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**Report to Resources & Audit Committee**

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**Date of Meeting: 21 April 2016**

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**Subject: Social Services Scrutiny Review: Proposed Scope**

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**Report by: Head of Strategy & Customer Services**

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**1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1. On the 28 January 2016, the Housing, Health and Committee requested that the Resources & Audit Committee undertake a scrutiny review of the circumstances impacting on the Social Services budget position and report its findings to Council.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is for the Resources & Audit Committee to agree the scope and resources for that review.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that Committee:
  - 2.1.1. agrees the scope and approach set out in respect of the planned Scrutiny Review of Social Services;
  - 2.1.2. notes that a provisional budget allocation of £10k has been identified from within existing resources to facilitate access to external specialist advice should it be required;
  - 2.1.3. agrees to a progress report being reported to Committee in June and October 2016;
  - 2.1.4. notes that the findings of the review will be reported to Council in December 2016.

**3.0 Considerations**

- 3.1. Based on November 2015 outturns, Social Services projected a revenue overspend of £1,894,000 for the year 2015/16 of which £1.676,000 related to Child Services. This was reported to the Housing, Health and Care Committee on 28 January 2016
- 3.2. The Social Services management team discussed the increasing revenue overspend with the Convenor of Housing, Health and Care Committee. Given

the extent of the projected overspend and its implications for the Council's overall budget, it was concluded that a wider review of the situation would be beneficial to examine all the circumstances impacting on the service's financial position. This approach was agreed by Committee and subsequently approved by Council on 3 March 2016.

### Objectives

3.3. The objectives of the review are as follows:

- identify the key factors impacting on the Social Services revenue budget position;
- identify areas for improvement and actions to ensure that a sustainable resourcing position is possible for the Council.

### Scope

3.4. This project will necessarily be tightly focused. Whilst operational management arrangements are a consideration, for example financial and managerial controls, the review will also consider the wider social and economic environment within which Social Services operates in Clackmannanshire.

3.5. The review will focus its research on matters directly relevant to the costs and levels of child care services in Clackmannanshire, for example, number of children in the care system, child protection referrals and whether service policies, processes or models of care offer best value. This should include current considerations, possible future trends and the likely local outlook.

3.6. The following issues should be considered within the scope of this review. Should the project lead wish to clarify or extend the scope then this will be considered by the Resources and Audit Committee.

- the review will focus on the significant areas of Child Care expenditure including:- children's residential schools; fostering and children's disability services
- examination of the specific causes of financial pressures on Child Care Services in Clackmannanshire to determine if and how they might be mitigated.. This will include a detailed analysis of the cause and effect of variable factors beyond general data already provided to the Committee.
- analysis of the demographics of the looked after children population that specifically affect service demands in Clackmannanshire to ensure that current resources and demand forecast are realistic.
- financial governance to ensure compliance with Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation and managerial controls.

### Approach

3.7. The review should examine the current profile of social services

expenditure and consider the anticipated budget requirement for the future. Again, it will be important to remain focused on those issues impacting upon Child Services in Clackmannanshire.

The review will consider current best practice and may undertake benchmarking field visits. It is expected that the review should take into account a wide range of factors including:

- a) relevant demographics
- b) statutory requirements
- c) benchmarking spend, provision and policy against those of other councils
- d) the financial control environment.

### Resources

- 3.8. The review project team will be sponsored by The Depute Chief Executive, with a designated Chief Officer responsible for project management leadership. Effective project management and communication with a range of stakeholders will be essential to the review process.
- 3.9. The core review team will, amongst others as required, include representation from Internal Audit, Finance, Strategy and Social Services. Other specialist advice and support will be available as appropriate.
- 3.10. In order to meet the requirements of the scope of the review, it may be necessary/desirable to obtain external specialist advice. This will be financed and procured in line with Financial Regulations and Contract Standing orders. A provisional maximum budget of £10k has been identified from within existing resources to facilitate this if required.

### Reporting

- 3.11. The final report should be reported to Council no later than December 2016.
- 3.12. Progress should be reported to the Resources & Audit Committee in October 2016.

### **Conclusions**

- 3.13. The Resources and Audit Committee has been requested by the Housing, Health & care Committee to undertake a scrutiny review of the circumstances impacting on the Social Services budget position and report its findings to Council.
- 3.14. This report proposes objectives, scope, approach, resources and reporting arrangements to enable the review to be completed by December 2016.

## **4.0 Sustainability Implications**

- 4.1. There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.

## **5.0 Resource Implications**

5.1. *Financial Details*

5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes

5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes

5.4. *Staffing - staff resource implications are set out within the body of the report.*

**6.0 Exempt Reports**

6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes  (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

**7.0 Declarations**

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box )

- The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses
- Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive
- People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment
- Our communities are safer
- Vulnerable people and families are supported
- Substance misuse and its effects are reduced
- Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing
- The environment is protected and enhanced for all
- The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

**8.0 Equalities Impact**

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?  
Yes  No  Not considered applicable in this context.

**9.0 Legality**

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

## 10.0 Appendices

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

none

## 11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes  (please list the documents below) No

Housing, Health & Care Committee of 28 January 2016: Report prepared by the Head of Social Services entitled, Social Services Finance Report 01/04/15 to 30/11/15

### Author(s)

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### Approved by

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Garry Dallas	Executive Director	Signed: G Dallas

