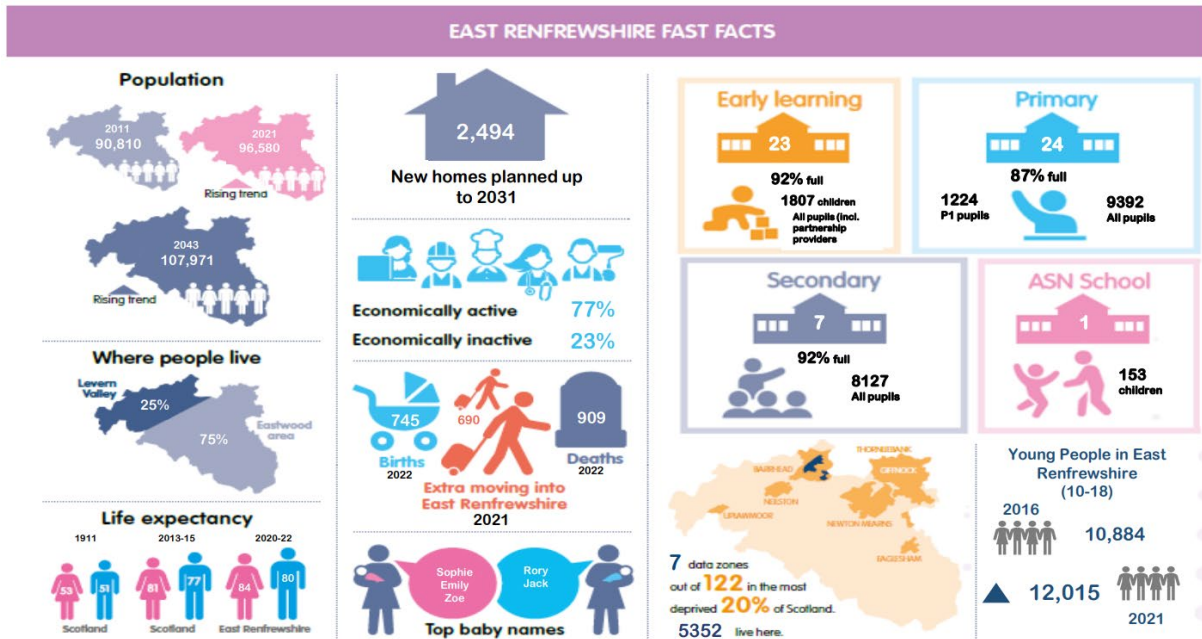
The role of social work professionals is to support, care for and protect children and adults across the whole of the life course and to enhance wellbeing and improve their outcomes. Our staff crucially assess, respond to and manage risk and play a key role in managing public protection.

Our workforce in East Renfrewshire continue to support our residents and we are fortunate to have staff that are stable, passionate and committed. It is important however, to consider the context in which services operate. We are both nationally and locally living in difficult times. The stress and strain of the Covid-19 pandemic is still evident in individuals and communities as is the ongoing cost of living crisis. Public services such as local authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships face increased demand and complexity with reduced resource and finances.

East Renfrewshire's Health and Social Care Partnership has faced the most difficult year since its inception. Our financial situation and requirement to make substantial savings led to a voluntary redundancy scheme. Many posts and roles have been removed from our structure. Another significant first was the introduction of the Supporting People Framework to assess need. In April 2023 only those with moderate, substantial or critical need would receive support. Given the depth of savings required, by November 2023 this was changed to only substantial or critical need would be met. I offer these examples to provide an understanding of the climate and pressure our workforce operates in.

As Chief Social Work Officer I am immensely proud of our staff and I hope this report provides a helpful insight into their work over the past year. We are committed to continue to provide the best service we can to our residents and to do so with trust, kindness, compassion and understanding.

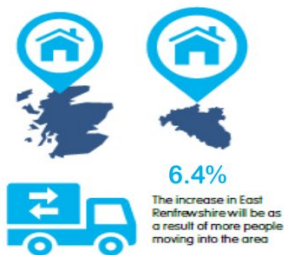
East Renfrewshire Population Facts



EAST RENFREWSHIRE'S POPULATION – WHAT TO EXPECT



The number of people living in east Renfrewshire is projected to increase by 6.4% by the year 2028. This is higher than the Scottish rate of 1.8%



The two age groups that will grow the most



East Renfrewshire currently has the highest average household size in Scotland, but this is projected to shrink as more people live alone



More houses are being built for three reasons



Demand will increase for services



East Renfrewshire has the second highest life expectancy at birth for females and the fourth highest for males



Section 1: Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions

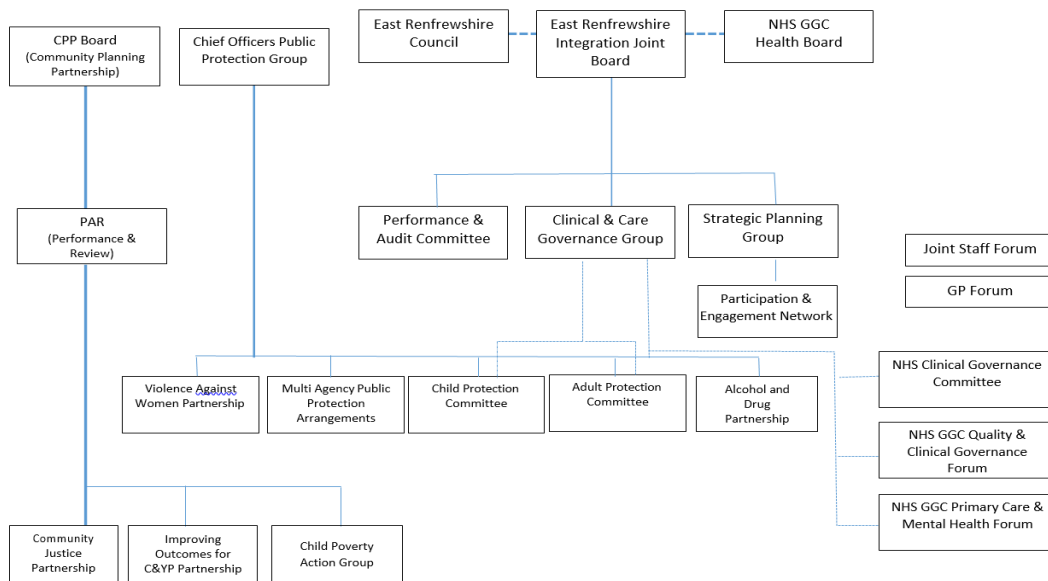
East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) was established in 2015 under the direction of East Renfrewshire’s Integration Joint Board (IJB) and it has built on the Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP), which NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and East Renfrewshire Council established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

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

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

This Chief Social Work Officer report reflects the ninth year of the move to a Health and Social Care Partnership and whilst it outlines the key statutory social work functions, it also explains how they are delivered within the spirit of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 legislation. The Chief Social Work Officer provides the Health and Social Care Partnership and East Renfrewshire Council with professional advice, leadership and oversight of all social work and social care functions. The Chief Social Work Officer is responsible for the scrutiny and quality assurance of all public protection services in East Renfrewshire and reports to the Chief Executive for East Renfrewshire Council in his role. East Renfrewshire Council’s Chief Executive chairs the Chief Officer Public Protection Group. The group meets twice a year and the Chief Social Work Officer acts as their professional advisor.

The chart below shows the governance, relationships and links with partners.



Our Strategic Vision and Priorities



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

Strategic Planning and Commissioning

Our strategic plan is the third iteration since our initial plan in 2015. The plan was developed in consultation with stakeholders and East Renfrewshire residents, despite the continuing challenges we faced from the pandemic. This included a highly participative engagement process coproduced with wider partners through our Participation and Engagement Network and a comprehensive strategic needs assessment. The consultation found that people were supportive of our strategic priorities and the key areas of focus set out in the plan. Many people emphasised the crucial importance of partnership and collaborative working and there was a focus on ensuring the necessary support is in place for our staff and for local unpaid carers.

Our headline planning priorities build on those set out in our previous strategic plans. We extended our priority for mental health to include mental health and wellbeing across our communities. We changed the emphasis of our priorities relating to health inequalities and primary and community-based healthcare and we introduced a new strategic priority focusing on the crucial role of the workforce across the partnership. For the 2022-25 plan, we also added a distinct priority focusing on protecting people from harm, reflecting the cross-cutting and multi-agency nature of this activity.

Health and social care services are delivered alongside our third and independent support and care providers and partners. Through our service reviews, current market assessment and conversations with providers and engagement with people and communities we have identified key areas we want to address through market shaping that will support the delivery of our [Strategic Commissioning Plan 2023-25](#).

Annual Performance Report

Our [Annual Performance Report 2023-24](#) has given us an opportunity to demonstrate how we have delivered on our vision and commitments over 2023/24. It provides information about the progress we are making towards delivering our strategic

priorities and achieving the national outcomes for children, the national health and wellbeing outcomes and criminal justice outcomes.

Clinical and Care Governance Group

The Clinical and Care Governance Group focuses on governance, risk management, continuous improvement, inspection activity, learning, service and workforce development, service user feedback and complaints. It continues to provide regular scrutiny on the areas requiring development and improvement to the Integration Joint Board.

Section 2: Service Quality and Performance

2.1 Children's Services

Early Identification and Intervention

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

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, the Request for Assistance team completed a total of 2,560 enquiries, a 47% increase from the previous year and 351 initial assessments, a decrease of 21% than previously. Of these 351 initial assessments, 24% required targeted intervention, highlighting ongoing and increased complexities evident in our communities post pandemic.

Children 1st Family Group Decision Making

The Children 1st Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) service is based alongside our Request for Assistance team in an effort to increase and improve families' access to early help and reduce unnecessary social work involvement. The FGDM Coordinator supports families² to formulate their own plan to improve family functioning negating the need for more formal supports.

There was a total of 57 families supported by the Family Group Decision Making Service during this reporting period. Twenty families were already being supported by the team moving into this period, 37 new families were introduced, and 35 families moved on.

Children and Young People's Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

East Renfrewshire has recognised the extent of mental health concerns among the children and young people's population. In response to this a multi-stakeholder Healthier Minds Service aligned to school communities, continues to identify and ensure delivery of mental wellbeing support to promote children and families' recovery. This Healthier Minds service works alongside our existing Children 1st Family Wellbeing Service to support children and families in need. With reduced resource in this reporting period, Children 1st Family Wellbeing Service received 121 referrals with 75% of families showing improvement.

Healthier Minds Team

The Healthier Minds service is East Renfrewshire's framework for supporting and nurturing the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and families. It is also a resource for staff across the children services partnership.

The Healthier Minds hub has representatives from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Social Work, Recovery Across Mental Health (RAMH), Youth Counselling, Educational Psychology, Community Learning & Development and the

Children 1st Family Wellbeing Service. Hub members meet weekly to consider referrals and the needs of the child or young person to determine the route for provision of the optimal support.

The three key elements of the service are:

1. Strategic mapping and support to maximise school community capacity to be trauma responsive.
2. Provision of direct services to children and families to build on strengths.
3. Emotional and mental wellbeing and strengthening of the existing school counselling model.

Within this reporting period 385 children & young people have been referred to the Healthier Mind service, with 21% diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) at point of referral (with a further proportion who are awaiting diagnosis or displaying neuro-divergent traits).

In this reporting period we have also seen:

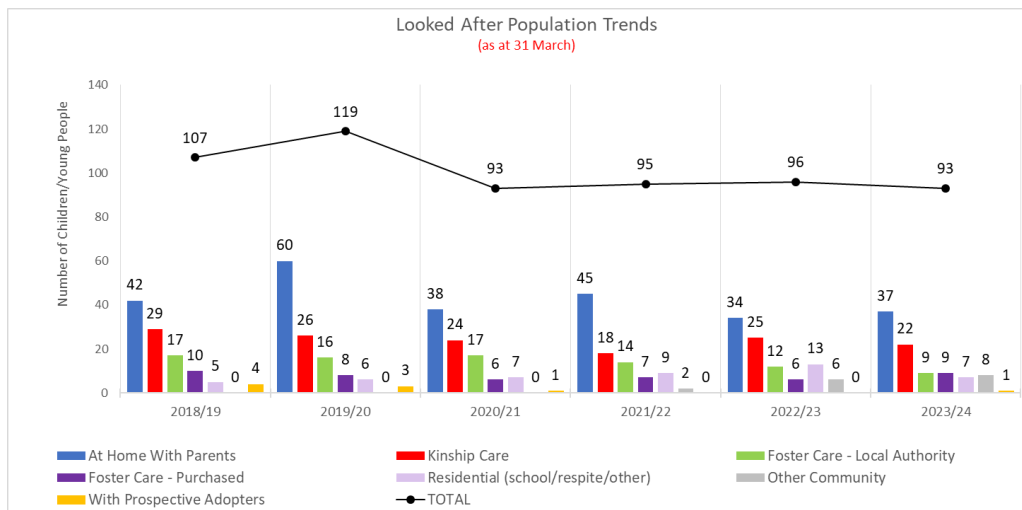
- Increased level of distress reflected in the main reasons for referral: Anxiety / stress, suicidal ideation, emotional regulation & trauma (top four reasons for referral).
- Significant proportion of referrals are higher than ~~at~~ Tier 2 in complexity and need.
- 97% of children and young people supported by Healthier Minds Team report improved mental and emotional wellbeing.
- All parents who completed the post support evaluation noted they would recommend the service to others.
- 15 sessions were delivered with 164 multi-disciplinary staff exploring topics such as Emotional Based School Absence; Supporting Boys with their Emotional Wellbeing; Supporting Self-Harm; Social Media and Emotional Wellbeing; Relational Practice; Neurodiversity, Masking and Emotional Wellbeing.
- A cohort of eighteen staff across Education and Health and Social Care Partnership completed the Cross Reach Counselling skills course to support their work with children and young people.

East Renfrewshire's Looked after Children and Young People's Population - A Profile of our Children

On 31 March 2024, 93 children and young people in East Renfrewshire were looked after in a range of settings. This constitutes approximately 0.4% of the total children's population of the area and remains one of the smallest proportions in Scotland. This

aligns with our continued commitment to The Promise and keeping families together wherever we can. The gender balance has been consistent in recent years with 58% boys and 42% girls. The number of children looked after away from home has decreased. This decrease has been maintained in spite of the challenges posed by our commitment to the National Transfer Scheme and support offered to unaccompanied asylum seeking children. It should also be noted that East Renfrewshire has not placed a child in secure care in this period or for the preceding eight years.

In this year, the average amount of time children were looked after at home increased from seventeen months in 2018/19 to nineteen months in 2023/24.



Intensive Family Support Team

The intensive family support service works alongside community social work, with families of children under the age of twelve years, where a need for more intensive support has been identified. In particular a referral to the team is recommended when children have been, or are at risk of being, removed from the care of their family and if child protection registration is being considered, including at the pre-birth stage. Integrating a Health Visitor within the team has strengthened the support and assessment for children and families for pre-birth and pre-school age children.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, 45 children received support from the Intensive Family Support Service. The majority of children supported (46%) were in 0 – 4 age group. The team provide a high level of support to families across seven days with an ethos of upholding the aims of The Promise to keep families together wherever possible and provide the right support at the right time for as long as families need it.

The creation of a health visitor post in our Intensive Family Support team has afforded the opportunity to provide health advice, support and guidance to families we work with when they need it and as often as they need it covering topics such as home safety, sleep routines, nutrition, bonding and attachment. It allows a health visiting service to parents, who would ordinarily not have benefited from this. This includes mothers, whose babies are not in their care, but who have lots of supervised time with their children. The health support ensures parents are given the advice they need

from an experienced health professional. This means we can strive to keep families together where it is safe to do so, recognising the importance of getting it right in the critical early stages of life.

Health visiting advice and guidance has also been given to fathers who do not have full-time care of their children, but are actively involved and want to be the best parent they can be. The impact of the health visitor being integrated into the intensive family support team is hugely beneficial and welcomed by parents.

Youth Intensive Support Service

The Youth Intensive Support Service is the lead service for all looked after young people aged 12 - 26 years, recognising that more intensive interventions are required to improve recovery from trauma, neglect and abuse.

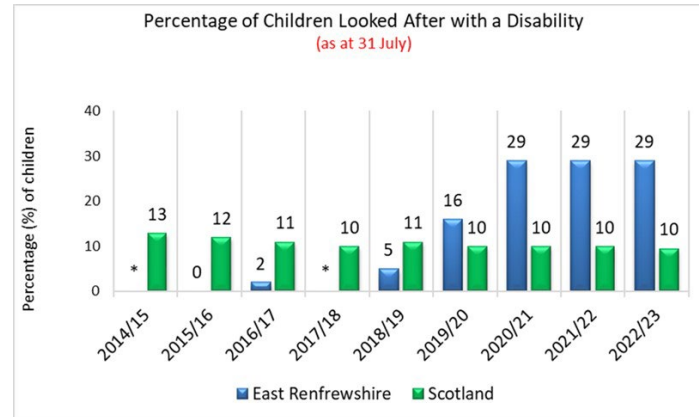
Using a relationship based model the team delivers the statutory duties within the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014, namely to support young people eligible for Continuing Care up to the age of 21 years and for Aftercare up to the age of 26 years. The service aim is to successfully engage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

- To reduce the number of young people looked after and accommodated and at risk of hospitalisation and custody.
- To reduce the impact of historical trauma and abuse for young people.
- To ensure that the transition into adulthood achieves better long term outcomes.

In 2023/24 a total of 156 young people received support from Youth Intensive Support Service and the most common age group was fourteen to twenty. 62.2% of young people were male however, this gender split is affected by the National Transfer Scheme's unaccompanied asylum seeking children arrivals who have been exclusively male. In the reporting period 32% of children and young people supported by the Youth Intensive Support Service are currently looked after and 13% also received additional commissioned support reflecting complexity of presentation and need for holistic wrap around support.

Children with Disabilities

Of note is that 29% of looked after children in East Renfrewshire have a known disability. East Renfrewshire has fully adopted the principles of self-directed support in partnership with children, their families and other people who are important to them.



Note: * represents numbers that are suppressed to maintain confidentiality

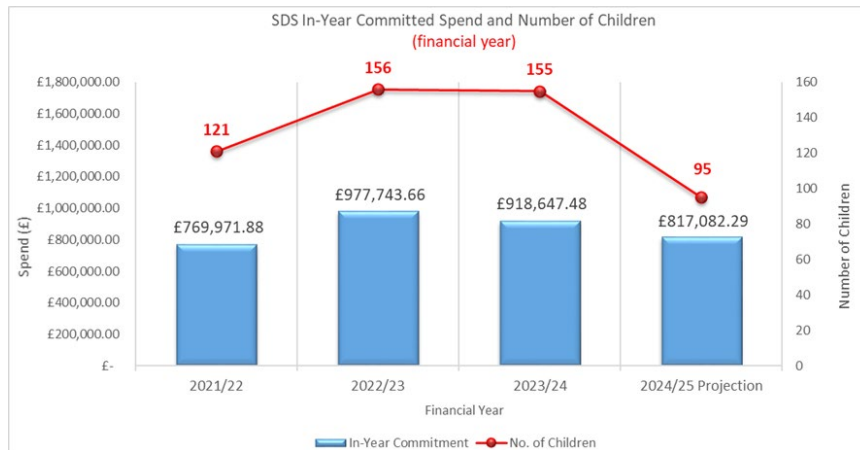
Source: Children's Social Work Statistics, Scottish Government

With the introduction of our Supporting People Framework all our assessments are discussed and agreed by a multi-agency consultation group. This ensures that families and the child's plan are fully considered and support is targeted to the right families. We continue to manage a high level of children with complex needs that require to be looked after away from home. This population increased during the years of Covid19 and have not returned to post pandemic numbers. One factor which has contributed to this trend significantly are the reduced options and resources for suitable respite support in the area.

In 2023/24 and in line with the implementation of the Health and Social Care Partnership's Supporting People Framework, community children's services focused on transforming and redesigning how we review, assess and plan for children with a disability. This included joint work between adult and children's services focusing on preparing and assessing for young people's transition. The work focused on ensuring that children's plans and any decision in relation to budgets were outcomes led which offered parity and flexibility for those in receipt of self-directed support budgets. The team worked closely with partners and other agencies across the Health and Social Care Partnership to fully embed our Supporting People Framework within children's services.

In the reporting period we undertook reviews for all children's plans where families are in receipt of a self-directed support payment. We recognised that there has been an increase in the use of both self-directed support and the request for support from children and families social work services during the recovery from the Covid19 pandemic. In order to support this increasing demand and offer families the best possible service delivery we have realigned some of our social work supports to ensure fair, equitable provision for all our children and their families. This includes a newly developed service based within community children services who will help support future reviews of self-directed support packages and children's individual plans. We will do this in partnership with carers, multi-agency partners and most importantly the child.

The number of children in receipt of an individual budget has decreased by 31% after applying the Supporting People Framework. All children with a support package were reviewed in 2023/24 under this new approach. The service still faces substantial pressure and it is anticipated that this will continue to be an area of significant demand over the years. We continue to work closely with the transition service and adults teams to support with transition planning given the more complex needs presenting. This includes early mapping with education colleagues, timely reviews and transition support from age 14.



Champions Board, Group Work and Participation

We continue to support our Champions Board group, Mini Champs and wider participation groups within East Renfrewshire to ensure that relationships and the voice of children is at the heart of what we do. There is engagement with children, young people, families and communities, with the following successes:

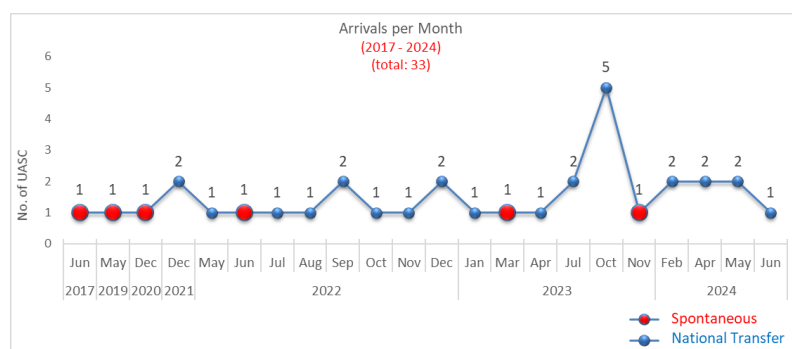
- Young People have attended both the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum, (STAF) conference and STAF summit, ensuring their contribution to national discussions around implementation of The Promise.
- The East Renfrewshire Champions Board met with The Promise Scotland as part of the 100 Days of Listening phase of the 'Moving On' Change Programme. Young people were able to share their experience, views and insights around moving on from care.
- Our young people, in partnership with Articulate Cultural Trust, were involved in designing, creating and launching a gable end mural on Strathclyde University to represent and raise awareness of Care Experience.
- As part of a wider summer participation programme, young people engaged in 'Track', a project where they created music and artwork as a way of exploring their identity and expressing their views.
- A relaunch of East Renfrewshire Champions Board took place for new Elected Members, Corporate Parents and Young People. Young Champions

delivered a presentation around the importance of relationships, being listened to and the success of co-production in East Renfrewshire.

- The Champions Board, Mini Champs, Parents and Carers came together to create a short film to share their views on involvement in the Children’s Hearing System. This work, in collaboration with CELCIS will be used as a training resource and to inform practice.
- Young people have worked alongside the Scottish Youth Film Foundation to create a film sharing their experiences of being a young person in their local community, exploring issues of stigma, prejudice and identity. This will be used as part of a wider awareness raising campaign as part of East Renfrewshire’s implementation of The Promise.
- Children and Young People celebrated their care experience through attending Who Cares? Scotland events such as Time to Shine and the Love Rally alongside their Corporate Parents. During Care Experience Week, a movie night was held at the local theatre for Children, Young People and their families and carers. Elected Members and Corporate Parents joined in on the celebrations for Care Experience Week.
- The Champions Board worked alongside Aberlour Child Care Trust to share their experiences of transitioning to independent living. Members of the Champions Board sat on the “A Good Childhood Board” with Social Work, Aberlour, and Housing to provide feedback on their involvement and guide the progress of the joint Housing / Health and Social Care Partnership care experienced young person housing protocol.
- The Mini Champs has continued to meet fortnightly to support care identity in a fun, nurturing way.
- Our Aftercare group continues to meet on a monthly basis, offering support, peer interaction and a sense of belonging.

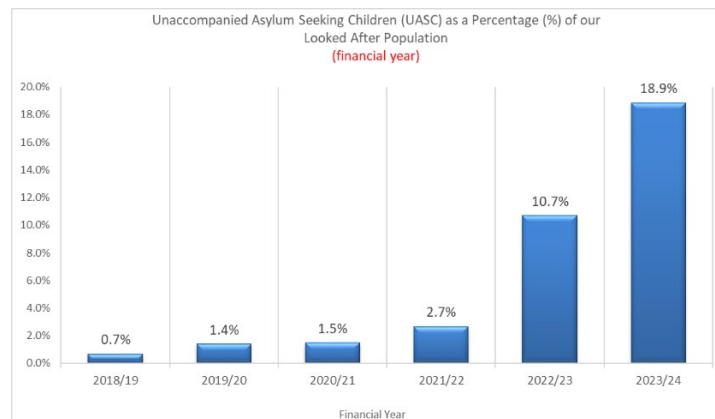
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

The Youth Intensive Support Service is the main support service for these unaccompanied children in East Renfrewshire. A total of thirty Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) have been accommodated in East Renfrewshire since the start of the National Transfer Scheme in November 2021.



Note: Chart includes data up to 10/07/2024.

Since the implementation of the mandated National Transfer Scheme in November 2021 the proportion of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in our looked after population in East Renfrewshire has risen significantly and is predicted to continue to increase. As young people get older this change is reflected in our aftercare population, currently 9.2% of our aftercare population are unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This group of young people can present with particular and prevalent trauma experiences and are often isolated. Our staff require skilled, compassionate and empathic approaches in supporting this group. The ethnic background of our separated children comprises 11% Afghanis, 6% Albanian, 26% Iranian, 23% Sudanese, 20% Syrian and 14% Vietnamese.



Fostering, Adoption and Supported Care

The Fostering, Adoption and Supported Care Team have continued to provide support, guidance and training to all our carers, ensuring that our fostering families provide safe and stable care which meets the needs of children and young people who require to be cared for away from home.

Fostering

Our fostering households have remained consistent with fourteen approved households offering children and young people emergency, short breaks, interim and permanent foster care. We have continued to focus on recruitment of foster carers after our last campaign's success. To build upon our success we will undertake more targeted recruitment opportunities related to different fostering approvals, highlighting the need for short break fostering to support children in their families' care.

Continuing Care

In 2023/24, our foster carers provided adult placements to young people ceasing to be looked after, which has allowed them to maintain their relationships and have ongoing consistency and support from their carers. Our carers have shown true commitment to supporting our young people into adulthood and in providing this consistency of support and care is helping to improve outcomes for our young people.

Supported Care

In 2023/24, we have foster carers who also have approval to provide supported care. Our supported care service is an adult placement service that can provide short breaks or interim placements for young people up to their 26th birthday. This remains an important service to our young adults who have been previously looked after and who are receiving aftercare support from children's services.

Adoption

We have continued to offer our quarterly support group to adopters, any adoptive parents residing within East Renfrewshire or those that have been matched with East Renfrewshire children. These allow parents to meet up, provide support to each other and hear from guest speakers or have focused input.

Our work with Siblings

The team has been committed to keeping children connected with their siblings who are living apart through adoption or fostering. We have developed our family connection service through establishing and supporting both birth families and adoptive families by writing letters, arranging and supporting in person meet ups between brothers and sisters.

The team recognise the importance of developing and supporting relationships between adoptees, adoptive families and birth families. Letters can play an integral role in helping children to develop their sense of identity, understand their multiple family membership and can help children create a coherent understanding of life history. The team are skilled in providing support, time, and guidance to all family members in creating connections.

We are proud of supporting reunification of siblings who have been separated through adoption; this has been a heartfelt experience for our team and the families we support. Through developing these relationships with adoptive and birth families, we have supported post-adoption links progressing from letters to meeting in person. We have had positive feedback from adoptive and birth families for the support we have provided to them.

We have continued to receive enquiries from prospective adopters and the team are undertaking adoption preparation groups, to progress with these enquiries.

Inclusive Support Service

The Inclusive Support Service is comprised of holiday provision during spring, summer and October school holidays and out of school activity clubs. The service provides a range of targeted support for children and young people aged 5 – 18 years. All of the children and young people who access the service have either complex health or behavioural support needs with a significant number having limited verbal communication.

During 2023/24 East Renfrewshire Inclusive Support Team in consultation with Social Work and partners in Education and Health worked to provide targeted support for our

most vulnerable children and young people. The team organised and delivered targeted support at spring, summer and October holiday provision for over 65 children and young people with complex support needs. Parent feedback highlights holiday provision continues to provide essential respite for families and offers social opportunities for children.

Staff from within Inclusive Support have been crucial to the delivery of aspects of individualised care plans for some highly complex young people and this is an area of need we continue to build on. Our staff continue to provide the nurturing care and support rated as excellent by The Care Inspectorate.

We currently have 238 children registered with the service, and in 2023/24 we have supported young people to engage in a variety of out of school activities such as football, drama, forest school outdoor club, beauty club and cooking. Clubs support young people to learn, and practice life skills and socialise with peers fostering friendships as well as have fun. Activities are provided over three evenings a week and Saturdays. This work is carried out in conjunction with both SupERkids a parent led charity and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.

Children and Young People's Rights

During 2023/24 we have been preparing for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) Scotland Act 2024; specifically to promote its passing by the Scottish Parliament and what impact it will have on children and families services within East Renfrewshire. During the last year the priority has been to ensure the Health and Social Care Partnership participates in the Council's review of the existing formal complaints process to ensure that child friendly procedures compliant with United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are in place and that these are now promoted by staff locally. In addition staff have engaged with the national statutory guidance consultation and taken feedback from young people in relation to the proposed contents. Implementation of the Act's duties already cuts across our Children's Plan delivery, The Promise and GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) implementation, and our engagement with our local partners. However we await the statutory guidance to help our mapping and will engage children and young people in this activity.

The Promise Ten Year Plan, Corporate Parenting, and Whole Family Wellbeing Delivery.

We are now over four years into the Promise's ten year plan with the 2021 – 2024 phase now complete and the new national Promise Plan for 2024-2030 published in June 2024. Chair of The Promise, Fiona Duncan, wrote to local authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships during 2023 requesting a progress update on implementation, as well as plans going forward over the next period. East Renfrewshire responded to this request providing a comprehensive report on our position.

In order to ensure we meet our obligations as outlined in The Promise we recognise the importance of involving those with lived experience in creating services that meet the needs of families and their children.

These proposals devised and negotiated over 2023/24 will take shape over the coming year and progress with Promise implementation will be reported to Council and Integration Joint Board through the Children's Plan annual review process.

To support the delivery of the Promise we have used our Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Grant to enhance universal early response services as well as those with a more targeted focus, this is in line with our original analysis of the needs of families that was undertaken in 2022/23. Over 100 additional families received enhanced support in 2023/24 as a consequence of the funding specifically:

- families with babies and toddlers at risk of being received into care,
- children and young people with significant needs around neuro diversity,
- minority ethnic families,
- children and young people with complex disability,
- women and children experiencing domestic violence.

Tackling Loneliness Together Project – Enhanced support to minority ethnic families

To decrease loneliness among minority ethnic families, Family First, our universal child and family service within the Health and Social Care Partnership, has been working in partnership with communities to create a peer support and parent-led network. Since this new approach has been established numbers accessing the service have significantly increased seeking support for a wide range of issues including housing, money advice, domestic violence, employability, and parenting support. In 2023/24 referrals from minority ethnic families were just under a third of all referrals in comparison to previous years, this is over a 25% increase. In addition isolation and loneliness are high among the different communities often due to language and cultural barriers and this impacts parental mental wellbeing and how families can support their children.

The model is now fully embedded and will continue long term in order that all communities can feel confident in asking for help.

Children's Services Planning

The East Renfrewshire Children's Services Plan 2023-2024 entered its first year of delivery. The local partnership group the Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People Partnership has worked together to implement across the agreed priorities that were agreed by Council and Integration Joint Board. The partnership continues to be effective, strong and responsive to seeking solutions to complex areas within the children and young people's policy landscape. Developments on progress with full implementation of the plan are due to be reported locally and nationally.

2.2 Adult Social Work and Social Care

Assessment and Review Activity

The Supporting People Framework, introduced in April 2023, implemented a universal approach to classifying risk, introducing criteria based upon research and practice that informs our decision making. The framework is a tool to support practice and inform professional judgment, making our decision more justifiable and fairer.

Across Scotland all Health and Social Care Partnerships are experiencing unprecedented financial pressures. In East Renfrewshire we must make significant savings in order to continue providing essential services to our community. In order to achieve these savings we have prioritised social care resources to ensure that we support the people with the most significant needs and that we meet our legal duties in managing risk and harm.

The Supporting People Framework initially set out that social care will be provided when needs and risks are assessed to be in the moderate to critical category. In November 2023 this was refined to substantial and critical need only. A new assessment template was developed based on the strengths and assets based approach of the Supporting People Framework.

Information was shared with the wider community through a public website and in person information sessions. Self-assessment options were explored to strengthen this offer to the community. Alternative approaches involving signposting to Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire and Talking Points network were identified as a more effective delivery method.

In order to implement the Supporting People Framework fairly, a programme of reviews of existing packages of support was commenced. Resources were targeted to identify and prioritise reviews.

To support workers and managers during the assessment and review process, we introduced the Peer Professional Review Group (PPRG). The Peer Professional Review Group is a space for the professional's carrying out an assessment to explore further options, deliberate over complexities, areas of risk management using the skills, expertise and knowledge of their partners. Discussions at the Peer Professional Review Group draw on a range of experience and expertise of the panel to help develop or re-shape care and support plans, taking an asset and strengths-based approach to identifying supports.

Care Home Assurance

We have continued to undertake annual care home assurance visits which further enhanced good working relationships with the care home providers and the partnership.

Our Care Home and Provider Services liaison meetings have facilitated a responsive approach to our partners commissioned to deliver care and support to individuals in our care homes and the community.

Initial Contact Team

The Initial Contact Team was launched in May 2019, as the single point of access for all new queries and referrals related to Adult Health and Social Care. The team was set up to respond to the growing demand and complexity of health and social care support needs across East Renfrewshire, and follows a “right person, right support, right time” delivery model.

The year 2023/24 has continued to see huge demand pressures upon the service, with particular challenges being the increase in duty referrals through the winter period, the increase in demand for equipment and adaptations, and the implementation of the Supporting People Framework.

Learning Disability Community Team

Transitions

The transition team provides support, advice and guidance to our young people with additional supports who are transitioning to adult services. The team meet with education colleagues and families to ensure that the young person has the appropriate supports in place whilst they are transitioning from children services to adult services.

The service works closely with all key partners to coordinate referrals for independent living skill development opportunities and is working to project future needs in partnership with Health and Social Care Partnership commissioning and to develop a robust range of supports for young people to move successfully into young adulthood.

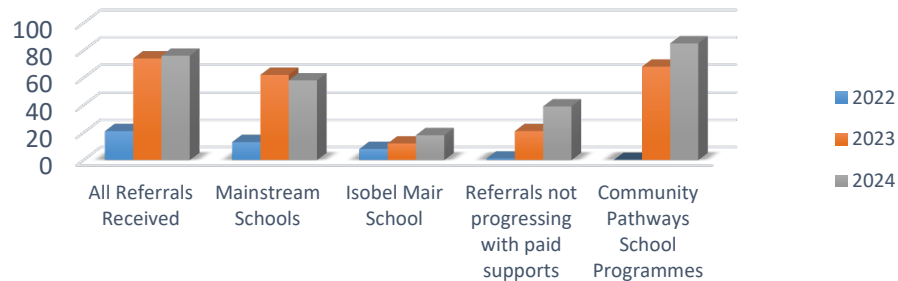
The team try to ensure that the transition is a positive experience for the young person and their family.

Supporting transitions – some key achievements 2023-24

- The Transitions Hub has developed a shared working space for multi-agency and partnership working focussed on transitions. This promotes collaboration and utilisation of third sector and community resources with a focus on developing networks and independence.
- The development of transitions specific resource allocation process that highlights positive collaboration between children and adult services and ensures consistency of eligibility criteria application.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) work in partnership with the Health and Social Care Partnership Transitions Team and Children and Families Services, to ensure young people who will require adult community mental health services have a seamless transition from one service to another. This multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach is evolving and key agencies are being identified to participate in the model including third sector. Young people on the CAMHS waiting list have been prioritised if they are 16/17 years of age to ensure the right support and

treatment is in place prior to them accessing adult services. This is particularly important for those on the Neurodevelopmental Pathway who may require ongoing medication and monitoring.

Transitions Service Referrals



Community Pathways

The service uses community-based spaces throughout East Renfrewshire. It offers day opportunities and community outreach support to people with learning disabilities, learning difficulties and neuro-divergent people in East Renfrewshire. The service offers transitions support for younger people moving towards adulthood and provides support with independent living skills, skills for work and volunteering opportunities.

People who attend the service have an individualised support plan, which may involve building based services, outreach support as well as a wide variety of projects, workshops and activities.

Feedback for the transitions work has been extremely positive from young people and their families.

The service has a long history of partnership working with a variety of local partners and this includes volunteering opportunities and traineeships for individuals and subsequent support to access employability programmes.

The learning disability registered service had an unannounced inspection in March 2024 with inspectors grading the service as very good for 'How well do we support people's wellbeing' and 'How good is our leadership'.

The report credits the service for demonstrating a person-centred approach for people with a wide range of different needs. It noted a wide range of interesting activities for people to choose from with an enthusiastic and well-trained staff team. Inspectors observed staff speaking to people kindly and with patience. Support for personal care was provided discreetly, ensuring people were treated with dignity. They found that each person had a personalised timetable of activities, presented in an accessible format and reported the service works well with other professionals and support providers.

The service was described as well managed by a very approachable management team. This was supported by comments from staff, people and their families. A culture of reflection and continual improvement meant people were supported by a service

that worked hard to ensure high-quality support based on current guidance and good practice.

Inspectors found the service should involve people using service more in evaluation and planning, which has been taken forward as an improvement.

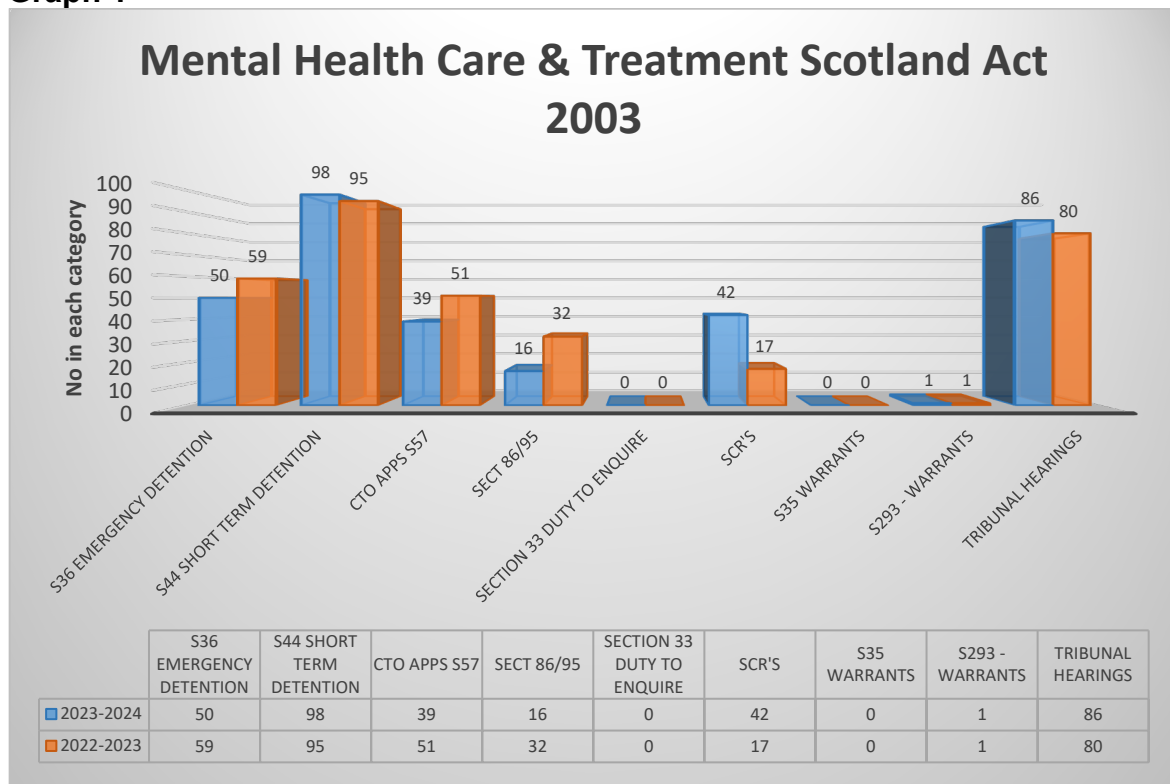
2.3 Mental Health

Mental Health Officers (MHOs) are responsible for carrying out specific duties on behalf of the local authority detailed within the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015, Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and Criminal Procedures (Scotland) Act 1995.

The East Renfrewshire Mental Health Officer service sits under the umbrella of Mental Health Recovery and Learning Disability services within the Health and Social Care Partnership. Operational management for the service is overseen by the service manager, senior manager and Head of Services with the ultimate responsibility for the statutory duties sitting with the Chief Social Work Officer. Mental Health Officers work closely with all partners across East Renfrewshire and the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS board area.

Activity generated by the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 has remained consistent although there was a noticeable reduction in the number of Compulsory Treatment Order (CTO) applications made. (Graph 1) However, in contrast the number of Mental Health Tribunals continue to rise which is likely a reflection of the number of Short Term Detention appeals and interim Compulsory Treatment Orders being granted.

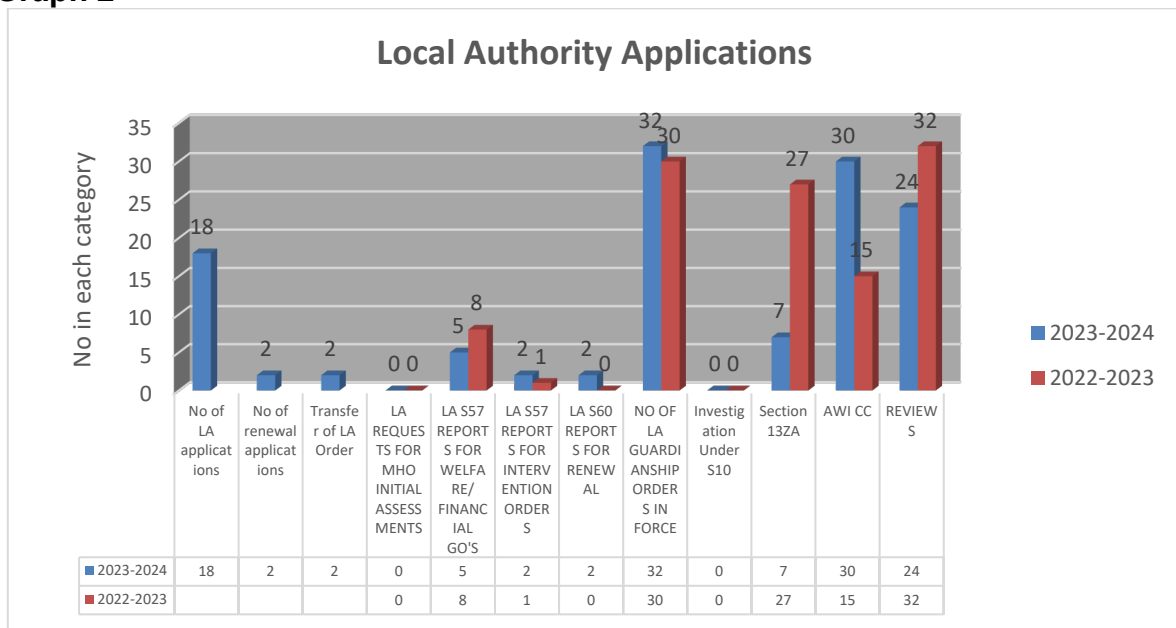
Graph 1



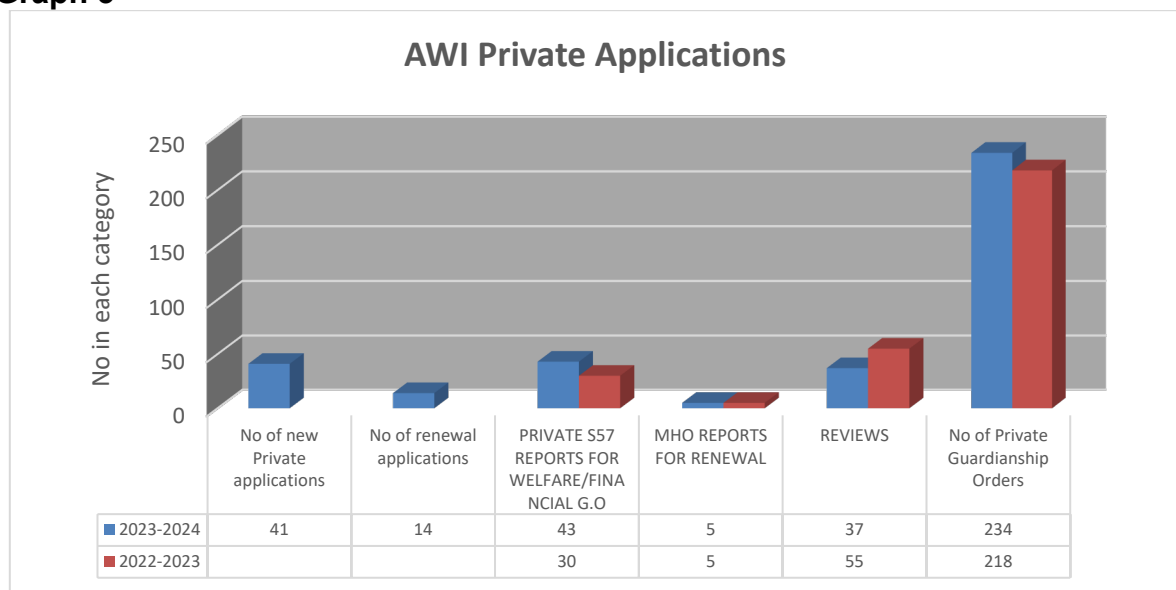
With regard to the activity generated under Adults with Incapacity legislation (Graph 2), one of the main pressures on the service this year has been the increase in adults not meeting the criteria for 13za to facilitate hospital discharge. This was particularly prevalent towards the end of the year with the impact of this being a 100% increase in

the necessity for an Adults with Incapacity Case Conference to progress legal authority to discharge and implement the support plan.

Graph 2

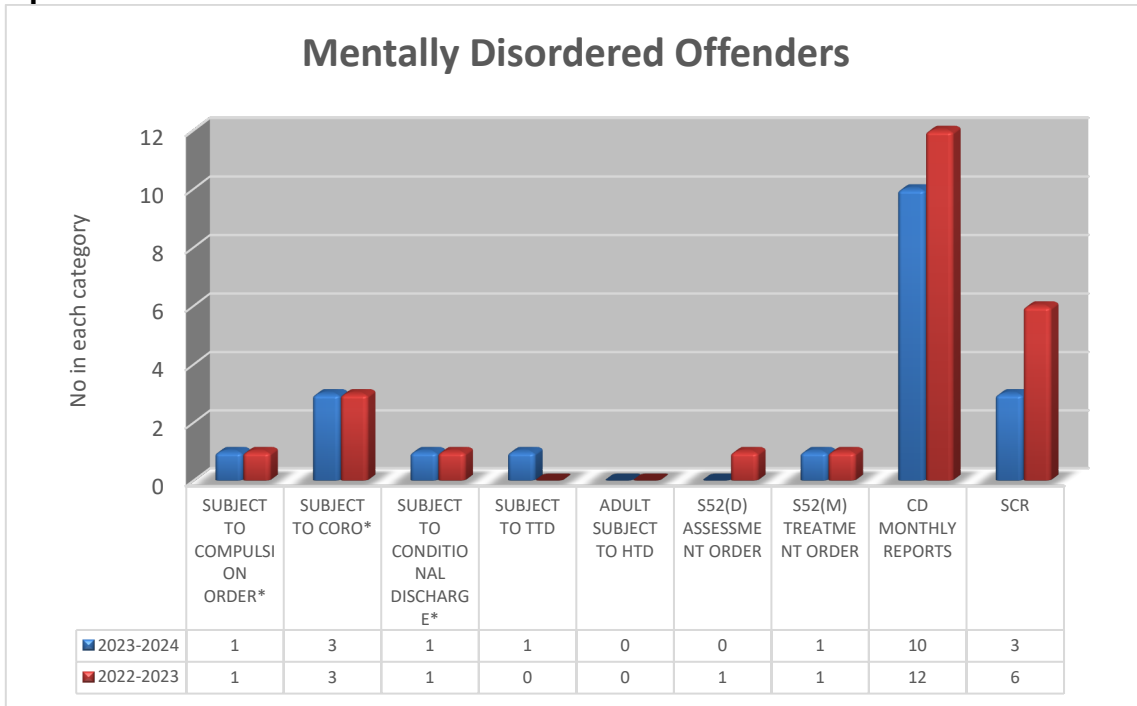


Graph 3



Figures from Graph 3 indicate that the demand for Mental Health Officers reports to accompany private applications for Welfare and Financial Guardianship remain consistent. The supervision of private guardians remains a challenge due to the ever increasing amount of guardians to be supervised which currently sits at 234 (an increase of 16 from last year).

Graph 4



Another area in which activity has increased is within our forensic case load. Numbers however remain relatively low with only seven individuals subject to orders under the Criminal Procedures (Scotland) Act 1995.

Sourcing support for individuals with complex mental health difficulties remains a challenge. There are limited resources within the East Renfrewshire area and we frequently find it necessary to look elsewhere for the level of specialism required. This is further complicated by the current national crisis within housing and the impact this has on safe hospital discharge planning for vulnerable individuals. Over the last year we have looked to develop our connection with our colleagues in housing to ensure that they are a key component of discharge planning and risk management.

2.4 Criminal Justice

Community Payback Orders (CPO)

During 2023/24, the Justice Social Work team have developed in a number of key areas. 89% Community Payback Orders (CPOs) completed within court timescale, this notably increased from 83% the previous year.

We have sought to develop the progress made within the previous year with regards our Unpaid Work Service. We continue to draw upon our bespoke workshops to deliver the Unpaid Work service to our local community. We have worked hard to ensure our premises enable service users to develop new skills. Throughout this, service users have been supported to complete some 7,721 hours of Unpaid Work during 2023/24 to the direct benefit of the community.

As part of our commitment to work in close partnership with the third sector, we commissioned the Wise Group to deliver Community Payback Orders Connect, an online flexible course which provides support in a number of domains including mental health and financial inclusion. This additionally strengthens the digital literacy of those who receive a service from Justice Social Work.

The Justice Service continues to deliver Moving Forward Making Changes programme. This enables us to provide individuals who meet the criteria for this programme access to specialised interventions. Work has progressed at the national level on the revision of Moving Forward Making Changes to Moving Forward 2 Change (MF2C). Justice Social Work continue to be involved at the national level in contributions surrounding the upcoming implementation of the revised programme and are on course to implement this programme by January 2025.

Court Services

We continue to work closely with our partners in Renfrewshire to ensure delivery of Electronic Monitoring Bail. We launched our Bail Supervision Service on 19th February 2024 in conjunction with Paisley Sheriff Court, completing a combined 38 assessments during 2023/24. This has enabled us to deliver robust alternatives to custodial remand.

Employability

We continue to work jointly with our partners in Work East Ren in facilitating a shared Community Justice Employability Worker post. This post has allowed considerable progress to be made in the lives of service users accessing the service in increasing their employability profiles. Since this post commenced, there has been 181% increase registrations, 57% increase in employability outcome and 100% achieving a positive employability or training outcome.

Service / Staff Development

The Justice Service have sought to continue training have completed a range of training. Staff continue to access appropriate risk assessment training including Structured Assessment of Protective Factors (SAPROF), Stable and Acute 2007

(SA07) refresher training and the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment version 3 (SARA V3), alongside new staff undertaking training in Safe and Together. The Justice Service have further participated in enhancing knowledge of working with those experiencing dementia and acquired specialised training in supporting those who have experienced Non-Fatal Strangulation.

The Justice Service continue to engage with our colleagues within the Community Justice Partnership. We have ensured all Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meetings are held in line with statutory responsibilities. Further, we continue to contribute to East Renfrewshire's British Sign Language Plan 2018-2024.

We have undertaken a joint venture with the Children and Families Intensive Family Support Team. Through support by the Justice Service for funding of Spousal Assault Risk Assessment training and Trauma-Focussed Cognitive Behavioural Therapy training, we have commenced a pilot focusing on four key areas: joint risk assessment in selected complex domestic abuse cases; preventative trauma-informed group work for male perpetrators of domestic abuse; supporting children and young people and young parents who have experienced trauma; and group-work with females convicted of offending. The identified outcomes are to provide support both to victims and perpetrators of offences to improve outcomes and in turn enhance community wellbeing.

The Justice Service remains committed to supporting the community in addressing domestically-aggravated offending and the associated consequences of said behaviours. We have continued to ensure 100% attendance at scheduled Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). Following on from the success of having secured a number of 'go-bags' for victims of domestic abuse (eighteen in total) in the previous year, we have secured a further 24 bags and remain ~~in~~ in active consultation with a number of partners to ensure a wide reach of these bags for women fleeing domestic violence.

2.5 Public Protection

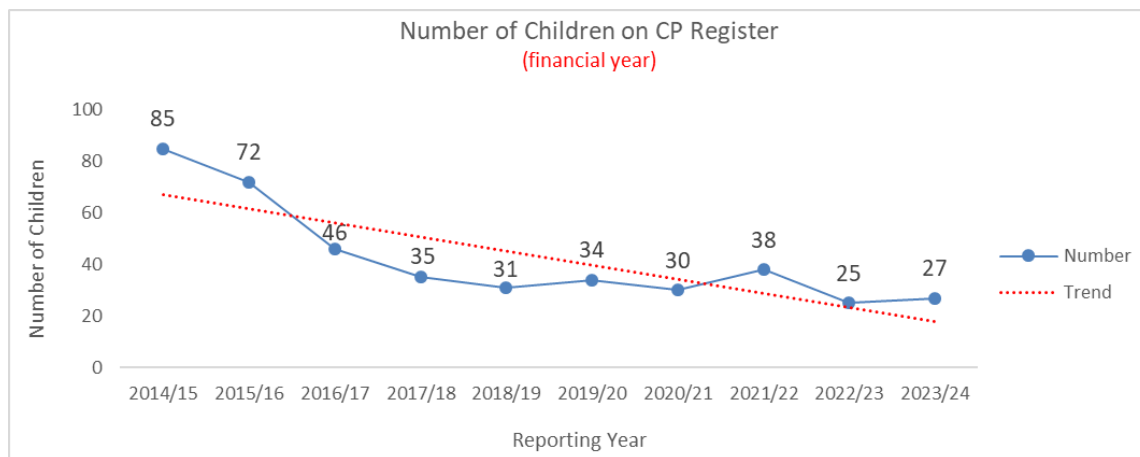
Child Protection, Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

The number of children on East Renfrewshire's Child Protection Register was 27 in 2023/24, this is an increase of 8% on the previous year.

In addition to robust management and audit activity, we continue to benchmark against comparator authorities to ensure that the rate of registration activity is proportionate and necessary.

Child Protection Registrations

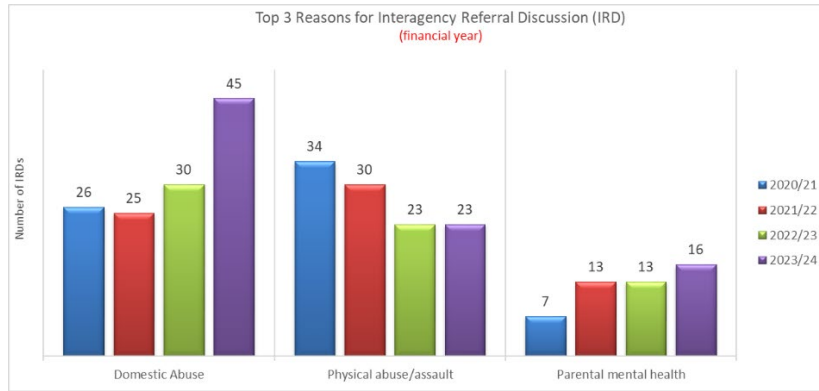
The graph below highlights the number of children subject to child protection registrations from 2014/15 until 2023/24.



Interagency Referral Discussions

During the period April 2023 - March 2024, we have undertaken 152 Interagency Referral Discussions (IRDs) (between social work, police, health and where appropriate education services) in respect of 242 children (some children may have had more than one interagency referral discussions in the reporting period). This is an increase of 31% of Interagency Referral Discussions and an increase of 42% of children on the previous year.

There was a 48% increase in referrals to our Request for Assistance team which may account for the increase in the number of Interagency Referral Discussions taking place.



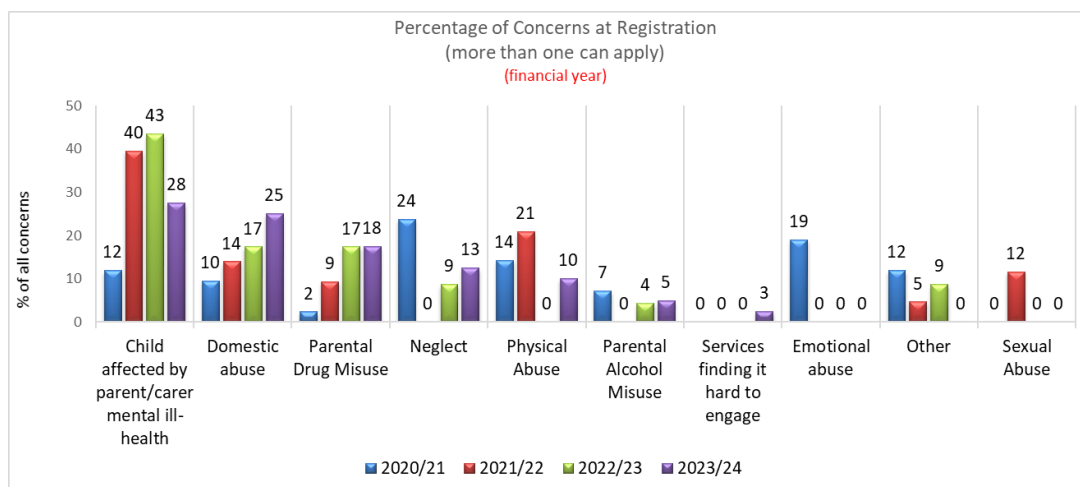
The most common reasons for initiating an Interagency Referral Discussion during 2023/24 are shown in the chart above. The highest reason for an Interagency Referral Discussion in the reporting period was domestic abuse. There has been a small increase in Interagency Referral Discussions for parental mental health and no change in physical abuse/assault.

Of the 242 children and young people subject to Interagency Referral Discussions, 29% were subject to a child protection investigation. Of these children and young people 52% went on to have an initial or pre-birth child protection planning meeting, with 67% of them having their names placed on the child protection register. This is an increase on the previous year figure of 45%.

This equates to approximately 10% of all the children and young people who were subject to an Initial Referral Discussion, which is close to the 6% from the previous year.

Concerns Identified at Registration

A child can be placed on the child protection register with more than one concern noted. Child Affected by Parent / Carer Mental Ill-Health is currently the highest concern at the point of registration followed by domestic abuse and parental drug misuse.



Interagency Referral Discussion Audits

A quarterly programme of Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) audit continues to be an ongoing exercise of our continuous improvement programme for child protection, allowing us to maintain an overview of the initial decision making in child protection processes. We have moved to biannual audits across the academic year.

In line with our commitments towards continual improvement an Interagency Referral Discussion Audit Report was produced in March 2024 covering the period between January – June 2023. Within this period we audited nineteen Interagency Referral Discussion's which was 30.65% of the total audits.

The audits findings included confirmation that we have a joined up approach to the Interagency Referral Discussion process. In addition to this the increased contribution of our colleagues in education being consistently part of the discussion increased the depth of quality.

The North Strathclyde Child Interview Team / Barnahaus

East Renfrewshire are part of the North Strathclyde Child Interview Team; this is a partnership with East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, Police Scotland, Scottish Children Reporter's Administration, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and Children 1st. Joint investigative interviews (JII) under the Scottish Child Interview Model went live on the 10 August 2020. Children and young people in East Renfrewshire are now interviewed and supported by Police and Social Work who are highly skilled, utilising proven techniques to achieve best evidence. In addition, the child / young person and their non-abusing care giver will have access to trauma informed support and advice throughout their journey from initial disclosure to court proceedings or when the family feel support is no longer required. This is delivered by Children 1st recovery and participation workers who provide the child / young person and their families an opportunity to express their views, needs and concerns.

Over this reporting period, East Renfrewshire made 32 referrals to the child interview team, where 94% progressed to a joint investigative interview. An overall disclosure rate of 96% was recorded against these interviews, which is an increase in comparison to last reporting period. An offence under the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 was the primary reason for referral for children and young people who reside in East Renfrewshire (50%), followed by Physical Assault (28%) and thereafter Domestic Abuse (25%). Caution is required here as given the relatively small numbers more detailed breakdown of information here could result in victims becoming identifiable. Of note is that in the main the victims were offended against, or witness to actions regarding adult males. Assurance is given in how seriously any offences against a child are taken and that partners are committed to investigating concerns, managing risk, supporting victims for trauma support and recovery and importantly assisting them in their journey to achieve justice.

The Bairns' Hoose had its official launch in August 2023 and the first joint investigative interview took place in September 2023. Over a six month period, 63% interviews have taken place from referrals across the North Strathclyde Partnership within an environment that provides a safe, child friendly, age appropriate setting where children and young people can have the opportunity to view the space which provides a virtual

link to Court, giving some reassurance that they will not require to step into an environment where they could face their perpetrator. The feedback provided by families that have utilised this house has been extremely positive.

Our Response to Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse continues to be the predominant cause for concern in referrals to our children services and features as one of the most significant factors within child protection interagency discussions. Of the 351 referrals made to the Request for Assistance team, 32.8% domestic abuse concerns were reported and 30% child protection interagency referral discussions (IRD's) noted domestic abuse as a significant factor. The number of children where domestic abuse was noted as a significant factor increased by 49% in 2023/24.

There were 41 adults referred to East Renfrewshire Adult Support and Protection where Domestic Abuse was highlighted as a concern during the reporting period. This represents a 64% increase from previous year 2022-23 (25 individuals). Eighteen Adult Support & Protection enquiries investigations were completed with 50% referred to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). In fifteen cases multiple forms of coercive control were reported and 72 reports of coercive control identified with monitoring and controlling the victims daily activities most common.

Through our multi-agency approach we work collaboratively to deliver a significant range of actions to ensure an effective and sustainable approach to preventing, reducing and responding effectively to domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women and girls. This includes the implementation of Routine Sensitive Enquiry, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference and Safe and Together practice to ensure a perpetrator pattern based, child centred, survivor strengths approach to working with domestic abuse. We continue to strengthen the capacity of our services and action across the whole system to address the long-term effects of trauma and abuse experienced by women, children and young people.

We worked collaboratively with our partners in Rape Crisis Glasgow and Clyde to launch a new sexual violence outreach support service in East Renfrewshire for women and girls (age 13+). This is an important addition to the specialist support available for women and girls who have experienced rape, sexual assault or sexual abuse.

As part of our work to protect people from harm and abuse, we have established and continue to support a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in East Renfrewshire for high-risk domestic abuse victims.

In 2023/24 we continued to see an increase in support required as a result of domestic abuse with 155 victims and 260 children discussed at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences. This is an increase of 15.6% and 33% respectively in cases discussed compared to the previous year. 21.32% of victims did not have children and this is important as women without children were not previously visible in the domestic abuse pathway and this demonstrates continued increase in awareness and risk assessment across the range of services and improved pathway response.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences referrals from all statutory services nationally continue to be low overall and may suggest that unless a victim in Scotland reports domestic abuse to the Police or seeks out support from a specialist domestic abuse service, they are unlikely to be referred to their local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences. This is not the case locally as East Renfrewshire demonstrates a higher proportion of referrals from children and families and wider statutory services with 33% locally compared to 10% nationally and therefore we are able to capture families that might not be known to another service.

We continue to work together with East Renfrewshire Women's Aid Service to provide direct support for women and children who have experienced domestic abuse. Following a significant increase in calls to the helpline and drop-in following the pandemic the service is now seeing a move back towards levels experienced pre-pandemic. During the period, East Renfrewshire Women's Aid Service supported 1059 women and children across the three core services and helpline in 2023/24, a reduction of 2.5% from the previous year.

Women's Aid further launched a new Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDAR) Programme. This is a twelve week group work programme for women and children to support their recovery from domestic abuse.

Women supported by the service recently met with the Promise lead planner to discuss their experiences of seeking support and how services could be improved. Women gave positive feedback about their experiences of Women's Aid and described their experiences of being supported as employees and feedback on family-oriented support such as health visiting, education and after school care.

Training and Capacity Building

Domestic Abuse, Risk Assessment, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences and Safe and Together training continues to be delivered in addition to the provision of bespoke sessions for key partners. Over the course of the last year 181 staff were trained across a range of disciplines including Adult Services, Children & Families, Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs, Housing, Education, Care at Home, Community Learning and Development and Health Visiting.

Additionally domestic abuse training sessions were delivered to the council Human Resources (HR) and managers to support the implementation of the new policy for HR and managers. Bespoke training was delivered to all community pharmacies across East Renfrewshire and a further 25 participants took up the offer to attend and observe a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference. Workers are further supported out with training with specialist domestic abuse advice as required.

East Renfrewshire participated in the national campaign 16 Days of Action to end violence against women and girls by developing a specific local programme of key messaging and campaign activity delivered throughout the 16 days and concluded the campaign by launching our new Domestic Abuse Policy and Revised Guidance for employees.

Adult Support and Protection

East Renfrewshire operates a dedicated Adult Support and Protection team, which acts as a single point of contact for all Adult Support and Protection and adult welfare concern referrals. The dedicated Adult Support and Protection team has greatly strengthened and streamlined our approach to screening and triaging adult protection referrals and application of the three-point test.

Adult Support and Protection activity has continued to increase over this period, in keeping with the trend identified since the implementation of the 2007 Act. In the reporting period there has been a total of 1107 inquiries undertaken by Council Officers of which 228 progressed to investigation. The 228 Adult Support and Protection investigations, represents a 33% increase from the previous reporting period.

In order to support consistent thresholds, robust decision making and management oversight, all inquiries (100%) have been reviewed and approved by the Adult Support and Protection Team Manager and Duty Manager in line with our local Adult Support and Protection local operating procedure.

Adults who experience problems arising from infirmity due to age were the highest common client group to be subject to Adult Support and Protection investigation, accounting for 25% of all investigations. Institutional harm was the most common harm experienced by adults, accounting for 22% of the recorded harms. This was significantly increased from the previous reporting period due to the Large Scale Investigation (LSI) conducted during this period.

The Large Scale Investigation was conducted in relation to a privately operated care home in the 2023/24 period. This was a significant undertaking with ten Council Officers, supported by a range of professionals across the Health and Social Care Partnership undertaking 59 Adult Support and Protection Inquiries and Investigations for all of the residents, both East Renfrewshire Council residents and placing authority residents.

Joint Adult Support and Protection Inspection

The Adult Protection Committee received notification of a joint Adult Support and Protection inspection on 30 January 2023. The Inspection took place over the following four months, and focussed on 'Key Processes' and 'Strategic Leadership'. [The Inspection Report](#) was published on 27 June 2023.

The Joint Inspection report was complimentary of our strategic leadership, recognising our commitment to supporting adults at risk of harm and developing a culture of learning and continuous improvement, which supported the development of adult support and protection services.

We welcome the external scrutiny and feedback that the joint inspection brought and benefited from the experience of working with the joint inspection team through the inspection process.

We have continued to provide flexible and adaptable training opportunities to support staff, partners and providers, developing a strong partnership approach. These courses are provided both as a part of our Public Protection Development Programme, but also as bespoke session for partners and providers to support their improvement.

ASP Training, Learning and Development

In this period we improved and delivered our rolling programme of Adult Support and Protection training as part of the Public Protection Development Programme 2023/24. This programme set out a multi-levelled structure of training, developed to support staff at all levels of knowledge and involvement to identify the right training for their role.

The suite of training materials drew on learning from our previous Large Scale Investigation and supporting organisations to improve their practice. This has provided a range of introductory and more detailed training events that focused on supporting improved practice.

Section 3. Resources

Financial Performance 2023/24

This was a very challenging year for the Health and Social Care Partnership as we worked to balance meeting the demand for services within the allocated budget. We needed to deliver just over £7 million of savings as part of our plans to balance our budget and we were not able to do this. We used £1.9 million reserves as planned to support us to redesign how we deliver services and we achieved £2.7 million of savings during the year. This meant we had a £2.5 million shortfall against planned savings and when this shortfall is combined with the additional cost pressures from delivering services we ended the year with a deficit of £4.7 million.

This meant during the financial year 2023/24 we moved to a financial recovery position and had a number of discussions with both of our partners; East Renfrewshire Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Both partners have provided additional funding, on a non-recurring basis, for 2023/24 to eliminate this deficit. The savings shortfall and service pressure have been addressed by the Integration Joint Board in the budget set for 2024/25.

Future Challenges

The Integration Joint Board continues to face a number of challenges, risks and uncertainties in the coming years and this is set out in our current Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2024/25 to 2028/29 and our Strategic Plan for 2022/23 to 2024/25. These key strategies also inform our strategic risk register and collectively support medium-term planning and decision making.

The Integration Joint Board operates in a complex environment with requirements to ensure statutory obligations, legislative and policy requirements, performance targets and governance and reporting criteria are met whilst ensuring the operational oversight of the delivery of health and care services.

UK and Scottish Government legislation and policies and how they are funded can have implications on the Integration Joint Board and how and where we use our funding over time.

The most significant challenges for 2024/25 and beyond include:

- Delivering savings to ensure financial sustainability, ensuring sufficient flexibility to allow for slippage, shortfalls or changes.
- Recognising the tension between delivering a level of savings that will allow the Integration Joint Board to start to rebuild reserves and protecting service delivery.
- Managing reduced service capacity as a result of savings and maintaining discharge without delay from hospital and other key indicators.

- Delivering on our Recovery & Renewal programme for areas of change, including the implementation of a new case recording system.
- Understanding the longer term impacts of Covid-19 on mental and physical health.
- Recruitment and retention of our workforce, particularly in the current cost of living crisis.
- Managing prescribing demand and costs in partnership with our GPs.
- Supporting the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our workforce and our wider population, again further impacted by the current cost of living challenges.
- Meeting increased demand for universal services without funding for growth, including increased population demand and new care homes opening with the area.
- We may also need to prepare for the challenges and opportunities that may arise from a national care service.

The Integration Joint Board agreed its budget for the financial year 2024/25 on 27th March 2024 recognising the significant challenges brought forward from 2023/24 as well as new demand and cost pressures for 2024/25.

Whilst the scale of this challenge is significant to East Renfrewshire, particularly as one of the smaller Health and Social Care Partnerships this is not unique; the national position across all public sector services shows a challenging financial outlook.

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

The future challenges detailed above and our associated response include the main areas of risk that the Integration Joint Board is facing. The uncertainty of the current economic climate, the longer term impact of Covid-19 on our population, the capacity for East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and its partners to meet continued demand and complexity whilst delivering such challenging savings remain significant risks.

Section 4. Workforce and Looking Forward

Training, Learning and Development

Learning and Development remains a priority for the workforce and the service has continued to deliver a wide range of training in spite of the considerable financial and resource pressures. Temporary funding was secured to deliver the National Transforming Trauma Programme (NTTP).

Following the appointment of a Trauma Lead, the Trauma Training programme was further developed with the launch of a Level 2 Skilled Training. The roll out of the Level 3 programme has expanded to include relevant partners across the council and Health and Social Care Partnership and there has been significant evidence of shared learning.

Consistent with the aims of the Promise, our employability advisers from our Care Experienced and Resettled Employability programmes took part in Level 2 Trauma Informed training with the aim of ensuring that all front line practitioners and managers are able to deliver services through a trauma informed lens.

A review of our Signs of Safety training programme was undertaken to identify areas in need of refresh. These included subjects such as the harm matrix and safety planning, timelines and network meetings and a programme of training has been delivered that will be fully evaluated once complete. Signs of Safety continues to be our established practice model with all new members of social work staff undertaking training.

A large scale training programme was undertaken in relation to the newly launched Supporting People Framework and work is ongoing to embed the learning. This is a new framework and there has been extensive support put in place to support front line staff and managers given the scale and speed that delivery entails.

Training was also delivered on Unaccompanied Children and Young people from *Just Right Scotland*. This was in recognition of the challenges facing teams, in particular our family placement services. This was delivered to a cross section of staff, including partners across the council.

A comprehensive foster care training programme was launched and a trainer approved to deliver the accredited Promoting Positive Behaviour (PBB) training programme to foster carers. This was also in response of the increasing complexity of children and young people being placed with our carers.

In January 2024 East Renfrewshire was awarded funding to become a pilot site to support the implementation of the Newly Qualified Social Worker Supported Year programme. The service has begun to scope need, review our induction programme and begin work on the development of a Learning Hub that will support post-registration continuous professional learning (CPL). This will enable us to build on existing strengths, work with established practice forums and our Advanced Practitioner group to ensure a sustainable approach in the longer term.

An annual review of learning needs was undertaken by our learning and development service consisting of consultation with managers and staff that formed the basis of our annual multiagency public protection training programme. Identified gaps were in relation to separated children, permanency and court skills and work is underway to deliver further training on Age of Criminal Responsibility legislation (ACR) as well as the new National Guidance on Child Protection. Our public protection programme has continued to provide essential training to support both internal staff and external organisations to improve their practice and effectively manage risk. In addition to routine courses in risk assessment and management, a flexible approach has been adopted to include bespoke sessions for providers as need demands.

Our Registered Care at Home service underwent an inspection in January 2024 in which our induction programme was commended. The need for ongoing refresher training was highlighted as well as specific management training in areas such as auditing and this is in the process of being addressed.

The partnership was also the subject of a strategic Adult Support and Protection inspection in 2023, which included scrutiny of our learning and development programme. The inspection commented on the “culture of learning and continuous improvement” that was evident. Most staff reported in the staff survey that they had access to appropriate and effective training.

Looking Forward

As Chief Social Work Officer I am committed to the ongoing professional development and training for all our staff and to build on our quality improvements.

We are committed to keeping The Promise in East Renfrewshire and to this end we will seek approval of the Council and Integration Joint Board to establish an East Renfrewshire Promise Board which will be a completely new way of working in partnership with children and families who have used East Renfrewshire Council and Health and Social Care Partnership services. We will also implement a three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme to support the Promise Keepers, their workforce and all Corporate Parents to understand purpose and intent.

We will work alongside partners to ensure that the voices of children are listened to and respected in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and will also remain committed to reducing poverty and inequality in our communities.

Participation and involvement and importantly, analysis of what those who use our services tell us, will remain an utmost priority.

Conclusion

This report highlights and summarises the statutory duties and activities across the social work workforce in East Renfrewshire. It reflects, what I believe as Chief Social Work Officer, the high quality standard of our profession in the fields of children and families, justice and adult social work. Our residents and communities rightly expect quality services when they require them and I am heartened that our workforce show ongoing commitment in delivering this.

In the past year we have witnessed considerable challenge and demand requiring us to make savings and efficiencies, redesign and reduce our workforce and pivot resource to ensure ongoing viability and stability. This will continue to be a challenge in the forthcoming year and it will therefore be important to work within financial parameters whilst highlighting areas of potential or actual risk that could impact on the provision of social work and social care services.

I would like to personally thank all our staff for their kindness, commitment, drive and professionalism in their delivery of support. I can attest that many go far and beyond normal duties of what would be expected to support our residents and keep them safe. This is particularly appreciated for managing this in an uncertain, challenging and complex space. Their values, actions and support continue to make me proud to represent them as East Renfrewshire's Chief Social Work Officer.

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCOUNCIL23 October 2024Report by Director of EnvironmentBROWN BIN (GARDEN / FOOD WASTE) COLLECTION PROPOSAL**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To advise Council and seek approval for proposed changes to the collection of brown bins (garden & food waste) from Monday 5 May 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Council:
- (a) Note the information provided as background on the costs and usage of the current brown bin (garden and food waste) collection scheme; and
 - (b) Approve the change of frequency of brown bin collections to a fortnightly service, while maintaining the current cost of the garden waste permit scheme within this.

BACKGROUND

3. The current brown bin collection in East Renfrewshire is a weekly collection of food and garden waste. There are 50 collections throughout the year, with the collection of garden waste requiring the purchase of an annual permit, as this is not a statutory service – but is subject to clear public demand. Food waste collection is a statutory service and is collected from brown bins without a permit.

4. East Renfrewshire Council commenced charging for garden waste collection on Monday 7 June 2021, as approved by Council on [15 April 2021](#). Currently permit holders receive 50 uplifts of their garden waste within brown bins for an annual cost of £52.20. Included in this annual cost is the collection of a single real Christmas tree; additional or standalone tree collections (without a garden waste permit) cost £15 each for collection and disposal.

5. East Renfrewshire is the only council that offers a weekly collection of garden waste. Of the 32 Scottish local authorities, 24 have a charging regime in place and 5 do not collect garden waste. The remaining 3 council areas do not currently charge for garden waste collection; but 2 of these Councils are seeking to introduce charging in 2025/26. The frequency of collection varies for the charging regime, from weekly collections to all year round fortnightly collections, or to seasonal collections (typically March to November) on a fortnightly or less basis.

6. Within East Renfrewshire, the garden waste permit scheme is voluntary. Charging is currently reviewed annually in line with the Council's Charging for Services process. Approximately 22,800 permits were issued for 2024/25, along with 442 permits for an additional brown bin. The number of permits purchased demonstrates the high demand for

this service within East Renfrewshire. This year a range of options were assessed. In addition to considering options for permit price increases, the service considered changes to the collection frequency that are consistent with other local authorities' garden waste services to recover a higher proportion of the operating costs of the service.

REPORT – PROPOSAL FOR GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION FROM 2025/26

7. To identify the service provision for brown bins being offered by other local authorities, a benchmarking exercise was undertaken as shown in the table below, highlighting that the majority of authorities offer a fortnightly or 4-weekly service as a means of reducing service delivery costs. While the brown bin permit charge in East Renfrewshire is broadly comparable with other authorities, this remains a heavily subsidised non-statutory service, with East Renfrewshire being the only Council collecting brown bins on a weekly basis.

Council Area	24/25 Cost Per Bin / Permit	Collection Frequency	Seasonal / Notes
Renfrewshire	£40	Fortnightly	
Glasgow City Council	£50	Fortnightly	
Inverclyde	£42	Fortnightly	Collections are March to November
South Ayrshire	£50	Four Weekly	No collections in December, January & February
East Ayrshire	£30	Four Weekly	No collections in December, January & February
West Dunbartonshire	£60	Fortnightly	March 2025 start date. Seasonal Collections.
East Dunbartonshire	£50	Fortnightly	No collections in December, January & February
South Lanarkshire	No Charge*	Fortnightly	*Charging of £45 per annum, approved from 2025
North Lanarkshire	No Charge	Fortnightly	2025/26 proposals under consideration

8. It should be noted that the table above is for 2024/25 collections. Most Local Authorities will be reviewing their 2025/26 charging, with increases planned in some authorities.

9. The estimated costs for brown bin collections in 2025/26 is £2,429,447. Costs are inclusive of staffing, vehicles (which includes capital charges), disposal fees and administration of the garden waste permit scheme. The forecasted income is £1,190,160 for the garden waste scheme based on the same level of usage. Garden waste is currently calculated as 80% of disposal fees, equipment and staffing for brown bin collections (therefore the 2025/26 estimated cost for garden waste disposal would be £1,943,558). On this basis, garden waste collections are expected to operate at an under recovery of £753,398. Disposal fees represent a significant cost for all of the Council's waste operations. It is a volatile market where local authorities have no option but to accept significant cost increases when these arise.

10. To reduce the cost of brown bin collections it is proposed that for the 2025/26 financial year, East Renfrewshire Council maintains the current £52.20 annual charge for garden waste collection permits but changes the frequency of collections of brown bins (for food and garden waste) to a fortnightly service, aligning the service with neighbouring authorities. This will provide 25 collections throughout the year, as opposed to the current 50, presenting the opportunity to lower the costs by £356k.

11. A move to 25 collections per annum at a permit charge of £52.20, would mean the cost for collection of garden waste would amount to £2.09 per collection. This is comparable with existing charges in other local authorities where there is a charging regime. Additionally, East Renfrewshire offers the collection of a single real Christmas tree as part of the permit which increases the value of the service; tree collection and disposal is normally charged at £15 per tree.

12. With a projected under recovery of £753,398 in 2025/26, approval to move the brown bin service to a fortnightly collection cycle will reduce costs by £356k, reducing the under recovered costs to approximately £397k.

13. Agreement on this change is required in sufficient time to support a smooth transition to the new approach for 5 May 2025. This will include required re-routing works and development of a communications program.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

14. Changing garden and food waste collections to a fortnightly service will provide the opportunity to reduce the cost for this non-statutory service by £356,000. This will be achieved by a reduction of two refuse collection vehicles and crews required for collections. There will be no redundancies required for this saving.

15. This saving assumes that the weights of garden waste disposed of annually would remain constant. Likewise, income has been based upon the current 22,800 permits purchased in 2024/25. The requirement for additional brown bin permits has not been factored into potential income, with the cost for an additional brown bin remaining the same in 2025/26. There are currently 442 additional brown bin permits in 2024/25.

16. There is no proposal to increase the current annual permit charge of £52.20.

17. Disposal fees for brown bin (garden and food) waste are currently increasing by 20% per year. There is only one facility in Central Scotland which processes this waste. The Service with other local authorities will continue to look at alternative options for processing of garden and food waste.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

18. Consultation has taken place with the Trade Unions on this proposal. The Council has benchmarked with neighbouring authorities.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

19. The proposals outlined would enable East Renfrewshire Council to continue to offer a garden waste collection whilst reducing costs of this service. These savings will be delivered from the reduction of the number of crews carrying out collections and reduction of vehicles required. The reduction in two crews from the service would result in six posts from the establishment being deleted. These are vacant posts at present and mainly staffed through agency workers. There would not be any redundancies as a result and the staff savings would be achieved through normal turnover. HR have been consulted on the proposals.

20. It is imperative that any decision regarding changes to the brown bin service is made in a timely manner, as there are significant lead in times for re-routing and public communications.

21. There are no property, legal, IT, Subsidy Control, equalities, sustainability and climate change implications associated with this report. It is anticipated that there would be no major change to the high recycling rates that take place in East Renfrewshire currently.

CONCLUSIONS

22. To balance the costs of service delivery, officers from Neighbourhood Services have carried out a review of the brown bin collection service. As a result of this work, it is proposed to move brown bin collections to a fortnightly service, with no cost change to the permit in 2025/26.

23. The above change allows costs to be reduced through reductions in vehicle costs and staffing. There are no redundancies associated with the proposed change. Changing collection to a fortnightly service aligns East Renfrewshire neighbouring local authorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

24. It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) Note the changes and further detailed information provided as background on the costs and usage of the current brown bin (garden and food waste) collection scheme; and
- (b) Approve the change of frequency of brown bin collection to a fortnightly service, while maintaining the current cost of the garden waste permit scheme within this.

Director of Environment

Further information can be obtained from Caitriona McAuley, Director of Environment
Caitriona.McAuley@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

October 2024

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL23 OCTOBER 2024Report by Director of Business Operations and PartnershipsCHANGES TO ORGANISATIONAL REMITS - ENVIRONMENT**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for a change to Head of Service remits within the Environment Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Council is asked to:
- a) Approve the changes to the Head of Service remits within the management structure in the Environment Department; and
 - b) Delegate to the Head of HR and Corporate Services in consultation with the Director of Environment to make the necessary arrangements.

BACKGROUND

3. There are many changes taking place both internal and external to the Council and it is important that senior management structures are continuously reviewed to ensure services are delivered in the most efficient and effective manner.

REPORT

4. There are currently three Heads of Service in the Environment Department and the current structure is shown in Appendix 1a:

- Head of Environment Services (Place)
- Head of Environment Services (Housing and Property)
- Head of Environment Services (Operations).

5. New appointments to these posts have recently taken place. In order to better reflect local and national priorities there is a need to consider how we maximise the capacity of the Environment Department to continue to meet the challenges associated with our strategic vision A Place To Grow ambitions including '*an inclusive, connected and green place, with a fair, sustainable and healthy local economy, that our residents are proud to call home*'.

6. To do this, the department requires to strengthen its approach to strategic and future focused planning, taking a long term view of the challenges and priorities and have resources fairly aligned to support that approach and the work of the new leadership team.

7. The department priorities include:

- Increasing access to affordable housing and taking measures to address the housing emergency;
- To deliver an ambitious capital programme including City Deal projects;
- To maximise the potential of our property estate to meet future economic, social and environmental needs;
- To provide and maintain attractive places for people to live, work and visit;
- To develop and support community wealth building;
- To deliver local transport, active travel, parking and road infrastructure priorities;
- To achieve Get to Zero (GTZ) ambitions; and
- To continue to provide high quality services efficiently.

8. The key changes proposed will support delivery of these priorities.

9. The Change and Governance Service in the current structure reports to the Head of Housing and Property and is made up of the following teams:

- Resettlement;
- Get To Zero;
- Change and project management;
- Customer Service and Business Support; and
- Digital Services.

10. It is proposed the Resettlement Team will move to Housing Services in recognition of reducing caseloads, external funding coming to an end and the main case work relating to housing services. This service will now be managed as part of the Homelessness Team's case work.

11. The remaining teams of the Change and Governance Service will report to the Head of Place and this will facilitate a concentration on Housing and Property work for the Head of Service (Housing and Property). A review of the remaining resources will consider how these can best be aligned to support the newly formed Directorate with a strengthened approach to governance, change and policy functions within the Environment Department. This will be led by the Head of Place.

12. The new Head of Environment Operations is responsible for Roads Operations. It is proposed to transfer the Strategic Transport functions responsible for Local Transport Strategy and Active and Sustainable Travel to that service with some shared expertise that can strengthen delivery of the work programme.

13. In summary it is proposed that the Head of Service remits are changed to:

- Head of Environment Services (Place)
 - Planning and Building Standards
 - City Deal
 - Change and Governance (GTZ and other Environmental related policy)
 - Economic Development
- Head of Environment Services (Housing & Property Services)
 - Housing Service
 - Property and Technical Services
 - Major Capital Projects
 - Corporate Health and Safety
- Head of Environment Services (Operations).
 - Prevention Services (Environmental Health and Trading Standards)
 - Roads and Transportation (Operations & Strategic Transport including Active and Sustainable Travel)
 - Neighbourhood Services (Fleet, Cleansing and Parks)

The proposed structure is shown in Appendix 1.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

14. There are no additional financial implications as no new posts are being added into the structure.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

15. Consultation in relation to these proposals has been undertaken with those directly affected employees and the Trade Unions have been made aware of the changes.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

16. There are no IT, sustainability, equalities or other implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSIONS

17. The proposals contained within this report allow changes to the senior management teams which will ensure ongoing focus on service delivery and support the Environment Department to continue to deliver highest quality services to our residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

18. The Council is asked to:

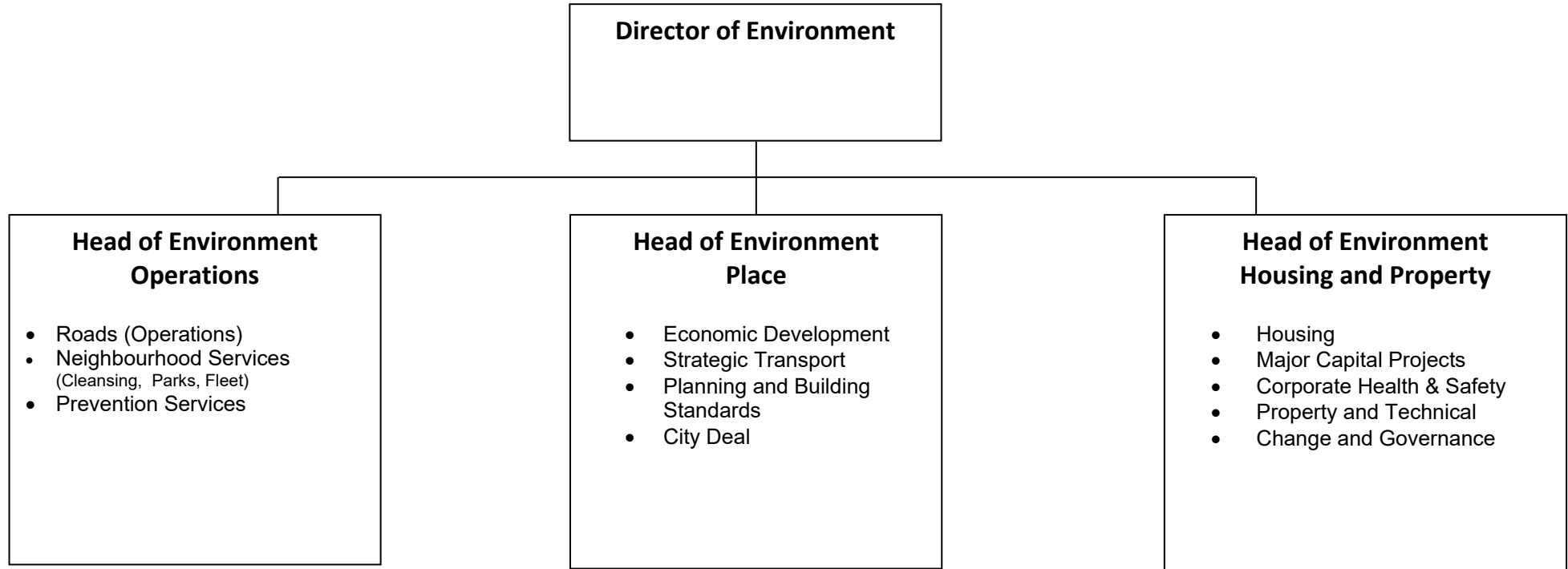
- a) Approve the changes to the Head of Service remits within the management structure in the Environment Department; and
- b) Delegate to the Head of HR and Corporate Services in consultation with the Director of Environment to make the necessary arrangements.

REPORT AUTHOR: Sharon Dick, Head of HR and Corporate Services, 07741 235242

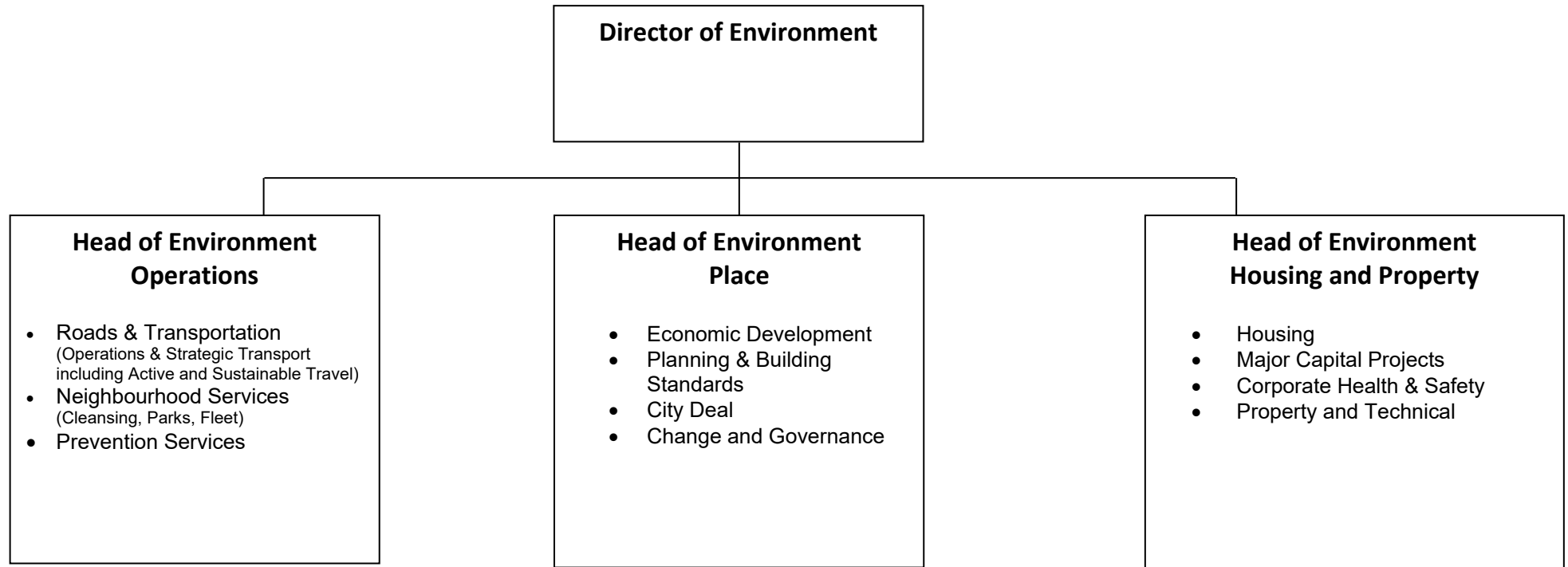
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Environment Department Management Structure Current Structure



Environment Department Management Structure Proposed Structure



EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL23 October 2024Report by Director of Business Operations & PartnershipsARMED FORCES COVENANT AND SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To advise the Council of the engagement and work being carried out in support of the Armed Forces Covenant to support serving personnel, regulars and reserve, veterans, their partners and dependent children in East Renfrewshire.
2. To update the Council on the work towards gaining Gold accreditation from the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. It is recommended that Council:
 - a. note the progress that has been made by the Council, Health and Social Care Partnership and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust in supporting our armed forces community and implementing our Armed Forces Covenant duties;
 - b. note the work of the Veterans Support Officer (VSO) in supporting service personnel and all the activities in this area; and
 - c. recognise the work to pursue the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold recognition award.

BACKGROUND

4. The Armed Forces Act 2021 created a legal obligation on specified bodies in all four home nations of the UK to implement the Armed Forces Covenant. These are the bodies responsible for providing local services in the areas of healthcare, education, and housing, such as local authorities, governing bodies of schools, and NHS bodies.
5. The Armed Forces Covenant Duty contains the following legal obligation: When a specified body exercises a relevant function, it must have due regard to:
 - a. the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces;
 - b. the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces; and,
 - c. the principle that special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, in the armed forces.
6. In 2012, East Renfrewshire Council signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant. The terms of the Covenant require the Council to acknowledge and understand that those who serve, or who have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect. The Covenant focuses on enabling members of the

Armed Forces community to have the same access to government, commercial services, and products as any other citizen and ensures that they suffer no disadvantage as a result of their service.

7. East Renfrewshire Council has also signed a Community Covenant with the Armed Forces and Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire to build on the good relations between the Armed Forces Community and its partner organisations. This is a voluntary statement of mutual support that recognises and remembers the sacrifices made by members of the community, including those currently serving as well as their families.
8. The main objectives are to:
 - a. ensure that service personnel are known to their health provider and can access specialist advice services through NHS Scotland;
 - b. improve overall health and wellbeing and offer guidance on specific health concerns including advice with mental and physical recovery;
 - c. coordinate access to council services such as housing, mental health and addictions services;
 - d. signpost the Veterans Welfare Service, Ministry of Defence 'Supporting Services Through Life' for help or advice on pay, pensions, compensation and Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) benefit assistance;
 - e. signpost to ex-service organisations, volunteering services and treatment and support to those suffering from mental ill-health as a result of their service career; and,
 - f. access employability services and our employability team through Work EastRen.
9. To support the delivery of this work, the Council employs a Veterans' Support Officer (VSO). This officer works across East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, and Inverclyde Council areas. The VSO has served 22 years in the armed forces which proves to be crucial by bringing a depth of knowledge of this community and experience to the councils to support their efforts to ensuring the Armed Forces Covenant commitments are met. This post is based within the Money Advice and Rights Team (MART) in ERC and has a close relationship with advice services across all three council areas.
10. One of the elements of the Covenant is that each local authority should appoint an elected member to be the local Armed Forces Champion, to be an advocate for local service personnel and their families. At a Council meeting on 7 September 2022 Councillor Campbell was nominated and then selected to the role as local Armed Forces Champion.
11. The Armed Forces Champion role has a range of responsibilities including advocacy; liaising and communicating with different bodies; raising awareness of the role; and building up relationships with partners and organisations across the local authority. In addition, the role allows for scrutiny to ensure the Council are delivering in their obligations as set out in the Covenant.
12. The Council has an Armed Forces steering group comprised of representatives from Housing, Education, Money Advice and Rights Team (MART), Employability Team (WorkEastRen), HSCP, HR, and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust (ERCLT).
13. The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support the armed forces and acknowledges employers that provide exceptional

support to the Armed Forces community and Defence by going above and beyond their Covenant pledges. The scheme encompasses Bronze, Silver, and Gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate, and advocate support for defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

14. East Renfrewshire Council was awarded a Silver award in 2017 and recredited in 2022. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde were awarded a Gold award in 2023.
15. The Chief Officer (CO) of East Renfrewshire's Health and Social Care Partnership is also the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board Armed Forces and Veterans Champion. In her role as Champion, the CO is leading a proactive strategy to improve health outcomes and healthcare experiences for members of the Armed Forces Community in East Renfrewshire and across the whole of the health board area.
16. A key element of this is a partnership with Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS), which since April 2022 has been providing welfare support to veterans and other members of the Armed Forces Community on a medical pathway. DMWS Welfare Officers provide non-clinical emotional and practical support, finding solutions to improve wellbeing, support sustainable recovery, a timely and smooth transition from inpatient services to home, with continued support where needed in the community to live an independent and fulfilling life. Made possible with new funding from the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Healthcare Charity and with input from Glasgow's Helping Heroes, this service has recently been extended to provide wraparound peer support for veterans with mental health problems. Since mid-2022 the service has supported 326 patients across the health board and indirectly benefited 570 family members/carers and 258 NHS staff.

REPORT

17. With regards to our Covenant duties, the Veterans Support Officer (VSO) has delivered briefings to teams and departments across the Council to highlight our duties and raise awareness with further briefings planned this year.
18. The VSO has worked alongside ERCLT to provide the Health for Heroes programme, which allows free fitness membership and support to veterans whose mental health would be improved by physical activity. This project is unique to Local Authorities/ Leisure Trusts in Scotland. There are 50 free places available in East Renfrewshire, with 46 veterans currently being supported. This free gym membership was the first of its kind in the UK.
19. In addition to fitness membership, a Veterans' Breakfast Club, financially supported by the British Royal Legion, is held each quarter in Barrhead Foundry. Feedback has shown that this has had a positive effect on veterans' mental health and return to civilian life. Attendance has been improving through increased engagement with Health for Heroes members with 14 members attending the last session. The aim is to build upon this success and the team are working to attract funding for additional capacity to support this work.
20. The VSO continues to work with individual service personnel and their families, signposting to other services, advocating on their behalf, and offering bespoke assistance to return to civilian life.

21. The Education Department monitors the number of school children from armed forces households that attend East Renfrewshire schools. The schools are made aware of the children and can monitor and support their well-being and identify any issues that may be linked with being an armed forces family member. There are circa 100 armed forces children currently in the East Renfrewshire school population.
22. As a member of the Scottish Government's Veterans' Support Fund Board, the VSO has obtained over £500,000 in funding for charities and services across the three council areas. This funding is awarded to mainly major national and local charities which local residents can access, including Erskine, Scotland's Bravest Manufacturing Company, Fares 4 Free, and Bravehound.
23. The Council has strong relationships with the veteran community and hosts a number of events in support of Armed Forces. The Armed Forces' Champion, supported by officers and Elected Members, represents the Council at events such as flag raising ceremonies, Edinburgh Military Tattoo, armed forces days, associated events and continues to be an advocate for our service personnel and families. In addition, the Armed Forces' Champion engages with veterans at the Health for Heroes Breakfast Club and attends the ERC Armed Forces Oversight Group.
24. HSCP and the Council supported the Royal British Legion's Insult to Injury Campaign, ensuring that military compensation is exempt from financial assessments for social care charges.
25. There has been a strong focus on the mental health of veterans. HSCP and the Council have worked together to develop East Renfrewshire Council's suicide prevention policy and to support mental health recovery.
26. The Royal British Legion are purchasing a house in Newton Mearns to be leased by veterans, this will be administered by Barrhead Housing Association. The Council has assisted both organisations with this provision.

PLANS

27. The Council and HSCP has started working towards the ERS Gold award. The Armed Forces Oversight Group will monitor progress at the quarterly meetings and will share a report on activity to the Armed Forces' Champion, who will attend twice per year. The Armed Forces' Champion will keep elected members and the local MSPs and MP apprised of any issues affecting the armed forces community.
28. The Council's Guaranteed Interview Scheme for vacancies has been extended to cover veterans who meet essential vacancy criteria, guaranteeing suitable candidates an interview with the Council.
29. To raise awareness of the support given to veterans as employees there are plans to:
 - highlight the support that is offered to the armed service community and reservists within our employee groups;
 - review the current volunteer and special leave policies for employees to ensure there is clarity that reservists and adult cadet volunteers are supported; and
 - feature work with the armed forces community in internal communications to raise awareness.

30. A survey is underway among Council employees to find out how many reservists, Adult Cadet Volunteers, spouses/partners and service families are employed. The survey is also an opportunity for employees to express interest in joining a network of veterans' champions within the Council.
31. In addition, we continue to explore charity applications to support an extension in the number of Health for Heroes places available and additional capacity to support growth in the programme.
32. We will also continue to share information about East Renfrewshire's annual Remembrance and other related events on the Council website, on social media and in the local media.

CONCLUSION

33. The Council, HSCP and ERCLT continue to support serving personnel, regulars and reserve, veterans, their partners and dependent children in the area and looks to develop this support further by taking steps to gain the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold recognition award.

RECOMMENDATIONS

34. It is recommended that Council:
 - a. Note the progress that has been made by the Council, Health and Social Care Partnership and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust in supporting our armed forces community and implementing our Armed Forces Covenant duties;
 - b. Note the work of the Veterans Support Officer (VSO) in supporting service personnel and all the activities in this area; and
 - c. Recognise the work to pursue the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold recognition award.

October 2024

REPORT AUTHOR

Sharon Dick, Head of HR & Corporate Services
Brian Dunigan, Money Advice & Rights Team Manager
Carolynne McKendry, Active Health & Wellbeing Development Manager, ERCLT
Jane Duncan, Veterans' Support Officer

BACKGROUND PAPERS

East Renfrewshire Council, Council Paper, 7 September 2022, Report by Direct of Business Operations and Partnerships, Nomination of a Veterans' Champion
East Renfrewshire Council Cabinet Paper 1 October 2015, Report by Chief Officer HSCP and Deputy Chief Executive, Veterans Support Advisors Role.

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