

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL – 15 DECEMBER 2016

STARRED ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MINUTES

Audit and Risk Committee of 14 November 2016

7. SOCIAL WORK IN SCOTLAND

- 7.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Accounts Commission on the delivery of Social Work services in Scotland. The Chief Officer Children and Young People Support was in attendance to present the report to Committee. The summary included in the report advised that current approaches to delivering social work services was not sustainable in the longer term and there were risks, should costs be reduced further, which could affect the quality of service provision. The report included key recommendations for Local Authorities and Integration Joint Boards.
- 7.2 Members discussed aspects of the report such as the stability of the local authority workforce within Social Work and Mrs Blackie advised that this was very positive in the Scottish Borders. She went on to explain that qualifications offered by local Colleges did not necessarily match current employment opportunities and further work was needed to make progress in this area. Discussion followed on how an early intervention approach could be developed further through multi-agency partnerships and on how Resilient Communities/community-led social work services could contribute to this. With regard to recovery and aftercare for adults, health and social work staff worked closely with families and local support networks to enable people to return home as soon as possible after treatment. By way of clarification, Mrs Blackie confirmed that in certain circumstances, looked-after children included young people up to 26 years of age, with 40 looked-after children currently under SBC's care. Members acknowledged that there was clearly a need to find alternative ways of maintaining this responsibility within the current financial constraints. Following discussion, Members agreed to recommend to Council that the self-assessment checklist as detailed in Supplement 4 of the Accounts Commission 'Social Work in Scotland' report be issued to all Elected Members to raise their understanding of social work in the Council. Members further discussed the merits of developing similar checklists covering a range of responsibilities, for example their corporate parenting role, and how these could be used to assist them in their roles. The Chair thanked Mrs Blackie for her attendance.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the Accounts Commission report.**
- * (b) **AGREED TO RECOMMEND that the self-assessment checklist as detailed in Supplement 4 of the Accounts Commission 'Social Work in Scotland' report be issued to all Elected Members to raise their understanding of social work in the Council.**

8. MID-TERM TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2016/17

- 8.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing the mid-year report of treasury management activities for 2016/17, in line with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice, including Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators. Following consideration by the Audit and Risk Committee, the report would then be presented to Council for approval. Appendix 1 to the report contained an analysis of the performance against the targets set in relation to Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators and proposed revised estimates of these indicators in light of the 2015/16 outturn and experience in 2016/17 to date for discussion by the Committee prior to presentation to Council for approval. It was also noted that any changes to the report following presentation to the Executive Committee on 15 November 2016 would be reflected in the final version to be considered by Council on 15 December 2016.

- 8.2 The Chief Financial Officer advised that all of the 2016/17 target indicators reported on were based on those agreed as part of the strategy approved by Council in February 2016. The mid-year report for 2016/17 was detailed in Appendix 1 and covered: the economic update for the first six months of the current year; reviews of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy; Council's capital expenditure (prudential indicators); Council's investment portfolio for 2016/17; Council's borrowing strategy for the current year; and compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2016/17. Members' requests for clarification on interest rates and deferred borrowing were met and the Chief Financial Officer advised that deferred borrowing had not impacted on the Pension Fund returns. With regard to housing development, it was noted that the current market had not allowed Bridge Homes to build its target number of new houses and it was likely that the actual number built would be in the region of 100 homes by 2019.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED that treasury management activity in the six months to 30 September 2016 had been carried out in compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy and Policy; and**
- * (b) **AGREED TO RECOMMEND that the Treasury Management Mid-Year report 2016/17, as contained in Appendix 1 to the report and as amended by Executive Committee on 15 November 2016, be presented to Council for approval of the revised indicators.**