

		<i>Papers</i>
1.1	AOB	
1.2	Apologies	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.		
3.	Minutes/Committees	
3.1	Minute of Meeting held on 14 December 2016 Board Action Log and Workplan Matters Arising	
3.2	Remuneration Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal Update on Pay 	
	Reports	
4.	Draft Budget 2017/18	
5.	Digital Strategy update	
a.	Case management system – options appraisal	
b.	Digital Strategy – governance and decision making arrangements	
6.	Research Programme	
7.	Draft Corporate Plan – Update	
8.	New Risks	
	Date of Next Meeting: 23 March 2017	



Present:

Carole Wilkinson (Chair), Bernadette Docherty, Catherine Robertson, Martin Toye, Douglas Yates, Sam Anderson, Suzie Vestri

In Attendance:

Neil Hunter (Principal Reporter/Chief Executive), Ed Morrison (Head of Finance & Resources), Lisa Bennett (Head of Strategy & OD), Susan Deery (Head of Human Resources), Malcolm Schaffer (Head of Practice and Policy), Tom Philliben (Senior Operational Manager), Alistair Hogg (Senior Operational Manager), Maryanne McIntyre (Press & Communications Manager), Donald Lamb (Acting Data Manager - Item 6), Thekla Garland (Scottish Government), Pamela Armstrong (Governance Officer).

		Timescale	Action
1.1	AOB There were no additional items of business.		
1.2	Apologies Apologies were received from Anela Anwar (Board Member)		
2.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.		
3.	Updates Suzie Vestri <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Board Development Day in Hamilton. • Attended Joint CHS/SCRA Board Meeting in Edinburgh. • Visited Dumfries Team Catherine Robertson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Board Development Day in Hamilton. • Attended Nominations Committee. • Attended Audit & Risk Committee. Bernadette Docherty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Joint CHS/SCRA Board Meeting in Edinburgh. • Chaired November Audit & Risk Committee. • Appraisal meeting with SCRA Chair. 		

	Timescale	Action
<p>Douglas Yates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Board Development Day in Hamilton. • Visited Dumbarton, Paisley & Greenock SCRA Offices. • Attended Counter Fraud Seminar at Stirling Court Hotel. <p>Sam Anderson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visited Edinburgh Office, observed a hearing and met with Jennifer Orren (Participation Officer). • Met with Ed Morrison (Head of Finance & Resources & Lisa Bennett (Head of Strategy & OD) • Attended Joint CHS/SCRA Board Meeting in Edinburgh. • Completed Future Learn online course- Caring for Vulnerable Children. <p>Martin Toye</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Board Development Day in Hamilton. • Attended Joint CHS/SCRA Board Meeting in Edinburgh. • Attended Audit & Risk Committee. • Attended Nominations Committee. • Met with Malcolm Schaffer (Head of Practice & Policy) to discuss Information Governance & research. • Attended Kilbrandon Lecture & Dinner. <p>Carole Wilkinson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaired Joint CHS/SCRA meeting. • Chaired Nominations Committee. • Chaired Board Development Day in Hamilton. • Attended Audit & Risk Committee. • Chaired Equalities Network. • Attended Child Protection Review • Conducted two Board Member appraisals. • Attended event for Chairs. • Visited Ayrshire locality offices. • Attended Perth Hearing Centre opening. • Attended meeting with Robert Marshal (Head of Care & Justice, SG) • Attended meeting with Helen Cameron (Director of Children & Families, SG) <p>Attended Practice Development Award student's presentation.</p>		

		Timescale	Action
4.	Minutes/Committees		
4.1	<p>Minute of meeting Held on 22 September 2016</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacancy on Audit & Risk committees (page 2, Item 4.1) to be amended to reflect that the Board Chairs proposal to appoint Suzie Vestri to the Audit & Risk Committee was approved by the Board. • The rest of the minute was agreed as an accurate record. <p>Board Action Log and Workplan</p> <p>The action log and workplan were reviewed</p>	Immediate	PA
4.2	<p>Draft Audit & Risk Committee Minute of Meeting held on 17 November 2016</p> <p>Bernadette Docherty, Audit & Risk Committee Chair spoke to the draft minute and highlighted in particular:</p> <p>Information Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHIP continues to be a useful vehicle for interagency action. • There is continued vulnerability in the development of Assessments/Child Plans containing children's addressees in multiple places. The responsibility is being pushed back on Local Authorities to ensure addresses are removed. <p>Quality Assurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is more work still to be done on ensuring accurate referrals are received. <p>Annual Report on Joint Inspections of Children's Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA has now had three managers involved in inspections as 'Associates' and the subsequent improvement planning process, gaining valuable experience. <p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are in place and progressing well. The Committee acknowledge key limitations in strategic financial planning due to the one year budget cycle. <p>Digital Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of objectives and outcomes is dependent on funding received from Scottish Government. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Risk Registers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee were satisfied with the risk register reviews and are assured that risks are being assessed and updated appropriately. <p>Annual Fraud Report 2015/16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee were assured that should fraud be detected, SCRA will take appropriate action. A number of preventative strategies are in place. 		
	Reports		
5.	<p>Chief Executives Report</p> <p>The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive spoke to the update report which detailed a wide range of activity across the organisation.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <p>Updates were given in the following areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Partnerships SCRA Staff Survey 2016 Pay, terms and conditions Learning & development Suggesting new ideas/innovation External communications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report Partner e-news Events Staff Event. Internal communications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Survey Business Continuity Plan Healthy Being Winter National Reporter Research and information team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom of information/Data Protection/PVG Requests. Research IT Operational Plan – Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Management System – Options appraisal. Practice & Policy activities. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was asked if there is an understanding of why 40% of staff didn't complete the staff survey. The Board were advised that SCRA will continue to promote the annual survey. In previous years the response has been below 50% so there has been 		

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	<p>progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results of the staff survey are broken down to locality level where trends and performance can be reviewed. Senior Operational Managers will include this in performance review discussions at local level. Grampian locality were congratulated on receiving two awards for the work done on the PACE project. The output from the Children and Families survey 2016 will be incorporated into team and locality plans. The Next Steps to Better Hearings report will be included in local authority discussions. SCRA have engaged Sopra Steria, a leading digital transformation company to help with an options appraisal and recommendations for future investment in the case management system. The Board were reassured that due diligence has been done using the Scottish Government procurement framework. A Learning and Development coordinator for hearing system at CELCIS has been appointed from within SCRA. Discussions on resources to support this continue with SG. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMS lessons learned report to be issued to all Board members and EMT. The Board were encouraged by the Chief Executives report. 	Immediate	PA
6.	<p>2nd Quarter Organisational Performance Report 2016/17</p> <p>Donald Lamb, Acting Data Manager introduced the report which detailed organisational performance for the period 01 July to 30 September 2016.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report uses a balanced scorecard approach which attributes measures within the organisation into four quadrants; service to children and young people, workload, resources and corporate governance. This provides a concise report which enables a fuller focus on the key areas of performance throughout SCRA. Continuing feedback from the Board will be used to inform future development. Performance remains strong around decision 		

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	<p>making with the target being met and referrals over 100 days remaining low. Initial Hearings proceeding to disposal is also meeting the target. Hearing scheduling remains challenging, with performance for quarter 2 below target, despite a positive start to the quarter. Significant variations exist between localities, these were discussed by Senior Operational Managers in the latest round of locality performance review meetings during the quarter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the exception of CPOs which are increasing, casework volumes were stable, with only the established downward trends in Compulsory Supervision Orders and non-disclosure cases occurring. Referral volumes within localities remained volatile with several localities showing large changes from average. • Working days lost to absence, continues to be above the 4% target, mainly due to long-term absence. The target looks, and has been, difficult to meet for 2016/17 but we should continue to strive towards this target. Long-term absence has increased with 15 members of staff affected. There are clear action and communication plans in place for these cases and managers are proactively seeking advice on appropriate support and return to work planning. Absence management will form part of the 2017/18 Management Development Programme and SCRA has a clear absence management strategy which will form a major focus of the 2017/20 Workforce Strategy with a formal review of the policy planned for November 2017. • Financial forecasts continue to point to a slight forecast overspend of £64k. This is primarily due to operational pressures. Capital forecasts are on target. Two new properties have been finished in the quarter in Perth and Irvine. This has led to the property indicator standing at 89.3%, just below the 90% target. • SCRA's annual staff survey results have been collated and analysed. The survey results were positive and showed continuing year on year improvement. Locality level versions have been shared with Locality Management Teams and the Chief Executive/Principal Reporter will be providing more detail on the results to the Board meeting. • The Blueprint for the processing of Children's Hearings is undergoing a full multi-agency review and refresh of what we assess as effective 		

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	<p>measures of success. This will have implications in particular for SCRA in what is required to be recorded and reported on as a result. This work will continue throughout 2017 and will inform the future development of the Organisational Performance Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to develop the Corporate Plan for 2017/20 is well underway with a final version going to the December Board for sign off. Accompanying strategies have been developed alongside to support and enable the delivery of the corporate objectives. The Corporate Parenting Plan will be launched in April 2017 and will be the result of a broad range of consultation and input from across the organisation and with our partners in the Children's Hearings System. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance in relation to decision making is at its highest level. Locality variations will continue to be addressed at locality reviews and locality management team meetings. • Written notifications of Hearing decisions sent to children and families within 5 working days shows an upward trend which the Board were happy to see and credited Support Staff with the hard work done to achieve this. • The spike seen in referrals in Glasgow has plateaued. While still higher than previous, the LMT are being proactive and engaging with Police Scotland who is the main referrer. The trend is reversing. • The issue with referral rates is not seen nationally but ties in with areas where Hubs have been implemented. SCRA have provided training for Hub units. Police Scotland is looking to provide consistent staffing within Hubs. There is a joint SCRA/Police Scotland meeting scheduled in January 17. <p>Agreed: The Board agreed that overall the report provided a good sense of stability and good performance. The advantage of the Organisational Performance Report is the level of detail and confidence it gives to the Board. The Board passed on their thanks to the Data Manager and the data team</p>		

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7.	<p>Locality Performance Reviews</p> <p>Alistair Hogg, Senior Operational Manager introduced the report on the most recent round of Locality Performance Reviews.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SOM's met with the Principal Reporter in advance of the 3rd round of Locality Performance Reviews in order to consider how we might improve the process. With general performance remaining stable, there was a danger that the Reviews would become a bit stale and repetitive. . • The proposal is generally to use the LPR's to consider topics that will be proposed by EMT, with members of EMT attending Reviews to facilitate the discussion. This would provide opportunity to discuss and debate issues nationally and also allow EMT members to attend Locality Meetings and increase their visibility. Performance and the Locality Plans would still be the central part of the discussion at Reviews, but new topics for scrutiny based on our business plans, would hopefully keep the Reviews interesting and stimulating. • The development of the next Corporate Plan will require Localities to develop their own 3 year Locality Plans. It is therefore proposed that the next round of LPR's will be used as planning days, which will include a focus on performance. These days will occur in February 2017 and will be led by the Planning business partner. The SOM's will attend their own Localities Planning Days, and also each other's if capacity allows. • There are, as always, some areas that are feeling very stretched. This is often due to staff absence, or sometimes due to a spike in certain types of work. The absence of key managers in one Locality has been hard felt, and resulted in their LPR being delayed until the end of November 2016. • This third round of reviews has continued the experience from earlier reviews that managers are working together with their staff and Unison partners, to deliver their service in line with agreed plans. Full implementation of the appraisal scheme and achievement of the 20 day target for Hearings continue to require further effort. • A new set of action logs have been created from this round and will be subject to review at the next set of meetings in 2017. 		

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	<p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of feedback has been received from LRM's. Some like the reviews as they are currently, some would like more challenge and some would like a more thematic approach. The format of the reviews need to be tailored to locality circumstances. • It is important that the next phase of the Blueprint for Children's Hearings is informed and developed by operational performance. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board agreed the content of the report and the summary of key findings was captured well. • The Board agreed with the request to dispense with a report on Locality Performance Reviews in June 2017. • The Board support a shift to a locality plan and thematic approach where assurance and accountability will be the main purpose of the meetings. 		
8.	<p>2016/17 Budget Monitoring</p> <p>The Head of Finance & Resources spoke to the report which summarised SCRA's financial position for the year to October 2016 and the forecast for the full year 2016/17.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total available revenue resources for 2016/17 are £21,682k, comprising £21,300k of core Grant in Aid (GiA) and £382k other income (Local Authority funded posts, shared services, rents etc.). As part of the budget construction, £50k was allocated as the revenue overspend for 2015/16. In order to balance the 2016/17 budget a few centralised savings targets were created, the largest being in property. These are proving challenging to achieve. • Depreciation is reported within expenditure expense head and it should be noted that depreciation expense is a non-cash charge. A depreciation budget of £2.5m has been included in the 2016/17 budget allocation by the Scottish Government to cover depreciation, amortisation and impairment charges. • The total available capital resource for 2016/17 is £1,227k. This comprises Core Grant in Aid for capital expenditure of £970k, an anticipated capital receipt of £80k, additional Grant in Aid of £167k to 		

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	<p>finalise Tranent re-instatement works and carry forward from 2015/16 of £10k.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget holders are anticipating net revenue budget overspends of around £64k following allocation of In Year resources for exceptional translation & interpretation costs and the new ISIS budget pressure. Finance continues to work closely with localities, Head Office Business Partners and Business Managers in monitoring spend and forecasts between now and the year end. The capital budget is currently forecast to be on budget. The nature of capital spend means that Finance, Property and IT will continue to closely monitor the forecast to ensure that there is no significant variance from budget at the year end. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board approved the revised capital forecasts reflecting allocation of savings on the property programme to the IT programme. 		
9.	<p>Corporate Procurement Strategy</p> <p>The Head of Finance & Resources introduced the report detailing the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2017-2020.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCRA's second Corporate Procurement Strategy was published in February 2016. The Strategy has been substantially updated to ensure compliance with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and the guidance produced under the new Procurement Regulations. There is a requirement under the Act for contracting authorities with an annual procurement spend above £5m to publish an organisational Procurement Strategy. Although SCRA's procurement spend in 2015/16 was below this level, the Procurement Team have decided to follow best practice by producing and publishing this Strategy. Every attempt has been made to make the Strategy accessible to SCRA staff at all levels of the organisation and also to external readers and suppliers. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been a significant exercise to ensure compliance. The main changes focus on continuous improvement. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 4 of the Corporate Procurement Strategy outlines strategic aims and key priorities. This will be done in line with the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Procurement Strategy will be published on Connect. A quality impact assessment is planned. SCRA have trained and developed their own procurement staff, following best practice. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board agreed this was a quality document and were happy to approve the updated corporate procurement Strategy 2017-2020. There is no specific mention of ethics or vision within key priorities. Can this be made clearer within section 4.4 Priority four: realising Sustainability. The Board suggested the foreword be made a visual diagram. 	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>EM</p> <p>EM/NH</p>
10.	<p>Draft Corporate Plan</p> <p>The Head of Strategy/OD introduced the updated draft Corporate Plan 2017-20 incorporating changes following the November Board Development Day and meeting with the Sponsor Team.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the past 6 months, the Board has been presented with a series of reports outlining the approach being adopted to development of the Corporate Plan 2017/20, the Business Plan 2017/20 and a series of supporting strategies and plans, all of which are being aligned to provide a consistent direction and complement each other. Some minor changes have been made to the Corporate Plan, based on feedback from the Board development day in November. In addition, initial work on supporting strategies and plans has led to some of them being combined (e.g. workforce & organisational development strategies, digital strategy & IT operational plan), with the Corporate Plan adjusted to reflect this. The next steps planned are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further development of the supporting strategies and plans that support the Corporate Plan and alignment of all of these with the Corporate and Business Plans, will be targeted for completion by the end of January 2017. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The high level 3 year programme of activity in the Business Plan will be refined and brought to completion, and the detailed activity plan for year 1 will be fully developed, also by the end of January 2017. ○ Linked to this, work in the early part of 2017 will deliver a final Corporate Plan that satisfies the needs of the Board, the Scottish Government, and other internal and external stakeholders. ○ In January and February, new 3 year Head office and Locality Plans will be developed by the individual Teams, with support from Quality and Performance Business Partners, to align frontline and supporting activity with the Corporate Plan. Work to progress this is already underway, with the Locality Planning process scheduled for discussion at the Performance Improvement Network on 5th December, and facilitated locality planning sessions already diaried. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A major gap identified during the planning process is that there is no Practice strategy- a lot of work done goes unnoticed. This is currently being developed. ● Regarding Outcome 2, Consistent, high quality decisions. What is the measure? Is what we are currently doing the right thing? Different measures are being considered with a move towards more qualitative measures. ● The report is a restatement of previous commitments. It has a more qualitative feel with attention to inputs and the quality of inputs. There are limitations in terms of measurements but the team are aspiring to improve on that. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Board endorsed the stage of development of the draft 2017/20 Corporate Plan and to further approve work to fully develop the Corporate Plan and complementary strategies. ● The Board agreed the current draft is well written and the language used is constructive, open and positive. The Board welcomed that gaps have been acknowledged and form part of future activity. ● A further draft of the plan will be taken to the January 17 Board meeting. 		

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11.	<p>Draft Business Plan</p> <p>The Head of Strategy/OD introduced the updated draft Business Plan 2017-18 incorporating changes following a meeting with the Sponsor Team.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Business Plan complements our Corporate Plan for 2017/20. The Corporate Plan sets out our framework for planning and delivering services from 2017 to 2020, explaining our key priorities and outcomes and outlining how they will be addressed. It also summarises internal strategies and plans that support and enable delivery of our key outcomes. • The Business Plan provides a more detailed picture of what we are doing, and how and when we intend to do it. It is essentially an internal guide, designed to help Localities and Head Office teams to plan their activity and manage delivery. • The Corporate and Business Plans provide the basis for Localities and Head Office teams to develop their own 3 year plans. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board endorsed the format of the Business Plan, it clearly lists what we are going to do and how we are going to do it. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board endorsed the stage of development of the Business Plan 2017-18 • A further draft of the plan will be taken to the January 17 Board meeting. 		
12.	<p>Draft Workforce Report</p> <p>The Head of Human Resources introduced the draft Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy which underpins the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2017/2020 Corporate Plan is underpinned by a number of supporting Strategies, including the Workforce and Organisational Development (OD) Strategy. The Workforce/OD Strategy outlines the key high level objectives and priorities that will bring added value to our workforce, their roles, their learning, improving performance and ultimately the quality of the services we deliver to children, young people and their families. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy highlights our vision, ambitions and strategic objectives, further breaking them down into key workforce priorities that we can align to projects and developments over the next three years to 2020. The Strategy will be flexible enough to respond to our ever changing environment and financial settlements as well as responding to the needs of our Localities and Head Office functions. Each year, an Annual Workforce Plan will be considered by the Board which will detail how the Workforce Strategy is being delivered. The Strategy notes the content to be included in the Annual Workforce Plan to ensure that a consistent approach and therefore, clarity in how we intend to meet the objectives of the Strategy. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft workforce and organisational development strategy aligns with the new approach to the Corporate strategy. The strategy is high-level allowing for flexibility and scalability. The Empowerment Strategy is firmly embedded within the document. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board approved the workforce and organisational development strategy. The Board agreed that the report was well written with the vision and objectives set out clearly. The Corporate Plan references outcomes while this plan talks about strategic objectives. The language will be aligned Empowerment strategy to be sent to Board members. 	<p>Jan 17</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>LB/RM</p> <p>PA</p>
13.	<p>Annual Workforce Report</p> <p>The Head of Human Resources introduced the report which outlines the composition of the current workforce and workforce planning for 2017/18 in line with Year 1 of the 2017/2020 Workforce and OD Strategy.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The three year Workforce and OD Strategy sets the strategic direction for our workforce until 2020. The Annual Workforce Report for 2017/18 aims to meet the first year of that Strategy which is an underpinning pillar of the SCRA's Corporate Plan. The activities highlighted in this report, albeit 		

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	<p>dependent on the Financial Settlement for 2017/18 will form part of the 2017/18 Business Plan. This Workforce Report will focus 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA clearly recognises that in order to achieve its strategies outlined in the 2017/20 Corporate Plan, it is important to put the workforce at the heart of SCRA. Workforce Planning is fundamental to the success of SCRA in achieving its objectives particularly given the challenging financial context anticipated over the next 12 – 18 months. • This workforce plan is written on the basis that SCRA secures the required level of budget for the next financial years. A standstill or reduced budget will have an impact on the plan and may require consideration of additional workforce impacts such as a sixth round of Voluntary Exits from the organisation. The plan itself will therefore be viewed as a ‘living’ document and will be responsive to the needs of the organisation. • The workforce plan will deliver Year 1 of the three year Workforce Strategy 2017/20. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board agreed the report was well written, detailed and comprehensive in its coverage and were happy to approve the workforce plan for 2017/18 		
14.	<p>Overview of Policies Annual Report</p> <p>The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive spoke to the report detailing the programme of policy reviews undertaken in 2016.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board agreed at its September 2013 meeting that an annual overview report on policies be presented for noting by the Board. • The policies are available to staff via Connect (SCRA’s intranet). • All SCRA policies are routed via the Partnership Forum for consultation. • The Board agreed in 2013 that policies which set direction, require specific high-level scrutiny and governance arrangements or are of a 		

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	<p>novel/controversial, public interest nature will be routed via the Board – for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whistleblowing, Risk Management, Fraud Policies ○ Complaints ○ Media Handling ○ Organisational Change, Voluntary Severance/Redundancy Policy and other major revisions to SCRA terms and conditions ○ Overall Health & Safety Policy Statement <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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. ● Policy development in the last 12 months has been consistent with this approach ● The review schedule for policies for 2017 as detailed in the report. 		
15.	<p>Policy & Influencing Report</p> <p>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 national level.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is the eleventh Policy and Influencing Report, requested on a bi-annual basis by the Board report and covers the period 1 June 2016 to 30 November 2016. ● SCRA was an active part of the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR). We are fully in agreement with the Group's recommendations and produced a research report on offending by 8-11 year olds which helps to lend important context and support to the proposals. The Advisory Group's recommendations were put out for consultation in June. The response was extremely positive and the Scottish Government is expected to announce a decision shortly. ● SCRA's Better Hearings research was published in October. The paper has gone to the Tripartite Group, which will prepare and publish an action 		

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	<p>plan based to the report's recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In anticipation of Education Committee interest in the hearings system during the Parliamentary term, SCRA invited the Education Committee clerks to observe hearings in Edinburgh over the summer. One of the clerking team attended and was able to discuss their experiences with SCRA and CHS staff afterwards. • SCRA took part in a session with the Scottish Parliament's Education committee on 21 September. Head of Practice and Policy, Malcolm Schaffer, shared a slot with Who Cares? Scotland, Social Work Scotland and Children 1st. Questions included: corporate parenting; changes in trends in the hearings system; the relationship between child protection and children's hearings; and what SCRA does to help improve looked after children's attainment. • SCRA has continued to be involved in work around the Scottish Government's Equally Safe strategy. Our input has focused on ensuring that the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people is appropriately addressed in the Strategy. • Scottish Green MSP John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) intends to bring forward a members Bill in the current session which will seek to remove any defence of reasonable chastisement where physical punishment is involved. He is likely to issue a public consultation beforehand but no date has yet been set for this. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board were asked to take a position in relation to the likely forthcoming debate on the physical punishment of children in Scotland. • Given the potentially controversial nature of this issue SCRA Officers felt a clear policy position was required in order to contribute to such a debate • In previous areas of controversy (e.g.around the age of criminal responsibility) SCRA were able to say the organisational position was fully endorsed by the Board and this was helpful in public discourse. • There is a need for consistency in a child rights based approach. There is an opportunity to show leadership and take the position that you cannot hit a child. • Adults in positions of trust are stopped from hitting a 		

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	<p>child, why allow parents?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a public health issue. There needs to be information available to parents about alternative strategies. • SCRA need to take a position supported by research. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board agreed the proposed SCRA position on the physical punishment of children. • Research previously published on plans for education of children on supervision to be sent to Board members. 	Immediate	PA
16.	<p>Retention & Disclosure Report</p> <p>The Head of Practice & Policy introduced the report which asks the Board to agree that SCRA should encourage the Scottish Government to make further changes to the retention and disclosure regime as it applies to children's hearings disposals.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the children's hearings system is welfare based, non-punitive and does not recognise concepts such as guilt, children who accept or have established offence grounds may still be subject to quasi-criminal consequences which can have long term impacts on their life chances. • The new retention and disclosure regime is extremely complex and involves a degree of unpredictability, raising serious concerns about the extent to which children and young people will understand the sometimes lifelong consequences of accepting offence grounds. The interaction between legislation and Police guidance exacerbates these issues. • While in some respects the 2015 Order laid before the Scottish Parliament can be seen as progressive inasmuch as they do restrict the time for which some offences will be disclosed, they fall short of the changes envisaged in the 2011 Act. More offences will be disclosed for longer under the 2015 regime than would have been the case under the 2011 Act changes. The content of Police guidance contributes to this. • Failure to consult with and involve hearings system partners and children's organisations in the development of the new regime has resulted in a 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>system that does not take proper account of the nature of children’s offending or the operation of the children’s hearings system. This is particularly the case in relation to the lists of offences which seem to be based on adult offending patterns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The period of time after which a conviction becomes spent is still linked to the length of the CSO, which does not sit comfortably with the real life operation of the hearings system and the reasons why a child originally referred because of concerns over their offending behaviour might still be on CSO some years later. In essence it treats a CSO as a “sentence” which is directly related to the severity of the offence. • Information on children’s hearings disposals is still being retained for significant periods of time on the Police Criminal History System, meaning that it may appear as Other Relevant Information after the conviction itself has become protected and non-disclosable. In other circumstances, information will drop off the Police systems but the individual will still be legally required self-disclose. This adds a further level of confusion and uncertainty for children and young people. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hearing system recognises that children are not adults. They can grow out of past behavioural issues. • How relevant is what a child did at twelve years old to their future life chances? There is no argument there shouldn’t be a mechanism but what should that mechanism and its scope be? • . The Scottish Government sponsor team are keen to move forward on this and may take comfort from the fact the Board are concerned. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board agrees SCRA’s position on the need for further development of the law and guidance in this area. • The Board agreed that a more progressive, child centred and coherent option (as detailed in section 7.3 of the report) should be used and promoted when in discussion with Scottish Government colleagues. 		

		Timescale	Action
17.	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA's Revised Risk Management Policy was approved by the Board at its meeting in March 2016. The Board has responsibility for the system of internal control and risk management within SCRA. The Board charges the Audit and Risk Committee with overseeing the operation of the system of internal control and with ensuring robust risk management arrangements within SCRA, including reviewing the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers six-monthly. • The Risk Registers are kept under review by the Executive Management Team (EMT) and Operational Group. A service wide Risk Reference Group has also been established to act as an internal focus for the development of SCRA's approach to risk issues and to provide leadership on the delivery of SCRA's risk management policy • The risks across both registers focus on the ongoing challenges in the delivery of a safe and effective service with the focus on capacity, resources and information governance. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber Security has been scoped and will be added to the IT Risk Register. • Both registers (Strategic and Operational) are subject to regular reviews. • The Risk Reference group meets in January when updated locality risk registers will be reviewed. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board were satisfied with the content of both the strategic and operational risk registers and associated activity and review. <p>New Risks</p> <p>No new risks were identified.</p>		
	<p>Date Of Next Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 25 January 2017, Ochil House, Stirling</p>		

Meeting Date/Item	Action	Timescale	Owner	Comments	Status
26/06/2015 - 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.	Mar-17	LB	Now fully integrated within SCRA's Corporate Plan (2017 – 20) , the Corporate Parenting Plan will be developed by Dec 16 . Accessible plan laying out how we will discharge duties. It will reference duty and UNCRC article that each action will satisfy	Complete
17/03/2016	CPD Training – Feedback on development of principles paper	Jan-17	SD	The head of Human Resource will provide a general update on succession planning to the January Board.	Underway
22/06/2016 - Chief Executives Report	Consideration to be given to measuring the number of families approached at Hearing Centres who refuse to participate in the Children and Families survey?	March 17 (or in design phase of next survey)	NH	To be considered in future design of Children and Families Survey work	Not yet due.
22/06/2016 - Digital Strategy	The requirement for approvals out with the normal cycle of Board meetings.	Sep-16	EM/NH	This can be dealt with either via revised delegations within approved limits or via a special meeting	Underway - project plans and delivery pathways will define decision making points
	A detailed report around Governance arrangements	Nov-16	EM	Joint Digital Strategy Oversight Board has considered Governance and Reporting arrangements in detail and these will be reported to joint meeting of Boards	Underway - proposal for a joint committee to be considered 1/17

Meeting Date/Item	Action	Timescale	Owner	Comments	Status
22/06/2016 - Review of Complaints 2016	Future reports to include a summary of any complaints outstanding.	Jun-17	MS		Underway
22/09/2016 - Financial Strategy 2017-20 and Spending Review 2016	An assumption has been made that the current pension scheme remains steady, The Board have highlighted this as a risk and will be assessed for potential addition to the risk register.	Nov-16	EM/PA	The Head of Finance will assess this risk and report to EMT on 7/12/16.	To be integrated into Budget 2017/18 report - March 2017
14/12/2016 - Corporate Procurement Strategy	There is no specific mention of ethics or vision within key priorities. Can this be made clearer within section 4.4 Priority four: realising Sustainability.	Mar-17	EM	Will be added in finalising document	Underway
	Foreword be made a visual diagram.		EM/NH	As above	Underway
14/12/2016 - Draft Workforce Report	The Corporate Plan references outcomes while this plan talks about strategic objectives. The language will be aligned	Jan-17	LB		

SCRA Board Meeting Workplan

Business Item						
Strategic/Corporate	14/12/16	25/1/17	23/3/17	20/4/17*	22/6/17	28/9/17
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	✓					

* Board Development Days

Business Item						
	14/12/16	25/1/17	23/3/17	20/4/17*	22/6/17	28/9/17
Health & Safety Annual Report			✓			
Efficiency Report						
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	✓					
Locality Performance Reviews	✓					
Joint Property Strategy/Action Plan						

*** Board Development Days**

~ Briefing paper presented to Board Development Day



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

SCRA RESEARCH IN 2016 AND 2017

Accountable Director: Head of Practice & Policy **Date: 25th January 2017**

Report Author: Information & Research Manager

Recommendation:

(a) Note the significant progress and continued relevance of the ongoing SCRA research programme

(b) Approve the planned priorities for 2017

Reason for Report: *For information*

Resource Implications: *Within approved budgets*

Strategy: *Within approved plans*

Consultation: *n/a*

Equalities Duties: *An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required*

Document Classification: *Not protectively marked*

1. SCRA's research team

1.1 The team comprises Gillian Henderson (Information & Research Manager), Indiya Kurlus and Ruth Oren-Woods (Research Officers (part-time)), and we have support from Gwen McNiven (Information Assistant). Sophie Henderson joined us in September 2016 on a work placement for care experienced young people which is sponsored by her local authority, and this will become a SCRA Modern Apprenticeship starting in early 2017. This year we have also had a final year student from Strathclyde University's School of Social Work & Social Policy on a three month placement.

2. Completed research in 2016

2.1 *Backgrounds and outcomes for children aged 8 to 11 years old who have been referred to the Children's Reporter for offending*

2.1.1 This research was carried out to inform the Scottish Government's review of the minimum age of criminal responsibility, and it was published in March 2016. It examined the cases of 100 children under 12 years old referred to the Reporter for offending to understand the factors that influenced their behaviour and outcomes for them. The research was well received by the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility Review Group, and was referenced in its report and the Scottish Government's consultation. The First Minister announced on 1st December 2016 that the age of criminal responsibility will change from eight to 12 years old.

2.2 *Children & families national survey*

2.2.1 SCRA's fourth survey of children, young people, parents and carers attending Children's Hearings was carried out in April 2016, and published in June 2016. This survey provides key information for SCRA and Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) on service users' views on our performance and their experiences of Hearings. There were a total of 636 participants in the 2016 survey. Some Localities were underrepresented in the survey and this means that the results for these areas are not meaningful. The challenge for the 2018 national survey will be to get the support of all Localities to increase the response rate across Scotland.

2.3 *The next steps towards better Hearings*

2.3.1 This research was requested by the Tripartite Group (SCRA, CHS and Social Work Scotland) and was published by the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) in October 2016. It supports SCRA's 2016-17 Business Plan objective: *We will deliver the 'Better Hearings' project through implementing an improvement plan which will improve service standards and 'personalisation' in the planning for Children's Hearings'.*

2.3.2 The research used three approaches to identify what would make the experience of Hearings better: 1. Literature review of children and young people's views on Hearings; 2. Interviews and focus groups with practitioners; and 3. Consultation with young people. There was a great deal of consensus between young people and

practitioners and this formed the basis of proposed standards for better Hearings. Implementation of the proposed standards is being taken forward by the CHIP and Tripartite Group, and by SCRA in its next Business and Corporate Plans and Corporate Parenting Plan.

2.4 *Women into leadership*

2.4.1 SCRA's 2016-17 Business Plan includes the action: '*We will promote equality of opportunity by exploring in a series of focus groups with female staff how best to encourage and support leadership development*'. The research team led a series of focus groups and interviews with female staff to explore their views on how best to encourage and support leadership development. Analysis of the feedback and a review of the literature were completed in June 2016, and the research report makes eight recommendations for SCRA to support women into leadership by tackling the obstacles identified by participants. SCRA's Equalities Network is developing an action plan to take forward these recommendations.

3. **Contributions to other projects in 2016**

3.1 *SCRA court project*

3.1.2 The research team supported this project by carrying out a survey of Reporters, and analysis of the 26 consultation meetings held with staff. From the survey and consultations, six areas for improvement were identified: 1. Strategic support and recognition of court work; 2. Technology, including CMS; 3. Management and effective use of resources; 4. Training and professional development; 5. Support for staff; and 6. Support for services users – children, young people, parents and witnesses. The Court Project Team has developed an action plan to take these forward.

3.2 *Role of the Safeguarder in the Children's Hearings System*

3.2.1 In August 2016 the Scottish Government commissioned the University of Strathclyde to carry out this project. Part of the research involved examination of 50 cases where Safeguarders had been appointed by Children's Hearings, and the researchers had proposed that SCRA collate the information required from its case records. This was a large piece of work for the team and additional to our existing commitments. The Scottish Government provided additional funds to SCRA to cover staff overtime to do this work. SCRA's research team developed the data collection methodology and extracted the case information. The collated data were provided to Strathclyde University researchers at the end of November 2016.

4. **On-going research**

4.1 *The exploration of minority ethnic groups' understanding and awareness of child protection and the Children's Hearings System in Scotland*

4.1.1 SCRA's Business Plan for 2016-17 includes an action for research on: '*the quality of engagement for children from ethnic minorities in the Hearings System*'. Its aim is to understand ethnic minorities families' engagement with the Hearings System and

child protection in Scotland, and ways that the Hearings System and SCRA could be more accessible and helpful to these families. The first stage of the research was an electronic survey of those working in universal services and the third sector. The survey closed in November 2016 and there were 182 respondents.

4.1.2 We are currently working on the second stage which is focus groups and interviews with those working directly with children, young people and parents from ethnic minority groups. This part of the research is exploring in detail the barriers faced by families, cultural differences and awareness of child protection and children's rights, and the effects of intervention. These are sensitive subjects, and may explain some of the difficulties we're finding in recruiting participants, particularly those working with single faith groups or nationalities. To date two focus groups and three interviews have been carried out with five different organisations. Four further organisations have agreed to be involved. We will continue to try to extend the numbers taking part. The research is due to report by end March 2017.

4.2 Measuring complexity in child protection

4.2.1 Several commentators (including SCRA) have raised that the fields of child protection and social work have become more complex in recent years. However, no one has attempted to rigorously measure complexity and thus to evaluate assertions about changes in complexity over time - this research is, to our knowledge, the first to do so.

4.2.2 The research examines four domains of complexity of relevance to SCRA: 1. children's lives; 2. inter-agency collaboration; 3. law; and 4. organisational processes. Work on 1. and 2. is underway, and involves comparison of cases of children born in 2003 with those born in 2013 and who all had CSOs made before the age of three years. Differences in complexity in children's lives are being assessed by comparing factors such as family composition, numbers and types of changes in the child's life, multiple adversities; and changes in inter-agency collaboration through comparison of number of agencies involved in a case, changes in workers, extent of legal representation, etc.

4.2.3 It is anticipated that the research findings will inform longer term planning by SCRA and partners in the Hearings System, influence the direction of child protection policy in Scotland, and establish a methodology to measure complexity in child protection that can be applied in other jurisdictions.

4.3 Assessment and support of the sibling relationships of long-term fostered and adopted children

4.3.1 This project is a collaboration with the School of Social Work & Social Policy at Strathclyde University, and is externally funded. The completion date has been extended to end March 2017.

4.3.2 It is known from research the importance that looked after children and young people place on contact with their siblings, however, this is rarely considered by Children's Hearings and courts in making Orders.

4.3.4 Our research has involved examination of the cases of 50 'index' children and those of their 76 'familiar' siblings. We found that the 50 'index' children also had 77 'stranger' siblings who they had no contact with and may not even know about. We're currently writing two papers for publication in academic journals: 1. 'Sibling birth order and patterns of intervention for looked after children in Scotland'; and 2. 'The scale and nature of estrangement from siblings experienced by looked after children'. The qualitative part of the research is on-going and involves interviews with adoptive parents, adopted children and their siblings.

4.4 *16 and 17 year olds involved in the Children's Hearings System*

4.4.1 This research examines the role of the Hearings System for young people aged 16 and 17 years, and is a collaboration with the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice, Strathclyde University. It aims to identify the factors that determine whether young people, and particularly those involved in offending, are retained within the Hearings System or dealt with by adult services. It supports SCRA's 2016-17 Business Plan objective: *'We will make significant contributions to the Youth Justice Improvement Board in order to advance the whole systems approach and youth justice capacity with a particular emphasis on contribution to improvements in the Hearings System for 16/17 year olds.'*

4.4.2 The research is focused on two groups of young people:

1. Young people on CSOs and approaching their 16th birthdays - Hearings' decision making on whether to continue or terminate CSOs, and the factors that influence these decisions including the young person's involvement in offending.
2. Young people aged 16 and 17 years who have committed offences and where the courts have requested advice of Hearings and/or remitted the case to a Hearing for disposal.

4.4.3 Data collection on the first group is on-going. Data collection on all 16 and 17 year olds with requests for criminal advice and/or remits in 2015-16 has been recently completed, and analysis will begin in early 2017.

5. Research planned for 2017-18

5.1 *Compulsory Supervision Orders - children and young people who reside at home with one or both parents. Effectiveness of decision making and outcomes - research proposal.*

5.1.1 SCRA's 2016-17 Business Plan included an action for research on: *'Planning and decision making for children and young people on compulsory measures of supervision at home'*. The original proposal for this research covered three areas:

1. Educational outcomes;
2. Offending outcomes; and
3. Decision making.

5.1.2 The research was to be purely quantitative. The Scottish Government asked if the research could be extended to cover further aspects of home CSOs, and indicated that additional funding would be provided for this work. A revised, costed proposal was submitted in November 2016 and we are awaiting the Scottish Government's approval of it. The proposed research, in addition to the three original areas, will examine:

- Outcomes for young children first placed on CSOs at home
- The use of contact conditions in home CSOs
- Plans and services provided
- Views of young people and parents
- Panel Members' views on decision making

5.1.3 This will be a major project for the research team, and if it goes ahead will be our main work in 2017. It is not possible to plan other work until this funding has been confirmed by the Scottish Government.

5.2 *Collaboration with CELCIS*

5.2.1 Dr Robert Porter, Research Associate in CELCIS, will be seconded to SCRA's research team for 60 days in 2017 to carry out a project on Hearings' decision making on contact with parents and if, and how, it contributes to drift and delay.

5.3 *SCRA's Research Ethics Committee*

5.3.1 In 2016, SCRA set up a Research Ethics Committee. Its membership is comprised of six staff in various roles in SCRA and two external academics. The aim of the Ethics Committee is to ensure that SCRA's research and external research that SCRA contributes to, is carried out:

- To the highest possible professional ethical standards for social research
- In accordance with legal requirements – including the Data Protection Act 1998, Human Rights Act 1998 and Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- In line with SCRA's policies and the ethos of the Children's Hearings System

5.3.2 All SCRA research proposals will be required to be approved by the Ethics Committee. Those by external researchers which have resource implications for SCRA (e.g. staff time, data reports, case file information), and/or require SCRA to facilitate access to service users will also require our Ethics approval. It is now becoming more common for organisations to have such arrangements; for example, SACRO, Barnardo's, and Kibble have their own ethics committees.

5.3.3 The research projects for 2017-18 described above will be the first to be considered by SCRA's Ethics Committee.

6. Recommendations

6.1 The SCRA Board is asked to

- (a) Note the significant progress and continued relevance of the ongoing SCRA research programme
- (b) Approve the planned priorities for 2017/18