

		<i>Papers</i>
1.1	AOB	
1.2	Apologies	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Minutes/Committees	
3.1	Minute of Meeting held on 10 December 2015 Board Action Log and Workplan Matters Arising	Attached
3.2	Remuneration Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal Update on Pay 	Verbal
	Reports	
4.	Draft Budget 2016/17	Attached
5.	Digital Strategy Update	Verbal
6.	SCRA Research Activities 2016/17	Attached
7.	Locality Performance Reviews	Attached
8.	New Risks	
9.	Date of Next Meeting: 17 March 2016	



Board Action Log as at January 2016

Meeting Date/ Item	Action	Timescale	Owner	Comments	Status
11/12/14 Minute 25/9/14	Chair to confirm Board lead for partnership	Jan 15 By Autumn 15	CW	Discussions with members continue, links are being maintained with UNISON via the chair and by attendance as an observer of the Branch Secretary	Progressing
26/6/15 Board Dev Day Note	Report to be prepared on SCRA's role as Corporate Parent – how SCRA will discharge duties and integrate into day to day work + how corporate parenting will work in relation to UNCRC.	Nov 15	MS	Briefing Note discussed at November Development Day. Training Session to be organised early in the new year.	Complete Underway
26/9/15	Update report on engagement with Partners from the Participation Officer to be scheduled for a future Board meeting	March 2016	NH/MMcl	Schedule into workplan	Not yet due
5/11/15	Risk Reference Group – joint session with Audit Committee to be organised Spring 2016	Spring 2016		Plans underway for session at February Audit Committee	Not yet due

Meeting Date/ Item	Action	Timescale	Owner	Comments	Status
5/11/15	Board Appraisal Feedback to be circulated to EMT Appraisal document to be updated following completion of the two remaining Board member appraisals	Nov 15 Jan 16	JMcD CW		Complete Progressing
10/12/15	SOM Report to Board re Locality Performance Reviews	Jan 16	TP/AH	Report scheduled for January 16 Board	Complete
10/12/15	Further case examples across all localities to be collated to evidence the volume and case type	March 16	MS		Not yet due
10/12/15	OPR- report format to be amended to split the number of hearings into types of hearings	March 16	LB		Not yet due
10/12/15	Digital Strategy Update for Board	January 16	NH/LMcD	Verbal update scheduled for January 16 Board	Complete



Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
Minutes of SCRA Board
held on Thursday 10 December 2015 at Canongate Youth Project, Edinburgh

Present:

Carole Wilkinson (Chair), Malcolm Dickson, Bernadette Docherty, Catherine Robertson, Douglas Yates, Andrew Menzies, Andrew Miller (Items 1-7)

In attendance:

Neil Hunter (Principal Reporter/Chief Executive), Ed Morrison (Head of Finance & Resources), Malcolm Schaffer (Head of Practice & Policy), Alistair Hogg (Senior Operational Manager), Susan Deery (HR Manager), Lisa Bennett (Head of Strategy/OD), Janis McDougall (Executive Officer, Minutes)
Eleanor Manson (Scottish Government)(Observer)

The Chair welcomed Eleanor Manson, Sponsor Team, Scottish Government who was attending the Board meeting as an observer as part of a wider personal development programme for Sponsor Team officials.

		Timescale	Action
1.1	AOB There were no additional items of business.		
1.2	Apologies Apologies were received from Anela Anwar, Board Member and Joe McKeown, UNISON Branch Secretary. Andrew Miller, Board Member advised that he required to leave at 2 p.m.		
2.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.		
3.	Updates Douglas Yates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SCRA Staff Event - Whistleblowing Training Course - Event at Police College on Equalities and Diversity Bernadette Docherty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visited Stranraer Office • Had an appraisal meeting with SCRA Chair • Attended Joint SCRA/CHS Board meeting, Board Development Day, Staff Event and Audit & Risk Committee. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Andrew Miller</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Joint SCRA/CHS Board meeting, Board Development Day, Ministerial meeting, Chaired his final Remuneration & Succession Planning Committee <p>Catherine Robertson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Audit & Risk Committee, Remuneration & Succession Planning Committee, Board Development Day • Had appraisal meeting with SCRA Chair <p>Malcolm Dickson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Health & Safety Committee, Joint SCRA/CHS Board meeting, Board Development Day, Staff Event and Audit & Risk Committee <p>Andrew Menzies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Board Development Day and Staff Event <p>Carole Wilkinson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended presentation ceremony to SCRA Diploma students • Involved in activity around Board vacancies to which there has been a good response • Held annual appraisal meetings with Bernadette Docherty and Catherine Robertson • Attendance at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institute of Directors Event – Women on Boards - SCRA’s Participation and Engagement Group - Joint SCRA/CHS Board meeting, Board Development Day, Staff Event - Kilbrandon Lecture - Met with Kirsty Herson in relation to SCRA providing a shadowing opportunity. Kirsty will start attending Board meetings in January. - Chaired a meeting of SCRA’s Equalities Network including a development session. Progress is now being made particularly in relation to ideas on rolling out equalities in localities. <p>Meeting with Minister – 10/12/15 Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The meeting with the Minister earlier in the day had been very positive. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>2. The meeting afforded the opportunity to discuss with the Minister the context within which the organisation is currently operating - plans for maintaining service delivery and continuous improvement, partnership working and shared services, against a backdrop of financial constraints.</p> <p>3. SCRA's current position in relation to finance was acknowledged.</p> <p>4. The Minister also thanked Malcolm Dickson and Andrew Miller for their significant contribution to the Board over the last eight years (both members are due to conclude their term of office in May 2016).</p> <p>5. Feedback from Sponsor Team indicated that the briefing note provided had been useful in setting the context and the inclusion of the financial, data and case information had been particularly helpful.</p>		
4.1	<p>Minute of Meeting held on 24 September 2015 The minute was agreed as a correct record.</p> <p>Action Log and Workplan The action log and workplan were reviewed.</p> <p>Noted: It is proposed to hold the April Board Development Day (28th) in Aberdeen.</p>		
4.2	<p>Minute of Board Development Day held on 5 November 2015 The minute was agreed as a correct record.</p>		
4.3	<p>Draft Audit & Risk Committee Minute of 19 November 2015 Malcolm Dickson, Audit & Risk Committee Chair spoke to the draft minute and highlighted in particular:</p> <p>Non-Disclosure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there remains a focus on reviewing and looking at processes in the light of breaches – the breaches now mainly relate to human error with no recurring process related themes emerging. • The Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership reviewed the recent non disclosure research report. The CHIP is the appropriate forum to raise partner awareness and progress work around reducing the numbers of non-disclosure orders across the whole system. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A representative from the Information Commissioner’s office will attend the next IG Leads meeting. The Group is now well established and provides an opportunity for constructive dialogue and sharing of good practice/lessons learned. <p>Case Sampling – Withdrawn Court Applications to Proof</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues around recording were raised again as a result of this case sampling exercise. An instruction has been issued to all staff that adequate recording is an essential and core professional function. • The reasons for withdrawing an application broadly fell into seven different categories. The most common reason was due to a change in circumstances, which for the vast majority saw a positive change in the circumstances for the child, through a reduction in the concerns that had led to the referral to a hearing, and/or a new level of co-operation with the professionals by the parent(s). • The issue around recording will be reviewed again in 18 months’ time – in the meantime it was noted that recording issues will be picked up via the Court Project which is due to run until September 2017. • The Head of Strategy/OD will consider options for review and report back to the next Audit & Risk Committee. <p>Joint Inspections of Children’s Services Annual Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overview report is the most comprehensive one received to date. • There are no common or consistent themes for improvement emerging across the inspection reports. • During some inspections SCRA staff have had to raise difficult issues with partners – this has led to tensions in some arrangements – but the interventions and position taken were appropriate based on SCRA’s specific vantage point. <p>External Audit General Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Audit Scotland tender process for the appointment of external auditors is now underway. <p>Internal Audit Report – Estates Strategy Follow-up Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The internal auditors have gained assurance over the estates management arrangements at SCRA. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is acknowledged that the use of outreach hearings centre is a long-term obstacle to ensuring that all hearing centres meet the desired standards of SCRA management. • The Management Response indicated the two medium risk recommendations were accepted and will be taken forward within the timescales detailed in the Management Action Plan. <p>Internal Audit Sustainability Review Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The internal auditors have gained an assurance that SCRA has robust financial planning, modelling and monitoring arrangements in place to support the financial sustainability of the organisation and ensuring that long and medium term goals are achieved. • There were no areas identified where further improvement is required and several areas of good practice were highlighted including the rigorous process adopted to identify the main actions needed to be taken to meet the outcomes and vision of SCRA. • The report provided an external and independent assurance/evidence of the work undertaken by the organisation. <p>Internal Audit Localities Review Report (North Strathclyde)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The internal auditors have gained an assurance over the high level devolved management controls in place. • North Strathclyde represents the organisation's most complex locality in terms of management structure covering five local authorities, four core sites with a high mix of part-time/fulltime staff. • The Management Response indicated the five low-level recommendations were accepted and will be taken forward within the timescales detailed in the Management Action Plan. (Note: 4 of the recommendations have already been completed). <p>Internal Audit Report – Case Management System Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review identified that CMS is operating in a robust and mature security control environment which is subject to formal annual accreditation and review. • There were a lot of positives within the report and the Senior Management Team were aware of the issues identified for improvement and had openly shared these as known risks in the course of the audit process. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to the three high risk areas the management response is proportionate in terms of balancing security against functionality and risk/likelihood. • The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive advised that the risks referenced in the report will be scoped by the Senior Management Team and included in the Strategic/Operational Risk Register as appropriate. • A separate note detailing the actions taken will be prepared for the SCRA Board Chair and SCRA Audit & Risk Reference Committee Chair. <p>Internal Audit Recommendations Follow-up Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress has been made on implementation of recommendations. <p>Strategic & Operational Risk Registers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Audit & Risk Committee reviewed and approved the risk registers for submission to the Board (scheduled for discussion later in the meeting). <p>Consultation on Revised Code of Audit Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee approved the joint SCRA/CHS response to Audit Scotland's consultation on the revised Code of Audit Practice. <p>Noted: The draft Audit & Risk Committee Minute of 19 November 2015.</p>		
4.4	<p>Remuneration & Succession Planning Committee – 10 December 2015</p> <p>Andrew Miller, Remuneration & Succession Planning Committee Chair gave a verbal update from the meeting held earlier in the day.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Committee had approved draft pay award proposals subject to alignment with Scottish Government Guidance which was scheduled to be published on 16 December 2015. 2. An initial paper on succession planning had been considered – further work will be undertaken with six monthly progress reports scheduled for the Remuneration & Succession Planning Committee. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay Remit – a further meeting of the Remuneration & Succession Plan Committee will be convened if there is a significant misalignment between the draft Pay Remit and Scottish Government Guidance. • General - there are scheduled changes to taxation arrangements for staff and the Head of Finance & Resources will ensure that there is information available in response to any potential queries on the changes. 		
5.	<p>Board Committee Membership Carole Wilkinson, SCRA Chair spoke to the report which detailed revised Committee membership.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Board as part of its governance structure has the following Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk and Audit • Remuneration & Succession Planning • Appeals • Nominations. 2. The Board will have two vacancies in May 2016 (the recruitment process is currently underway). 3. As part of succession planning arrangements the Chair has reviewed Committee membership and has consulted the two departing members with a view to relinquishing their respective Chair roles of Audit & Risk and Remuneration and Succession Planning Committees to allow a transition period and continuity of service. <p>Agreed: To approve the revised Committee membership as detailed in the Appendix to this minute.</p>		
6.	<p>Chief Executive's Report The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive spoke to the update report which detailed a wide range of activity across the organisation.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The activity spanning partnership working, operational business, information and research and in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the joint approach taken at the national partnership forum meeting in relation to a recently introduced national Hearings Arrangement Form. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The results of performance work are being seen through the 50 working days indicator with all localities close to or exceeding their targets. Timescales for scheduling Hearings remains less positive. Locality managers are actively investigating the areas of poorer performance. In some instances, there is recognised need to adjust how staff process casework, as it may be variations in Reporter practice that creates or prevents the delay. Following on from the renewed focus, significant improvements have been seen in Quarter 3. 2. Delay in casework decision-making continues to improve significantly with current levels 75% below average. The improvements which localities have made in this and other areas was a key focus of the Senior Operational Manager (SOM) reviews which took place in September and October. All initial reviews are now complete with the SOMs receiving assurance about progress against locality plans. The meetings have also provided opportunities to share ideas and approaches across localities. 3. In addition to the service to children and young people indicators, there was a lapsed order in the quarter. It has been fully reviewed by the locality with new grounds taken to protect the child and has been communicated to the Head of Practice and Policy. 4. Children referred on non-offence grounds decreased, driven by Ayrshire locality where managers are engaging with partners to ensure only appropriate referrals are received after large increases in recent quarters. Child Protection Orders (CPOs) have reduced overall, but Glasgow and Tayside and Fife localities continue to experience high numbers. The findings from the inspection in Fife may help inform SCRA of any issues arising. In addition, two SCRA staff have been involved as associate inspectors for recent inspections which will help SCRA understand more about the process while enhancing relationships with the Care Inspectorate. 5. The report is showing increases in PHPs and interim orders. These changes were unexpected and will be monitored and looked at by SCRA's Practice and Quality Network to understand any operational context which is occurring. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>6. Working days lost to absence continues to be above the 4% target despite both short and long term absences decreasing in the quarter. Appropriate early intervention and support continues to be provided to staff experiencing chronic illness, including regular keeping in touch meetings and return to work discussions.</p> <p>7. Financial forecasts point to revenue pressures. The Executive Management Team (EMT) are overseeing the deployment of a number of strategies including measures to contain translation costs while minimising the effect on service users. Creative staffing solutions are being identified to manage workloads within the current complement of staff. Capital forecasts are pointing to a slight overspend which will likely be offset by programme slippage at year end. The Head of IT has identified capital spend that can be accelerated from 2016/17 should significant slippage emerge in the last quarter. The financial forecasts at this stage take no account of the likely significant revenue and capital implications of the recent fire at SCRA's Tranent Hearing Centre.</p> <p>8. The OPR now includes returns of 'all about me' forms. This is used to help children and young people provide their views to the Hearing and must be taken into account by the Hearing where appropriate. Options are currently being looked at to improve return rates.</p> <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been performance improvement across the whole country. • Localities are significantly impacted by some local legal practices/approach adopted by solicitors in relation to meeting the target in relation to non-offence applications established at court. • PHPs impact on diary management – the Hearings Management Group are picking up the issue of the increasing number of PHPs • The recent case examples prepared for the Ministerial briefing demonstrable the incredible volume of work that can be created by a single case. • The Participation Group have discussed the locality breakdown in relation to the return of Having Your Say Forms. The Group is also exploring different ways to undertake pre-hearing visits – e.g. virtual visits. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the Second Quarter Organisational Performance Report for publication. 2. It would be useful to gather further case examples across all localities to evidence the volume and case type. 3. The format of the report in terms of presentation and content subject to one change – to split the number of hearings into types of hearings. 	<p>March 16</p> <p>March 16</p>	<p>MS</p> <p>LB</p>
8.	<p>2015/16 Budget Monitoring – Quarter 2</p> <p>The Head of Finance & Resources spoke to the Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring 2015/16 report which summarised SCRA’s financial position for the year to October 2015 and the forecast for the full year 2015/16.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget holders are anticipating revenue budget overspends of around £169k. Finance will continue to work closely with localities, Head Office Business Partners and Business Managers in monitoring spend and forecasts between now and the year end. EMT will oversee the actions set out in section 3.9 which are designed to reduce the forecast overspend. 2. In line with discussions with EMT and the Board there has been no carry-forward adjustment into 2015/16 as the overspend was less than £100k. It will not be possible to apply a similar overspend tolerance at the end of 2015/6. 3. The capital budget is currently forecast to be £16k overspent. This is dependent on a number of key assumptions particularly that the Inverness and Stornoway projects can largely be completed this year. A clear plan is in place for IT capital spend to March 2016 and acceleration of 2016/17 infrastructure replacement/hardware refresh plans is possible should resources be available this year. However underspends to date on IT and Digital projects have been diverted to meet unavoidable property costs, including a likely need to provide for dilapidation costs in Irvine. All projects will be closely monitored to ensure that the outturn is as close to the available budget as possible and it is expected that some programme slippage will emerge to offset the small forecast overspend. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As recorded at the previous Board meeting, the Board support the decision made in relation to providing additional resources due to staff absence (sickness and maternity leave) to maintain a safe and effective service. • Hearings System Digital Strategy - the Board has discussed the strategy previously and flagged up the need for SCRA/CHS Boards to have governance arrangements in place which will allow lessons from previous projects to be incorporated as well as independent advice and scrutiny. An update report on the Digital Strategy project is scheduled for the January Board meeting. <p>Agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the revenue position for the year to October 2015 and to approve the range of actions identified in the report to be implemented as required to mitigate the anticipated overspend for the full year 2016/16. 2. To note the capital position for the year to October 2015 and to approve the options detailed in the report to fully utilise the 2015/16 capital budget. 	Jan 16	NH/ LMcD
9.	<p>Draft Business Plan 2016/17</p> <p>The Head of Strategy/OD introduced the updated draft Business Plan 2016/17 incorporating changes agreed at the November Board Development Day and following a meeting with Sponsor Team.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The planned activities for the Business Plan 2016/17 fall into two categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those we committed to in the 2014-17 Corporate Plan which did not fall into year 1 or year 2 • Those in the current business Plan which will not be completed by March 16, and which will carry forward (where they continue to hold relevance) 2. SCRA will prepare a new Corporate Plan for 2017-20 during the course of the business year 2016/17. 3. A piece of work was undertaken to review the plan by categorising the actions in order to consider them for prioritisation 4. The actions in plan appeared to fall into 4 broad categories – Essential, Cost Neutral, Spend to save, and Value add. It was using these categories that the first stratified ‘cut’ of actions was completed. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>5. Proposed next steps are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the categorisation and its application within the plan – mid Dec 15 • Continue with full consultation of actions in plan – mid Dec 15 • Continue with more detailed planning based on feedback and delivery plans from leads on which is currently in the draft – end Dec 15/Jan16 • Stock take following outcome of Spending Review – Jan 16 • Develop or refine detailed timeline for final development – Jan 16. <p>6. Confirmation has been received from Sponsor Team that an agreed date for completion of the business plan will be set once the outcome of the Spending Review is known and decisions have been made by Scottish Government as a result.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the categorisation applied to the actions within the draft Business Plan 2016/17 and the methodology used. 2. The categorisation “value add” to be changed to “continuous service improvement”. 		
10.	<p>Annual Workforce Report The HR Manager spoke to the annual workforce report for 2016/17.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Annual Workforce Report for 2016/17 aims to meet the needs of our Business Plan – which in turn supports the final year of SCRA’s Corporate Plan 2014-17. The focus is on the sustainability and resilience of staff resources, recognising that workforce planning has a significant role to play in this by considering the internal pressures of staff capacity and capability in the context of external pressures. 2. The challenge for workforce planning in 2016/17 will be to ensure that Locality Management Teams and Head Office functions are enabled to continue to make improvements in service delivery performance within the context of very challenging resources. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>3. Evidenced through the results of the 2015 staff survey, SCRA has seen a rise in staff morale, motivation and workload management and is striving to continue that upward trend through the provision of adequate resources, opportunities for individual and organisational growth at the same time being as flexible as possible to meet our internal and external service delivery challenges.</p> <p>4. The purpose of the report is therefore to identify the key supports and resource challenges facing SCRA over the next twelve to eighteen months in recruiting, retaining and developing the workforce it requires. Specifically it will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key pillars that are required to be in place to support the workforce • analysis of the existing workforce • workforce planning - including our flexible approach to service delivery, supportive absence management methodologies and the learning and development requirements of our workforce through corporate training and succession planning. <p>5. Although the report outlines activity and actions that will help to inform our business, financial and training plans, SCRA's workforce planning requires to be flexible and agile to react to the needs of the service and our service users. Additionally, the outcome of the Spending Review may have an impact on how we approach our service delivery and as such an impact on our workforce plan. It will therefore be reviewed regularly, in partnership, to ensure its continued fit with the business.</p> <p>6. The current composition of the workforce and the short-term workforce plan for 2016/17.</p> <p>7. A three year Workforce Strategy will be developed to align with SCRA's Corporate Plan 2017/20.</p> <p>8. Achievements from the 2015 Workforce report as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.</p> <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need for a consistent approach to absence management across localities and for that management to be visible to staff and plans put in place to reduce the current level of absence. - The focus has been a broad approach over the last couple of years but this will now be enhanced with a clearer focus on early intervention and support to both prevent absence and improve ability to return to work.. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Corporate Learning and Development Programme will include training for managers in relation to absence management. - Absence management did feature as part of the Senior Operational Managers' performance review meetings. - The Board receive absence management statistics as part of the organisational performance report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report was comprehensive and it was particularly helpful to see information on the age profile. <p>Agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Board will monitor and interrogate the section on absence management in the organisational performance and if there is no progress in this area will request more detailed reports on this specific aspect of performance. 2. To endorse and support the short-term workforce plan action for 2016/17. 	Sept 16	CW
11.	<p>Corporate Procurement Strategy 2015-18</p> <p>The Head of Finance & Resources introduced the report detailing the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2015-2018.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SCRA's first Corporate Procurement Strategy was published in 2012. The Strategy has been substantially updated in light of the considerable developments in public sector procurement in the last three years. 2. Further updating of the Strategy will be required once all guidance relating to the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 has been issued by Scottish Government. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be updated in June 2016 and annually thereafter. 3. The Strategy has been re-structured to give more prominence to procurement aims, vision and improvement activity and some of the annualised information included in the previous strategy has been removed giving the Strategy a longer shelf-life. Annual information on objectives and activity is now included in the report provided to the Board each September. 4. The Strategy focuses on how SCRA has and is adapting to recent changes in legislation and regulations from working with the new procurement thresholds to addressing Fair Work Practices. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>5. In re-drafting the Strategy the Procurement Officers reviewed the strategy documents of a number of other public bodies and have incorporated some of the best elements into the revised SCRA Strategy.</p> <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the December Executive Management Team meeting, the need was identified to ensure that delegated purchasers have the confidence and training to carry out their role in relation to purchases up to £20k. • Equalities issues – the need to monitor this particular aspect and in particular how the organisation continues to ensure that local suppliers are able to bid for services. <p>Agreed: To approve the updated Corporate Procurement Strategy 2015-18.</p>		
12.	<p>Overview of Policies Annual Report The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive spoke the report detailing the programme of policy reviews undertaken in 2015.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The programme of policy reviews undertaken in 2015. 2. All SCRA policies are routed via the Partnership Forum for consultation. 3. The health & safety policies are monitored and tracked by the Health & Safety Committee. <p>Agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To continue with the previously agreed approach that policies which set direction, require specific high-level scrutiny and governance arrangements or are of a novel/controversial, public interest nature will be routed via the Board, with others devolved as previously agreed. 2. The review schedule for policies for 2016 as detailed in the report. 		
13.	<p>Influencing Report (1 June 2015-1 December 2015) The Head of Practice & Policy introduced the report which detailed key areas where SCRA had been able to be influential and apply its professional expertise, data and research to particular issues at a national level.</p>		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Noted: The range of activity for period 1 June 2015 to 1 December 2015 as detailed in the report.</p> <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Policy & Public Affairs Manager continues to work one day per week at Victoria Quay – feedback from Sponsor Team on this arrangement is positive. • There is a need to review legislation which may not at first appear to be relevant to SCRA but may have unintended consequences e.g. the Apologies (Scotland) Bill. • SCRA has been involved in a number of significant pieces of work alongside Police Scotland. SCRA now has an established open and constructive working partnership with Police Scotland. <p>Agreed: To continue with the twice yearly report to the Board and that a section to be included detailing requests for visits.</p>		MS
14.	<p>Risk Strategic & Operational Risk Registers The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive introduced the report on the updated Strategic and Operational Risk Registers.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Audit Committee, at its recent meeting, reviewed and approved the registers for submission to the Board. 2. A full review of the registers has been undertaken by the Executive Management Team (Strategic) and Operational Group (Operational). 3. The risks across both registers focus on the ongoing challenges in the delivery of a safe and effective service with the focus moving to sustainable performance delivery and quality of outcomes. 4. The most recent review of the registers indicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational capacity for safe and effective service delivery remains the significant risk although as the organisation moves into a period of sustainability it is showing a downward trend. - The closure of risks in both Registers reflects the organisation's progress towards more sustainable performance improvement and also reflects findings from the both the staff survey and the recent CMS User survey. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>- Efficiency planning and delivery of a sustainable budget are inextricably linked to operational capacity risks. The future financial position of the organisation is now one of the key core risks to operational capacity/stability. With uncertainty on the future budget position and the forthcoming spending review process these risks are showing an upward trend.</p> <p>5. The Risk Reference Group met in June 2015 when the focus for the session facilitated by Scott Moncrieff was on development of locality risks and risk appetite. Locality Risk Registers were due for completion by December 2015 and these were discussed by the Group at its December meeting.</p> <p>6. The Risk Management Policy is due for revision and was scheduled for submission to the November Audit Committee. With the consent of the Audit & Risk Committee Chair, this will be considered by the February Audit & Risk Committee to allow time for consultation/discussion/review of amendments to the policy with the Risk Reference Group.</p> <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk around information governance and use of encrypted emails by some local authorities has been scoped but the risk is not sufficiently clear or consistent at this stage to be logged on the strategic risk register. • The new operational risk identified around non-disclosure in relation to Locality practice versus statutory requirements has now been resolved. A variation in practice not to include significant redacted information to all parties has been agreed by EMT, with suitable safeguards. • The risk registers provide an accurate reflection of the current risks facing the organisation. Progress is being made in embedding risk management at all levels within the organisation. <p>Agreed: To approve the Strategic Risk Register and note the Operational Risk Register.</p>		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>New Risks Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The potential risk around pay remit – the remit itself and also linked to the Spending Review – this will be monitored as the pay remit progresses. 2. There remains a risk around the outcome of the spending review – currently captured across the strategic and operational risk registers. 		
15.	Date of Next Meeting: 21 January 2016		

SCRA COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (effective from 1 January 2016)

Audit & Risk Committee

Andrew Menzies (Chair)

Bernadette Docherty (Deputy Chair)

Catherine Robertson

Malcolm Dickson (until May 2016 then vacancy to be filled)

(SCRA Chair and Principal Reporter/Chief Executive ex officio members)

Remuneration & Succession Planning Committee

Catherine Robertson (Chair)

Douglas Yates

Andrew Miller (until May 2016 then vacancy to be filled)

Appeals Committee

Bernadette Docherty (Chair)

Douglas Yates

Vacancy

Nominations Committee

Carole Wilkinson (Chair)

Catherine Roberson

Anela Anwar

Sponsor Team Representative, Scottish Government

SCRA Board Meeting Workplan 2015/16

Business Item									
Strategic/Corporate	25/6/15	24/9/15	5/11/15 *	10/12/15	21/1/16	17/3/16	28/4/16*	22/6/16	22/9/16
Policy & Influencing Report	✓			✓				✓	
Research Programme					✓				
Annual Strategy Seminar			✓						
Risk Register	✓			✓				✓	
Communications Strategy		✓							
Governance									
Audit Committee Minutes	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Development Day Minutes	✓			✓				✓	
Committee Annual Reports	✓							✓	
Feedback on Board Performance			✓						
Nominations Committee Minutes	✓	✓				✓			
Finance									
Budget Monitoring Report	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Draft Budget					✓	✓			
Annual Report & Accounts		✓							✓
Planning									
Draft Corporate & Business Plan				✓		✓			
Annual Workforce Planning Report				✓					
Performance									
Organisational Performance Report	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Operational									
Chief Executive's Report	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Complaints Review	✓							✓	
Equalities Annual Report						✓			
Environmental Annual Report	✓								✓
Overview of Policies Annual Report				✓					
Inspection Themes Annual Report		✓**							

* Board Development Days

** Report scheduled for November Audit Committee

SCRA Board Meeting Workplan 2015/16

Business Item									
	25/6/15	24/9/15	5/11/15*	10/12/15	21/1/16	17/3/16	28/4/16*	22/6/16	22/9/16
Health & Safety Annual Report		✓							✓
Efficiency Report		✓							✓
Young People's Board		✓***							
New Bio-diversity Duties	✓								✓
Procurement Strategy				✓					
Corporate Parenting				✓~					
Participation & Engagement Update						✓			
Digital Strategy Update								✓	
Update on New Grounds							✓		
Performance Management Review								✓	
HR Strategy									✓
OD Strategy									✓

* Board Development Days

*** Update included in Chief Executive's Report

~ Briefing paper presented to Board Development Day

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Draft Budget 2016/17

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive **Date:** 11th January 2016

Report Author: Head of Finance and Resources

Recommendation:

- 1. To note the draft budget plans for 2016/17.**
- 2. To comment on the key issues identified for Challenge and Review at section 3.16.**

Reason for Report: For noting

Resource Implications: Outwith approved budgets

Strategy: Outwith approved plans

Consultation: Budget Holders and Executive Management Team

Equalities Duties: Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken on final budget proposals

Document Classification: Not Protectively Marked

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 In September 2015 the Board reviewed and commented upon the draft Spending Review submission with further discussion taking place at the Board Development Day in November 2015. In the September report it was noted that SCRA's revenue requirement for 2016/17 was £21.442m. The report stated that funding at this level is required to allow SCRA to continue with its modernisation programme, continue to work closely with partner organisations to implement the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and ensure plans and resources are in place to avoid increasing risks to individual children and young people involved with the hearing system.
- 1.2 Section 2 of this report updates Members on the draft outcomes of the 2015 Spending Review and section 3 provides an update on the first consolidation of 2016/17 revenue budget proposals received from budget holders in December 2015. An update on capital planning is also included in the report. However the list of projects set out in sections 3.16 to 3.23 require detailed dialogue with programme leads before a draft capital plan can be pulled together.
- 1.3 SCRA's current year forecast outturn was reported to the Board in December 2015 and the draft 2016/17 revenue budget proposals assume no carry forward overspend from 2015/16, achievement of which is still challenging.
- 1.4 It has been clear from previous Financial Plan reports that 2016/17 was going to be very challenging in delivering a sustainable service in the face of real terms reductions in resources. The first consolidation of the 2015/16 revenue budget plans confirms this. A special meeting of EMT took place in mid-December 2015 to consider the extent of the challenge and to identify some key areas of review in the coming weeks, including core staffing levels, voluntary severance, and savings targets.

2. Spending Review 2015

- 2.1 The Scottish Government Spending Review has resulted in only one year funding settlements for public sector bodies. In late December Sponsor Team confirmed the following details from the Finance Minister's Draft 2016/17 Budget Plans:

Published budget:
Resource £20.28m
Ring Fenced (non cash) £2.5m (depreciation)
Capital £0.97m

Indicative budget through in-year transfer:
Resource £21.3m
Ring Fenced (non cash) £2.5m (depreciation)
Capital £0.97m

This continues the pattern of recent years whereby SCRA's published revenue (resource) budget is supplemented by in-year transfers.

3. Draft Budget 2016/17

Revenue

- 3.1 Budget holders have submitted draft revenue and capital budgets for 2016/17. A summary is attached at Appendix 1. The Finance Team has consolidated the revenue budget returns and the draft total is £21.4m which is an increase of around £0.6m compared to the 2015/16 revenue budget, broadly in line with the assessment of required funding and £0.1m above available funding.
- 3.2 The draft Budgets include a 3% savings target generating £475k revenue savings and the achievability of such a target will be considered by EMT at Challenge and Review (C&R) in mid-February.

Staff Costs

- 3.3 The draft staff budget is based on an establishment of 388.19 FTEs. Details are attached at Appendix 2. This is line with expectations and reflects a net reduction of around 7.98 FTEs from last year, largely as a result of round five voluntary severance. The Establishment Group met late last year to finalise FTE numbers for 2016/17 ahead of C&R and to consider a number of proposals to change establishment. Decisions around funding will be taken at C&R.
- 3.4 The draft Budget Plans do not reflect the impact of a further round of voluntary severance. EMT will consider whether a Business Case for further voluntary severance should be presented to the Board in March 2016 along with the draft Budget plans. The key issue is expectations about future levels of revenue funding. The draft staff budget does not include any assumptions for natural turnover savings in 2016/17 although it is expected that strict adherence to the Vacancy Management procedure will continue throughout 2016/17.
- 3.5 In addition to the core establishment budget holders have submitted budget proposals for non-establishment posts and externally funded posts as detailed in Appendix 3, at a cost of £405k.
- 3.6 The draft staff budget reflects a one year pay remit as discussed with the Remuneration Committee in December 2015, an increase in the employer's superannuation costs and an increase in national insurance costs as a result of the loss of the contracted-out rebate for both employers and employees.

Non staff costs

- 3.7 The draft Property budgets show an overall increase of £21k (0.75%) against the 2015/16 budget. All property budgets will be subject to a rigorous challenge with a view to identifying further potential efficiency savings.
- 3.8 Draft IT budgets have been increased by a net £44k as a result of anticipated increases in software costs for HR and Finance systems coupled with the removal of the savings target for hosting costs.
- 3.9 It is proposed that the draft Legal Expenses budget is increased by £17k (12%) to £160k to reflect a continuation of the increased activity experienced in 2015/16.

- 3.10 An analysis of the Interpretation and Translation forecast for 2015/16 and draft 2016/17 budget is shown in the table below:

Locality	2015/16 Budget	2015/16 Forecast (at P8)	2016/17 Draft Budget	2016/17 change to 2015/16 Budget	2016/17 change to 2015/16 Forecast
	£	£	£	£	£
Ayrshire	8,000	9,000	14,000	6,000	5,000
Central	10,000	10,000	10,000	0	0
Glasgow	50,000	50,000	45,000	(5,000)	(5,000)
Grampian	45,000	40,000	40,000	(5,000)	0
H&I	16,000	40,000	40,000	24,000	0
LD&G	9,000	6,000	2,000	(7,000)	(4,000)
NS	25,000	25,000	30,000	5,000	5,000
Practice	(35,000)	0	0	35,000	0
South East	65,000	90,000	50,000	(15,000)	(40,000)
T&F	30,000	85,000	78,000	48,000	(7,000)
Total	223,000	355,000	309,000	86,000	(46,000)

- 3.11 In relation to draft budget plans for printing, stationery and postages budget returns do not yet reflect any savings from Benefits Realisation Programme projects. This will be a focus at the Change Board and EMT C&R.
- 3.12 The draft revenue plans do not yet include the revenue implications of projects included in the draft capital plans which will be assessed and reported at C&R.
- 3.13 A detailed review of the draft 2016/17 revenue budget proposals by Senior Operational Managers and Heads of Service, supported by Finance and HR Business partners, is underway and will be pulled together by the Finance Team before EMT C&R in February.

Income

- 3.14 The draft income figure is £38k lower than the 2015/16 budget. Shared services provided to CHS are subject to review following the introduction of joint posts in summer 2015 and the recent departure of the joint HR postholder. C&R will assess the risks of receiving less income than budgeted, particularly in relation to Youth Justice and SCRA's Kilmarnock property let.

Challenge and Review

- 3.15 The consolidated revenue budget exceeds available funding by £100k as noted in section 3.1. However the draft budget makes a number of initial assumptions which may be optimistic. It may be more realistic to assume a small carry forward deficit from 2015/16 (£50k), a 2.5% savings target (£80k), lower income from Youth Justice/Kilmarnock (£70k) and no additional funding for a small round of voluntary severance (£250k). This revised set of assumptions would result in a savings target of £550k for Challenge and Review.

3.16 Items for consideration by EMT at C&R will include, but are not restricted to:

- the impact of any 2015/16 overspend to be carried forward into 2016/17;
- affordability of the draft pay remit;
- deminimis level for staffing and future shape and skills of the workforce with reference service design and use of enabling technologies;
- the funding and impact of a new round of voluntary severance;
- the achievability of a 3% locality savings target;
- the achievability of centralised savings targets on estates, contract management and other supplies and services;
- income opportunities and risks;
- the reduction of performance targets and service quality;
- the scale of IT and other digital ambitions; and
- the provision of centralised funds for supporting business areas, e.g. for maternity absence backfill, Diploma support and Hearings support.

Capital

3.17 The Head of Property and Head of IT have identified a list of potential capital projects for 2016/17 and these are listed in Appendix 4.

3.18 Key locations for property projects in 2016/17 are Perth and Irvine assuming completion of projects in Inverness and Stornoway in late 2015/16 or early 2016/17.

It is not proposed to commission any new replacement property projects in 2016/17 but rather to focus capital resources on a significant Minor Works programme which will allow catch up on some important projects, build in some protection of the current estate for future years and support initial implementation of the emerging, joint Property Strategy with CHS.

3.19 There is now relatively little surplus space in the estate following recent lease agreements for Falkirk and Arbroath and improved space utilisation in Hamilton.

3.20 Finally, in Property terms, there is the potential to generate £80k in net capital receipts in 2016/17 from the disposal of the existing premises in Perth.

3.21 In terms of Information Technology priority capital requirements have been assessed by the joint Head of IT and key projects are reflected in Appendix 4. These investments are required to ensure software and hardware is up to date and capable of supporting the joint digital ambitions of SCRA and CHS.

3.22 The Sustainability, Quality and Performance Programme commenced in 2015/16. Initial programme and project documentation is under development and bids for capital investment may arise which will necessitate a review of capital priorities.

3.23 A business case to support the Children's Hearings System IT Digital Strategy will be drafted by February 2016. At this stage, despite political support for the proposed approach, there is no funding support from Scottish Government for the Digital Strategy and it is expected that the position will be reviewed in the spring.

3.24 The total, new capital requirements identified for 2016/17 amount to £970k (net) which is in line with available capital resources. However the draft plans will be rigorously reviewed at C&R to ensure capital investments are aligned with business priorities and will deliver clear benefits for the hearing system.

4. Alignment with Business Plan

4.1 The SCRA Planning and Finance Teams are monitoring alignment between the most significant activities in the draft Business Plan and the draft Budget returns.

4.2 To date this monitoring has provided a fair degree of comfort that the activities reviewed are matched by resources included in the budget returns, mostly in the form of staff time included in the establishment figures and draft capital proposals. However this will be a key area of focus for EMT at C&R next month.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The draft revenue cash settlement for 2016/17 provides SCRA with a slightly increased level of cash resource compared to 2015/16 which is a good outcome in the current very challenging context for public sector funding. However demands continue to increase in some areas of SCRA's business and there are significant cost pressures to be faced including pay, pensions, national insurance and as a result budget holders will still be required to deliver similar levels of savings to those achieved in recent years.

The one year nature of the settlement creates risks in setting the revenue budget for 2016/17 due to the uncertainty of funding from 2017/18. The Board are asked to review the draft plans and comment on the key issues identified for Challenge and Review at section 3.16.

5.2 In relation to capital projects draft plans for 2016/17 will be presented to EMT at Challenge and Review based on the potential projects described in sections 3.17 to 3.23.

6. Recommendations

6.1 To note the draft budget plans for 2016/17.

6.2 To comment on the key issues identified for Challenge and Review at section 3.16.

Previous Papers:
Spending Review 2015, SCRA(SEP15)14

SCRA Consolidated Draft Revenue Budget 2015/16

Full year Actuals 2014-15	CODE	NARRATIVE	Full year Budget 2015-16	Actuals to period 7 2015-16	Original returned Budget 2016-17
15,765,654	001	Core Establishment	15,582,725	9,047,534	16,026,193
205,919	007	Non-Establishment Posts	440,152	108,651	405,504
0	009	Savings Target	(438,764)	0	(475,000)
47,393	003	Board Salaries	52,934	28,001	51,260
89,207	010	Training	70,208	31,548	85,480
49,122	011	Allowances	31,820	18,254	27,418
60,503	020	Other Staff Costs	62,359	32,564	65,323
16,217,798		Staff Costs	15,801,434	9,266,552	16,186,178
469,121	100	Repairs and Maintenance	428,698	185,244	474,600
215,293	101	Energy Costs	190,700	92,060	182,600
1,085,788	102	Rents	1,163,179	902,349	1,152,996
613,007	103	Rates	661,976	635,557	643,643
60,231	104	Water Rates	62,817	31,702	78,757
262,449	105	Shared Costs	325,454	283,479	317,217
26,137	106	Contract Services	12,996	11,099	16,893
6,756	107	Other Property Costs	0	972	400
2,738,782		Property Costs	2,845,820	2,142,462	2,867,106
79,714	202	Other Travel	68,359	36,996	61,630
150,227	203	Car Mileage	125,238	68,545	146,796
13,723	204	Subsistence	24,408	6,444	21,300
243,664		Travel & Subsistence	218,005	111,985	229,726
10,862	300	Equipment and Furniture	0	6,058	1,100
24,132	301	Maint. Contracts & Leases	26,660	12,656	18,832
5,323	302	Printing	8,200	96	6,150
100,793	303	Stationery	85,153	47,115	80,142
82,084	304	Photocopying	96,900	27,559	89,700
10,484	305	Books and Publications	15,850	4,475	13,950
377,198	306	Postages	316,550	195,358	357,200
57,124	307	Telephones	48,110	29,206	52,800
0	308	IT	72,000	0	0
654,190	309	Scots	664,745	381,407	665,000
363,583	310	Software	286,000	233,501	402,000
154,287	311	Legal Expenses	142,531	88,938	160,000
70,685	313	Hearing Costs exc. T&I	121,700	39,484	92,500
358,728	313H	Translation & Interpretation	223,000	194,022	309,000
55,156	314	Other Supplies & Services	32,490	27,808	50,658
12,061	390	Other Corporate Expenses	10,000	4,806	9,500
69,145	395	Audit	64,000	24,963	63,164
2,405,835		Supplies and Services	2,213,889	1,317,452	2,371,696
3,921	401	Interest	3,176	0	3,176
25,788	820	Unfunded Pensions	200,000	88,899	200,000
(428,970)	501	Income	(482,324)	(282,861)	(444,599)
21,206,818		TOTAL	20,800,000	12,644,489	21,413,283

SCRA Core Establishment - 2016/17										
North West										
Locality	A	B	C	D	E	E +	F	G	I	Total
Business - North West			1.00	1.00				1.00		3.00
Glasgow	7.06	17.17		6.00	22.64	3.37	5.00			61.24
Grampian	3.43	6.50		3.00	8.50	1.00	2.00			24.43
Highlands and Islands		7.50		2.50	6.57	1.00	1.91			19.48
North Strathclyde	1.63	13.31		5.00	13.89	1.71	4.00			39.55
Total	12.12	44.49	1.00	17.50	51.60	7.08	12.91	1.00		147.70
East and Central										
Locality	A	B	C	D	E	E +	F	G	I	Total
Ayrshire	1.80	10.00		4.60	10.66	1.53	2.00			30.59
Business - East and Central				1.00				1.00		2.00
Central	3.59	8.36		4.50	10.50	1.00	1.00			28.95
Lanarkshire, D&G	3.79	15.04		5.00	16.51	2.00	3.00			45.34
South East	4.76	8.70		6.00	12.70	1.00	3.00			36.16
Tayside & Fife	3.73	12.80		6.04	14.07	2.00	2.00			40.64
Total	17.67	54.89	0.00	27.14	64.44	7.53	11.00	1.00	0.00	183.68
Head Office										
Locality	A	B	C	D	E	E +	F	G	I	Total
Executive					1.00				1.00	2.00
Practice & Policy	0.40		2.77	2.00	1.40		7.00	1.94		15.51
Support Services	0.50	0.56	2.56	9.25	15.16		9.27	2.00		39.30
Total	0.90	0.56	5.33	11.25	17.57		16.27	3.94	1.00	56.81
SCRA Total	30.69	99.94	6.33	55.89	133.60	14.61	40.18	5.94	1.00	388.19

SCRA Non-Establishment - 2016/17								
Post	MA	TSA	B	D	E1	E	F	Total
Modern Apprentice	3.00							3.00
Trainee Support Administrator		1.00						1.00
Business Integration Manager							1.00	1.00
Trainee Reporter – Cohort 4 (to 5/10/16)					2.00			2.00
Trainee Reporter – Cohort 5 (1/4/16-)					2.00			2.00
Victim Information Co-ordinator				1.00				1.00
Reporters (supernumerary)						0.60		0.60
Youth Justice (externally-funded)			0.50			0.86		1.36
Assistant Accountant (externally-funded)				0.50				0.50
Total	3.00	1.00	0.50	1.50	4.00	1.46	1.00	12.46

Draft Capital Budget 2016/17

Project Title	£000
Infrastructure (Property)	
Perth	255
Tranent re-instatement	110
Irvine fit-out	60
Minor Works, including WLCC lease	235
<i>Perth disposal</i>	<i>(80)</i>
PROPERTY TOTAL	580
Infrastructure (IT)	
Infrastructure (Architecture) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAN switch replacements • Systems Development Environment • Desktop/Laptop/Printer Refresh 	210
Application (Architecture) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMS maintenance and development • Other systems development • Systems consolidation • Data Warehouse development 	195
Data (Architecture) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Warehouse security improvements • MI tools • Database development 	25
Business (Architecture) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DR and BCP • Enhanced digital security 	10
Reduce scope of IT programme	(50)
IT TOTAL	390
SCRA CAPITAL TOTAL	970



SCRA RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN 2016-17

Accountable Director: Head of Practice & Policy

Date: 12 January 2016

Recommendations:

The Board is asked to:

- (a) Note the progress in the completion of the 15/16 Research workplan, including programmes that carry forward to 16/17
- (b) Approve the additional proposed areas of focus for the 16/17 research workplan

Reason for Report:

For approval of Board

Resource Implications:

Within approved budgets

Strategy:

Within approved plans

Consultation:

Executive Management Team

Document Classification:

Paper is open. Appendix 1 is confidential and not for wider circulation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides the Board with SCRA's planned research activities in 2016-17. Most of these projects were begun in 2015-16.
- 1.2 The research team currently comprises of one part time Research Officer and the Information & Research Manager with support provided by the Information Assistant. Two members of the team left SCRA in 2016, one Research Officer and Support Assistant (Information), both part time. Within current resources, the work of the team will be more limited than previously with little capacity to undertake additional work and/or provide support to support Scottish Government and partner organisations.

2. Background

- 2.1 There are three research projects in the 2015-16 Business Plan which are carried over into 2016-17. A additional research project was started in October 2015 which is not in the 2015-16 Business Plan and will be completed in 2016-17. One new research project is proposed for 2016-17.

3. Continued research projects

- 3.1 **Assessment and support of the sibling relationships of long-term fostered and adopted children.**

This is a collaborative project with Dr Christine Jones at the University of Strathclyde and is externally funded. The project is due for completion on 31 August 2016.

The project is progressing to plan. Data has been collected on the 50 target children and their 155 siblings from SCRA case files. A progress report on the research is attached at Appendix 1.

- 3.2 **Children and families survey**

The 2015 Children and Families Survey was published in October 2015. As responses in some Localities were low, EMT decided that the survey should be repeated in April 2016 to increase numbers overall and to provide more representative coverage. The survey questions are necessarily the same with one addition. SCRA has agreed with the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) to include questions on awareness of the 'Helping Me Make Choices About How to Take Part in My Hearing' guidance. This will inform evaluation of the impact of this guidance. There is no capacity within the survey for further questions or changes.

- 3.3 **Scoping for a study on the involvement of children from ethnic minorities in the Hearings System**

This study was identified by the Board last year. Work will begin shortly to plan the plan the project.

3.4 The next steps towards 'Better Hearings'

This is an additional project which began in October 2015. It takes forward the work begun by CHIP and the Tripartite Group to improve the Hearings experience for children and young people. This research explores through focus groups and focus groups the views of professionals on what makes a better Hearing. A literature review is being carried out on what children and young people have said would improve their experience. The findings from both will be brought together to develop service standards which will be finalised after consultation with children and young people. The service standards will be implemented by the CHIP. Due to other commitments the project is 2 months behind plan.

3.5 New research project for 2016-17 – Planning and decision-making for children on compulsory measures of supervision at home

It is proposed that SCRA carries out a research project in the reasons why children are looked after at home and the decision making around this. Compulsory Measures of Supervision where the child remains at home are one of the most common measures made by Children's Hearings. Outcomes for children looked after at home are in general poorer than those of their peers but little research has been done on planning and decision making on these children. Improving outcomes for children looked after at home is a policy priority for the Scottish Government and included in its Looked After Children Strategy. This research should be included in the 2016-17 Business Plan and will start in June 2016.

4. Recommendations

4.1 The Board is asked to:

- (c) Note the progress in the completion of the 15/16 Research workplan, including programmes that carry forward to 16/17
- (d) Approve the additional proposed areas of focus for the 16/17 research workplan

Appendix 1:

Sibling study advisory group meeting 11 December 2015. Report of Progress

Appendix 2:

Research proposal – The Next Steps to Better Hearings

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Locality Performance Reviews

Accountable Directors: Senior Operational Managers **Date:** 11 January 2016

Recommendation:

To consider the outcome of the first round of Locality Performance Reviews and to seek the views of the Board regarding the content and frequency of future reports.

Reason for Report: *To advise the Board on progress of Locality Performance Review meetings*

Resource Implications: *None*

Strategy: *Performance Management Framework*

Equalities Duties *Equalities Impact Assessment not required*

Consultation: Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

Document Classification: *Not protectively marked*

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2015, the Board approved a set of recommendations regarding the review and development of the Senior Operational Manager (SOM) role. This report provides an update on a main aspect of changes agreed at that time, namely to establish a formal performance review framework, led by the SOM and focussed on locality performance as set out in their respective locality plans. The emphasis of these reviews was set out as “ .. (an) overview of each localities operational performance and designing, agreeing and supporting with each locality a set of improvement activities across the calendar year”. These regular reviews were also intended to “improve the clarity of accountability of performance between localities, the Chief Executive and the board, via the SOM’s”.
- 1.2 This report outlines the background, development, process, experience and outcomes to date, of these reviews.

2. Background information

- 2.1 In 2012 the SCRA Board approved a report on Developing and Strengthening SCRA Localities by adopting an approach based on devolution of decision making within the formal scheme of delegation and the development of an organisational culture of empowerment in order to support the wider distribution of decision making and organisational authority. Localities were given a level of autonomy and were empowered to manage their Locality performance, under the oversight, support and guidance of the SOM’s and with the help of business partners.
- 2.2 In March 2015 the Board were provided with a report on the review of the SOM role, which contained the recommendation that the SOM’s would lead periodic Performance Reviews of each Locality. In September 2015 the Board approved a Performance Management Framework, which contained details of the proposed Locality Performance Reviews.
- 2.3 Since March 2015, a number of factors have come together positively in reaffirming the need to both finalise the SOM review and importantly to clarify and develop the relationship between SOMs and their localities.
- 2.4 2015 brought an emerging maturity in locality empowerment whilst the bedding in of our CMS and the 2011 Act allowed a more strategic view of the service with much less focus on simply keeping the day- to- day service running. At the same time the creation of a comprehensive and reliable set of data reports and wider management information enabled by a stable CMS, meant that a shift to a more consistent performance management approach was possible. This stable platform of data alongside the refinement of our on-going staff, partner and families surveys has facilitated the opportunity to objectively review, support and challenge working practices, models and behaviours in a way hitherto not possible or reliable.

3. Development of the Process

3.1 Locality Performance Reviews were proposed during the review of the SOM role, and involved consultation with all LMT's, some individual LRM's and members of EMT. There was a clear recognition of the potential benefit of conducting these reviews, although the details would have to be considered and agreed. To this end a Development Day for all managers was held in Stirling on 2nd July 2015. This event was well attended and produced many thoughts and ideas for the way forward. The output from the Development Day was condensed into a report that was considered by the Performance Improvement Network (PIN), a group that has representation from a LRM from all 9 Localities. This meeting took place on 27/08/15 and was attended by both SOM's. Following detailed discussion, agreement was reached regarding the practical arrangements and expectations for the first round of Performance Reviews.

3.2 The main points of agreement were as follows:

- The Reviews should take place twice a year. Less than that would not maintain any momentum, and more frequency would push the capacity of LMT's.
- There was agreement that the Reviews should follow a standard process, and in particular that the focus should be on the Locality Plans.
- The Reviews should not create an industry of their own, so it was agreed that there was no requirement for a detailed minute, or for slick documents or presentations to be prepared in advance.
- Actions should be agreed, and a standard Action Log to be used by all Localities. These actions to be reviewed at the next Performance Review.
- The Review would be chaired by the relevant SOM, but the other SOM should also attend. This would ensure a consistency of approach across all Localities, and would encourage greater sharing of information or ideas. It would also be helpful to have the other SOM to provide a different perspective on any discussions.
- The first round of Reviews would take place mainly in October
- The Review process needs to be dynamic, and lessons learned as we go.
- The first round was to be reviewed by the PIN and the process adjusted according to experience.

4. Experience and outcomes

4.1 The first Performance Reviews took place between the end of September and November 2015 within the relevant locality offices. From this initial round of meetings the following comments summarise the experience and outcomes so far.

- The Localities were well prepared for the reviews and were well supported by business partners. Early in the process it became apparent that an updated Locality Plan with a RAG status attached to actions greatly assisted the discussions.
- Localities provided good evidence of progress against their Locality Plans.
- Localities demonstrated a good awareness of successes and were transparent and realistic about some of the challenges they were facing.
- There was a preparedness to amend plans to adapt to emerging issues.
- Localities were actively using data and other information to inform decision making especially around resource allocation. There were many positive comments about the content, quality and availability of data and management information.
- The meetings themselves were clearly taken seriously and were well attended by managers and staff representatives. There was Unison representation at almost every meeting.
- The “ critical friend “ approach seemed to work well in allowing an appropriate degree of challenge and supportive enquiry.
- It was clear that all localities are actively managing resources and performance.
- All localities have implemented or are moving towards a more clustered / pod or wider team approach to managing workflow.
- There was a clear willingness to learn from each other beyond locality boundaries and to try new ways of working
- Overall formal performance is very good and localities are live to variations in performance.

4.2 Challenges identified

- There were a number of examples of pressure on front line staff especially if the Locality experienced events that reduced capacity, e.g. sickness absence, maternity leave, a significant court case that took Reporters away from their caseload, etc

This reinforces the view that has been reached by EMT and by the Board, namely that we are at, or very near, the minimum level of staffing that is sustainable for the service.

Information will be used to inform any future VR/VER proposals, and budget decisions. Capacity will also be addressed through the work of the Court Project and the Reporter Capacity Project.

- The Performance target of arranging a Hearing within 20 working days from reporters decision is a common challenge, it being so susceptible to external factors such as availability of hearing slots and partner participants. In one or 2 Localities this was less of a challenge and this merited some enquiry to see if others can learn from their experience.

All Localities have raised the profile of this target and some have specific action plans around this. We would expect to see an improvement in performance against this target by the time of the next Reviews. SOM's will carefully monitor the trend to ensure that all possible action is taken within our control.

- Formal supervision and team meetings were not happening as often as they should, according to staff surveys.

Supervision is currently the subject of a case-sampling exercise, including an all staff survey and focus groups. This will inform future action and the results will be used at the 2nd round of reviews. Where there is an issue around formal Team Meetings managers are fully aware of the need for improvement and this will be monitored meantime and assessed at the next Reviews.

- The challenge to meet Budget savings targets was very difficult, particularly when set alongside the pressure to plug gaps in service from sickness and other leave.

This information will inform Challenge and Review to ensure that an appropriate and achievable savings target is set for Localities in light of the experience over the last 2 or 3 years.

- Translation and interpretation costs were very variable across the country. While this may be legitimate due to differing population profiles, it was also clear that there were variations in how Localities identify the need for translation and interpretation.

This variation is being addressed through the introduction of a new Practice Direction which requires Localities to adopt a more individualised discerning approach, whilst absolutely ensuring effective participation by providing appropriate support for those who need it. South East was the Locality in which there was the greatest expenditure and the Performance Review provided the opportunity to examine their practice and agree an alternative approach in line with the pending new Practice Direction. This has resulted in a significant reduction in cost due to a more focussed, evidence-based assessment of the need for this service.

- For some Localities there was a challenge to keep individual managers as well as LMT's curious and enthused to move beyond their present achievements.

Localities are encouraged to be innovative and the SOM's will use supervision and appraisal to identify individual development opportunities within and beyond SCRA

5 Conclusions and future considerations for the reviews

- 5.1 The Performance Review Meeting process has provided an appropriate challenge to LMT's and assurance was gained that SCRA's focus on performance improvement is fully reflected in Locality Plans.
- 5.2 We gained assurance that LMT's are identifying and addressing appropriate issues in line with SCRA's national objectives.
- 5.3 We saw clear evidence that Locality Plans were being used effectively as a live, dynamic document. Similarly, there was clear evidence that there is extensive use of management information and cognisance of the outcomes of surveys.
- 5.4 Both SOM's attended all the reviews, with one exception. We gained hugely from seeing and hearing what is happening in each Locality and learning examples of good practice that could be spread elsewhere. It was helpful to have each other's support, and often we could assist each other by being able to ask questions that might seem "loaded" if asked by the managing SOM. Feedback from Localities indicates that they also found it helpful to have a 2nd, viewpoint. We would intend to continue this into the 2nd round of Reviews and then re-assess.
- 5.5 A PIN meeting on 3rd December discussed the experience of the Reviews from the perspective of the LMT's. This was very positive and the comments are attached in Appendix A
- 5.5 As noted above, this is the start of a new process and as such we will continue to refine and develop it in line with experience and feedback from others.
- 5.6 The next round of Reviews have been set up for March 2016. After that we will undertake a full review of the process with EMT and with PIN.
- 5.7 We would welcome feedback from the Board on the process that we have implemented, and would be grateful for the Board's views on future reporting. Some immediate questions are:
 - Frequency - How often would the Board wish a report? Currently we anticipate this being twice annually.
 - What would they like by way of content and level of detail? This report contains information on the background to this process. We anticipate that future reports will not require such detail, being reasonably high level with broad themes and descriptors/analysis, with specific references to areas which are under pressure.

Notes from PIN Meeting of 3rd Dec 2015

There was discussion on localities' experience of the initial round of performance review, with the key points emerging from discussion as follows:

- *The experience was generally very positive*
- *It allowed localities to refocus on their locality plans (in a way that hadn't really featured in previous years), and enabled discussion with SOMs on any blockages being experienced*
- *There was value in being able to flag up matters of financial concern and, for those localities that had managed to gain temporary additional funding, there was a helpful focus on how effectively this was being used.*
- *Localities found it heartening to get positive feedback from SOMs, and all found it useful to have both SOMs in attendance, giving the opportunity for additional feedback from a manager less familiar with the day to day running of their particular locality*
- *Advance planning for the review meetings general worked well and was pivotal to the success of the meetings. Agenda setting influenced by localities but led by SOMs felt like the right balance*
- *The process was generally successful in giving an overall "feel" or "health check" for the locality, beyond the details of specific focus areas*

Discussion then moved on to consider any adjustments required before the next round of Performance Review meeting, summarised as follows:

- *No major changes are needed*
- *We are likely to learn as we go, and there should be a willingness to allow the process to evolve over the next couple of cycles*
- *Follow through on agreed actions will be vital*
- *Feedback from SOMs on good practice or different approaches they had seen in other localities was found to be very useful, and it was felt that there would be value in widening this approach – possibly a basis for some internal process benchmarking*
- *There was a clear role identified for PIN in sharing this information*
- *If preparation for review meetings focuses on both highs and lows, this might be useful in promoting the sharing of good practice/varying approaches*