

SCRA Board Meeting

A G E N D A

Wednesday 20 September 2023 at 10.30 a.m.
By Teams

		<i>Papers</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Owner</i>
1.1	AOB			
1.2	Apologies			
2.	Declarations of Interest			
3.	Updates			
4.	Minutes/Committees			
4.1	Minute of Last Meeting	Attached	Approval	
4.2	Workplan		Noting	
4.3	Matters Arising			
4.3.1	UK Boardroom Apprentice Programme		Information	
4.4	Audit & Risk Committee Draft Minute of Meeting		Noting	
	Reports			
5.	Chief Executive's Report	Attached	Noting	NH
6.	Review of the role of the Childrens Reporter	Attached	Approval	SD
7.	OPR	Attached	Approval	DL
8.	Budget Monitoring Report			EM
9.	Financial Strategy	Attached	Approval	EM
10.	Annual Accounts 2022-23 & Management Representation Letter	Attached	Approval	EM
11.	Annual Procurement Report	Attached	Noting	EM
12.	SCRA Annual Report	Attached	Approval	LB
13.	Keeping The Promise - Update	Attached	Approval	LB
14.	New Risks			All
15.	Proposed 2024 Board/Committee Dates	Attached	Approval	PA
	Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 13 December 2023, by Teams			



Present:

Michelle Miller (Chair)
Jim Edgar
Martin Toye
Kay Barton
Lorraine Moore
Suzie Vestri
Hazel Smith
Ying Zhang

In Attendance:

Neil Hunter (Principal Reporter/Chief Executive),
Alistair Hogg (Head of Practice and Policy),
Ed Morrison (Head of Finance & Resources),
Susan Deery (Head of Human Resources),
Lisa Bennett (Head of Strategy & OD),
Helen Etchells (Senior Operational Manager, North and West Scotland)
Paul Mulvanny (Senior Operational Manager, East and Central Scotland)
Donald Lamb (Data Manager) Item 7
Ian Allen (Head of Property) Item 10
Maryanne McIntyre (Head of Press and Communications) Item 12
Monica Sweeny (UNISON Branch Secretary)
Pamela Armstrong (Governance Officer)

		Timescale	Action
1.1	AOB None		
2.	Apologies Helen Etchells (Senior Operational Manager, North and West Scotland)		
3.	Declarations of Interest None		
4.	Minutes/Committees		
4.1	Draft Minute of the meeting held on 29 March. Agreed as an accurate record. Board Workplan Agreed Matters Arising None		

		Timescale	Action
4.2	Audit & Risk Committee		
4.2.1	<p>Draft Minute of Meeting held on 24 August 2023</p> <p>Jim Edgar, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Board Member, updated the Board in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report 2022/23 • Quality Assurance & Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Case sampling exercise on signed witness statements. ○ Data Quality Update. ○ Programme Update. • External Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ External Audit Annual Plan 2022-23 ○ Annual Accounts 2022/23 ○ General Update • Internal Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quality Management ○ Follow Up • CSAS Benefits Realisation • Strategic and Operational Risk Registers 		
4.2.2	<p>Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report</p> <p>Jim Edgar, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Board Member introduced the report, the purpose of which was to summarise the work undertaken by SCRA's Audit and Risk Committee in 2022/23 and to support preparation of the Governance Statement.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the work undertaken by SCRA's Audit and Risk Committee in 2022/23 and to support preparation of the Governance Statement. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board thanked the Audit and Risk Committee for the work undertaken over the Course of the year. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report for 2022/23. 		
4.3	<p>Remuneration & Nominations Committee Update</p> <p>The Board Chair provided a verbal update from the meeting held prior to the Board meeting. Items covered included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR/CE Performance Appraisal 2022/23 • PR/CE Pay Award 2023/24 • SCRA Pay Award Development 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Member Recruitment 		
4.4	Committee Membership The Board Chair advised members Committee membership will be discussed with members during upcoming one to one sessions.		
5.	Governance		
5.1	Board Objectives The Board Chair introduced the SCRA Board objectives for 2023/24. Noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewal – Strategy, Transformation and Continuous Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board will steer strategic development of SCRA's work to reflect Ministerial commitments in relation to Scotland's children and young people. The Board will promote and support SCRA to embed new ways of working, exploiting available digital technology and ensuring the application of new learning. Delivery – Efficiency and Effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board will oversee SCRA's performance against strategic ambitions, standards of practice and operational targets. To meet this objective, the Board will be provided with regular updates and reviews by officers to inform decision-making, scrutiny, oversight of risk management, challenge, and support. Resources – Budget Management, People and Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board will promote and support SCRA to embed new ways of working, exploiting available digital technology and ensuring the application of new learning. Delivery – Efficiency and Effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board will oversee SCRA's performance against strategic ambitions, standards of practice and operational targets. To meet this objective, the Board will be provided with regular updates and reviews by officers to inform decision-making, scrutiny, challenge, and support. Resources – Budget Management, People and Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board will agree organisation-wide review of existing strategies and deployment 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>of resources to ensure effective management of those resources in pursuance of SCRA's strategic objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Board will oversee SCRA's work to ensure services and practice that focus on inclusiveness and equality, and a diverse workforce, reflective of the range of communities the organisation serves. • Board Member Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide strategic, effective non-executive leadership of SCRA. ○ Demonstrate and promote transparent governance of SCRA. ○ Promote and communicate SCRA's role clearly and confidently. <p>Agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the SCRA Board objectives for 2023/24. 		
5.2	<p>UK Government Boardroom Apprenticeship Pilot Programme</p> <p>The Board Chair asked members to note the UK Boardroom Apprentice Board Host programme and to consider SCRA's enrolment in the programme.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Boardroom Apprentice is a twelve-month board learning and placement programme. Its vision is to move the board member role from aspiration to reality. • The programme is built on three key pillars. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Experience ○ Knowledge & Understanding ○ Support <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To proceed with the application to join the Host Board programme. 		
Reports			
6.	<p>Chief Executive's 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 Partnership 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Partnerships • Scottish Government Liaison • SCRA Managers Event • CHS Board and Management Development Programme • Scottish COVID Inquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Initial key points of learning <p>Issues arising during discussion: There is further work to be done within areas of the HSWG, and an expectation of delivery at pace. It is important to have a conversation around things needing to be done, at a measured pace.</p>		
7.	<p>OPR & introduction to official statistics The Data Manager introduced the report. The report uses a balanced scorecard approach, which attributes measures within the organisation into four quadrants; three aligned to the aims within our business plan: Care; Connect; and Protect and another quadrant around recovery or exceptions. 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.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 1 October 2022 and the repeal of the relevant Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 provisions, children (and relevant persons) have a statutory duty to attend their Children's Hearing. The impact of this is seen again this quarter in attendance data. Pre-Hearing Panels (PHP) have increased significantly as once again, PHPs must be convened to decide whether to excuse a child from the obligation to attend the Hearing. Hearings are also becoming more face-to-face. • positive improvements are occurring in Hearing scheduling which has increased to 61.8% and referrals over 100 working days which decreased from 237 at the start of January to 141 at the start of April. • The percentage of Hearing's decisions upheld at appeal (appeal refused) was low at 34% in the quarter. As part of the Case Sampling Programme, SCRA will be looking at appeals which were not opposed which will provide greater detail on this area. This will run in 2024 from mid-February through March and will report to the May Audit 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA has seen an increase in both long- and short-term absence, however short term does remain within the target that we have set as an organisation for the year. • Revenue savings are above target and mainly arose from vacancy management in the latter half of the year. Capital was underspent by 14.7%, mainly due to delays on the Elgin refurbishment and property Minor Works projects and a pause in an IT development project. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional support is being provided to North Strathclyde where there is an issue with Police and how they are managing their information The situation is ongoing but approaching normal. • Consideration needs to be given around the capacity of other organisations to support change within the system. We are vulnerable to what is happening in other agencies i.e., high vacancy rates. Communication is key. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the Fourth Quarter Organisational Performance Report 2022/23: (1 January to 31 March 2023). 		
8.	<p>Keeping The Promise Update Report</p> <p>The Head of Strategy & OD introduced the report, updating the Board on the recommendations of the Hearings System Working Group and the implementation planning.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 25th May 2023 the Hearings System Working Group (HSWG) published its final report, setting out across 330 pages, the background, context, recommendations and supporting narrative of what the group determined needed to change, improve, or stop to give full effect to the Promise for children coming into the Hearings System. • There is an all-managers event on 8th June and the HSWG recommendations are the topic for one of the workshops – to provide an opportunity for managers to delve a bit deeper into some of these – to consider what we can take forward as an organisation and to get their thoughts on how we might do that – what their priorities would be. 		

		Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the recommendations, Scottish Government are to lead the coordination and governance of implementation across agencies. This arrangement is something that we welcome and have been working with Scottish Government and CHS to develop structures to support this. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board are encouraged to see the constructive working relationship between SCRA and CHS. There is a complicated landscape in terms of governance, resulting in a lot of work to support and service. Can these structures be simplified in the future. SCRA will need to front load staffing and capacity and will require to increase improvement PM capability. Additional funding will be needed to support change management functionality. 		
9.	<p>2022/23 Draft Budget Outturn</p> <p>The Head of Finance & Resources introduced the report, providing a summary of SCRA's unaudited financial position for year to March 2023.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report provides information in the following areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue Efficiencies Property and Digital Programmes Financial planning Income exceeded budget and together with the revenue underspend this could create some additional flexibility in 2023/24 or be used to reduce cash drawn down in year. The capital underspends on the property and digital programmes are required to complete projects which have slipped. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve allocation of property capital underspend to complete 2022/23 projects in 2023/24 and digital capital underspend to support a paused IT development project. 		
10.	<p>Property Strategy</p> <p>The Head of Property introduced the report, providing the Board with an update on the work carried out over the last year along with the actions that are planned for the current</p>		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>financial year.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation is entering a period of further change and uncertainty relating to the planned structure for the Children's Hearing System. The information presented within the Resource Spending Review alongside new government property initiatives and actions to mitigate the climate emergency point to greater flexibility, collaboration and sharing of resources going forward. • Over the course of the pandemic, SCRA has put in place plans that are building a more flexible and agile organisation. This has been supported by a new core IT system, improved mobile technology and a new agile working policy. The adoption of agile, hybrid and smart working are being embedded in SCRA's workplaces and have successfully led to the creation of modern flexible offices in several locations. Where possible and supported by analysis carried out during development of these projects, the amount of office space leased has reduced providing cost and carbon savings to the organisation. As our offices no longer require large numbers of desks allocated to individuals and dedicated areas set aside for storing paper files it is expected that our overall requirement for space will continue to reduce over time. • Our planned activity for 2023/24 builds on the work of providing greater flexibility within our estate and contributes to our corporate objectives. Our properties, and the services we deliver from them, will need to be increasingly flexible, resilient, sustainable, and able to demonstrate value for money. • The additional funding provided by Scottish Government in connection with the Children (Care and Justice) Bill provides an opportunity to undertake works at several properties that produces improvements for physical and virtual hearing provision that builds additional capacity and resilience. For 2023/24, it is intended to target the additional £500K of funding specifically towards increasing the scope of planned works in Edinburgh, Glenrothes, Glasgow (initial design work) and the Hearing Room Improvements programme. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost pressures are evident in the wider economy which are leading to an increase in the cost of holding and operating from our properties. For low use locations where, frequent repairs are necessary and upgrading to meet environmental obligations are significant this will bring challenges. As all organisations review their need for office accommodation, we are seeing a reduction in the income received from the lettable spaces in our estate as tenants choose to vacate at lease expiry. • Sustainability and our response to the climate emergency will become an increasing strategic priority as working towards the Net Zero targets and fulfilling our public sector duties will impact on every part of the organisation and how our services are delivered. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA anticipates a shrinking footprint for staff based on smart working principles and an increase footprint for children and families. • The Board welcome SCRA's application to the Green Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme (GPSSED) <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the expanded scope of the Edinburgh, Glenrothes and Hearing Room Improvement works by allocating the additional CCJB funding. • To approve the strategic direction set out in the report for development of the next Property Strategy. 		
11.	<p>Inclusion and Diversity Annual Report</p> <p>The Head of HR introduced the report, updating the Board on SCRA's Inclusion and Diversity programme of work since June 2022.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA published its mainstreaming report for 22-23 on 31st March 2023. • The period 23-24 will be a 're-set' year, yet SCRA's Inclusion and Diversity Steering Group have set another impactful programme of work for the forthcoming year, with a focus on achieving real and tangible improvements to enable us to encourage good practice and focus on actions from previous years that we had to defer. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two main areas of significant focus will be on staff training and awareness and improving the recording of equality data – for both children coming to Hearings and our workforce – to enable us to better implement change that will have a positive impact on our staff and responds to the individual needs of the children and families we work with. To ensure highest impact and good use of resources, this will ensure that our work is evidence-driven and needs-based. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a commitment to considering issues and impact of poverty on inequality. 		
12.	<p>Communications Plan – Update</p> <p>The Head of Press and Communications introduced the report introduced the report recommending the Board note progress on actions within SCRA's Communications and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023 three years on.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Communications and Engagement Strategy aims to ensure SCRA continues to have an integrated approach to communications and engagement, and one that supports the organisation's vision and values. The Communications and Engagement Strategy is supported by an action plan. To align with the Corporate Plan cycle, the Communications Strategy has been extended to spring 2024. A new strategy will be developed in the new year. The Communications and Engagement Strategy highlights that we have a large external audience with a variety of different information needs. It is important that we employ a variety of communication tools to meet these needs. Social media forms a key part of our Communications and Engagement Strategy. We currently use the following platforms to engage with our external audiences: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn. We utilise these various platforms to highlight key messages and information, using visuals, cartoons, animations, and GIFS to give posts more prominence. We also target the content in our messages depending on the platform/audience. Our partner e-news continues to be published 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>quarterly. This contains a round-up of all our latest news, such as new research reports, corporate reports, and our new information materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA's Press and Communications Team continues to host and maintain several partnership websites, including the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership, Our Hearings, Our Voice, Hearings Advocacy, Stand Up for Siblings, My Corporate Parents, and the Youth Justice Improvement Board website which was and launched in June 2022. We also built and launched a website for The Glasgow Promise in October 2022. More recently we built and launched a website for Bairns' Hoose on 1 June 2023. We have also been approached to build a Child Protection website and this is under consideration. Our Press and Communications Team designs, builds, and maintains these websites for free as part of our commitment to partnership working. • Engaging in a meaningful way with Hearings-experienced children and young people continues to be a cornerstone of our strategy and approach. • SCRA continues to host and support Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV). SCRA also provides communications support to OHOV, and regularly attends Board Meetings to support the project team and the young people. • SCRA continues to roll out the Modern Apprenticeship Programme exclusively for care and/or Hearings experienced young people. • The Hearing Room Improvement Programme continues to be rolled out nationally and almost all rooms are now complete. We continued to modernise and adapt rooms during the pandemic so that we could host Hearings in child and young person friendly Hearing rooms where possible. • As part of SCRA's commitment to Keeping The Promise, SCRA launched its first ever group for care experienced staff. Staff members with any experience of care, whether having been through the Children's Hearings System, or being foster carers or adoptive parents etc. were welcomed to join. • Our Participation Officer and Press and Communications Manager regularly work with a variety of groups of young people, including Our Hearings, Our Voice, the Stirling Champs Board, and the Falkirk Champs Board to ensure that our workstreams are inclusive and co-designed with 		

		Timescale	Action
	care experienced young people.		
13.	<p>Annual Complaints Report The Head of Practice & Policy introduced the report on the review of complaints 2022-23.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRA's Complaints Handling Procedure has been in place since 2011 and follows the Model Complaints Handling Procedures (MCHP) provided by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), which was most recently updated in January 2020. • An internal audit of SCRA's complaints process was carried out in February and March 2021. This found a moderate level of assurance and made seven recommendations: complaints process; complaints logging; complaints sign off; independent review of complaint and finding; complaints' root cause; and lessons learned. All these recommendations have been implemented. • SCRA worked with Deaf Scotland in 2022 to ensure that our complaints process is as accessible as possible for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. We introduced a British Sign Language (BSL) video on our website that outlines the complaints process and provides details on how to make a complaint. We have also been trialling the use of a text message service for BSL users, who can contact SCRA to make a complaint via text message. The text service was introduced in September 2022 and to date we have not received any complaints via this service. • SCRA did not receive any direct complaints from children and young people in 2022-23. • The SPSO is currently working on a new approach to handling complaints that involve children. SCRA has participated in the workshops that were run to capture stakeholder's views. • Following the internal audit of SCRA's complaint process in February and March 2021, the root cause of each element of a complaint is recorded and analysed to identify any areas or processes that can be improved upon either locally or nationally. The following changes were implemented during 2022-23: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Standard Operating Model was updated to ensure further clarity around the printing of panel papers. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes amended within a locality to ensure future review hearings take place as specified. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to constantly look for new ways for children and young people to be heard. 		
14.	<p>Influencing Report 01 June 2022 to 01 June 2023</p> <p>The Head of Practice & Policy introduced the Influencing Report outlining the key areas where SCRA has been able to be influential and apply its professional expertise, data, and research to issues at a national level.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <p>Updates were provided in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pending Legislation and Parliamentary Work. Consultation Responses Current partnership & collaborative work Research Additional Work Horizon Scanning Other Influencing Work & Training <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report highlights the breadth and influence SCRA has. A huge amount of work is being undertaken to ensure we take a good legislative position. 		
15.	Risk		
5.1	<p>Strategic & Operational Risk Registers</p> <p>The PR/CE introduced the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers report for review by the Board.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Risk Registers were last reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee at its May 2023 meeting and the Board at its December 2022 meeting. Following a light touch review SCRA's revised Risk Management Policy was approved by the Board at its meeting in March 2023. The Board has responsibility for the system of internal control and risk management within SCRA. The Risk Management Policy will next be reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee in February 2024 and any changes reported to the March 2024 Board for approval. The Board charges the Audit and Risk 		

		Timescale	Action
	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Risk Registers are kept under review by the Executive Management Team (EMT) and the Planning and Performance Network (PPN). • The Head of Finance & Resources has worked with strategic risk leads to populate the fields in Decision Time that populate the Assurance Mapping Report, principally the Risk Impact, Risk Controls and Assurance Sources columns. Further development of this element of the tool is required. At this stage no assurance gaps are being flagged • 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>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers 		
15.2.	<p>New Risks None</p>		
	<p>Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 20 September 2023</p>		

SCRA Board Meeting Workplan August 2023

Business Item	Wed 21/06/23	Wed 20/09/23	Wed 13/12/23	Wed 23/01/24	Wed 20/03/24
Strategic/Corporate					
Policy & Influencing Report	✓				
Research Programme			✓		
Risk Register	✓		✓		
Governance					
Audit Committee Minutes	✓	✓	✓		✓
Committee Annual Reports	✓				
Remuneration & Nominations Committee Minutes					
SCRA Standing Orders Review (Next due March 2025)					
Finance					
Budget Monitoring Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Draft Budget			✓	✓	✓
Annual Report & Accounts		✓			
Financial Strategy		✓			
Planning					
Draft Corporate, Corporate Parenting & Business Plan		✓	✓	✓	✓ (BP)
Draft Annual Report		✓			
Annual Workforce Planning Report					✓
Communications Plan	✓				
Performance					
Organisational Performance Report	✓	✓	✓		✓
Operational					
Locality Performance Reviews			✓		
Chief Executive's Report	✓	✓	✓		✓
Complaints Review	✓				
Inclusion Annual Report	✓				
Environmental Annual Report					✓

Business Item	Wed 21/06/23	Wed 20/09/23	Wed 13/12/23	Wed 23/01/24	Wed 20/03/24
Overview of Policies Annual Report			✓		
Health & Safety Annual Report					✓
Procurement Report		✓			
Property Strategy	✓				
Keeping the Promise update	✓	✓	✓		✓
Staff Survey				✓	✓
Role of the Reporter		✓			
Agile Policy (Next review Sep 2024)					
SCRA Framework Document (next review 2024)					
SCRA Whistleblowing Policy (next review Dec 2024)					

Present:

Jim Edgar (Chair)
Kay Barton
Martin Toye

In Attendance:

Neil Hunter	Principal Reporter/Chief Executive
Alistair Hogg	Head of Practice & Policy
Ed Morrison	Head of Finance & Resources,
Lisa Bennett	Head of Strategy/OD
Paul Mulvanny	Senior Operational Manager
Pamela Armstrong	Governance Officer – Minutes

Internal Auditors – BDO

Chloe Main – By TEAMS

External Auditors – Audit Scotland

Laura Nelson
Asif Haseeb
Sean Cowan – By TEAMS

	Item	Timescale	Action
1.	AOB None		
2.	Apologies None		
3.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.		
4.	Minute of Previous Meeting: 25th May 2023 The minute was agreed as an accurate record. Action Log & Work plan The action log and work plan were reviewed and approved by the Committee.		
5.	Matters Arising None		

	Item	Timescale	Action
6.	<p>Information Governance, Six Monthly Report</p> <p>The Head of Practice & Policy introduced the report, providing the Committee with an update on SCRA's Data Protection compliance, data breaches reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), training, and requests for information between 1st January 2023 and 30th June 2023.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Retention Policy. Since 30th January 2023, SCRA no longer holds any case files about Over 18's on CSAS. ○ Covid 19 Inquiry Scotland. The cross-team collaborative report was submitted to Scottish Government at the end of June 2023. ○ Security Awareness Champions. An additional security awareness champion based in Highlands & Islands Locality has received training and joins the two existing champions. ○ Staffing. • Outstanding Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data Protection Compliance refresher training 2023. ○ Deletion of duplicate contact records. • Breaches of personal data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breach numbers. ○ Breach categories. ○ Non-disclosure breaches. ○ Trends in data breach numbers. ○ ICO investigations. ○ Data Protection related complaints. • Information Requests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GDPR - subject access requests. ○ Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) requests. ○ PVG Requests. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working to establish what, if any, correlation exists between the workload of each locality in a given month, and the number of breaches reported to the Information Governance team. That data is being gathered at local and national levels, with resources allocated to offset spikes in workload. While a lot of work continues to be done on process integrity, the main issue remains human error, and we will continue to address this with 		

	Item	Timescale	Action
	staff.		
7.	External Audit		
7.1	<p>Covering Report and Draft Annual Report 2022/23 (restricted until publication)</p> <p>The Head of Strategy & OD introduced the report, covering the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual Report will be published at 10am on Thursday 26 October 2023 and will be available on SCRA's website (www.scra.gov.uk). • This date has been agreed with our Sponsor Branch at the Scottish Government and will be formally laid in the Scottish Parliament on the afternoon of Wednesday 25 October 2023. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Research section of the report, the Committee would like to see short references to what was found and learned from the published reports. • The Committee expressed some further thoughts on formatting which will be discussed with the Communications Team. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve arrangements for the publication of SCRA's Annual Report 2022/23. 		
7.2	<p>2022/23 Auditor's Covering Letter, Proposed Independent Auditor's Report, Letter of Representation (ISA 580) and Annual Audit Report.</p> <p>Laura Nelson and Asif Haseeb, Audit Scotland, both spoke to the 2022/23 Auditor's Covering Letter, Proposed Independent Auditor's Report, Letter of Representation (ISA 580) and Annual Audit Report.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit opinions on the annual report and accounts are unmodified. • SCRA's financial statements give a true and fair view and were properly prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework. • No material adjustments have been made to the annual report and accounts because of the audit process. • Expenditure and income were incurred in accordance with applicable enactments and 		

	Item	Timescale	Action
	<p>guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The audited part of the remuneration and staff report, performance report and governance statement were all consistent with the financial statements and properly prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation and directions made by Scottish Ministers. SCRA has effective and appropriate arrangements in place to continue to deliver services. SCRA has a 5-year strategic financial plan. This includes several significant financial risks which will require close monitoring and review going forward. Governance Statement disclosures are consistent with the financial statements and comply with statutory guidance. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The materiality figure has been updated from the figure shown in the draft accounts, as this was based on last year's figure. It is correct to not recognise a pension asset. Due to fluctuations, they could potentially be a liability in next year's accounts. The issue identified around IFRS16 was not related to SCRA's calculations and treatment of lease assets and liabilities but presentational disclosure issues. Audit Scotland thanked the Finance Team for the good quality papers provided during the audit process. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the 2022/23 Auditor's Covering Letter, Proposed Independent Auditor's Report, Letter of Representation (ISA 580) and Annual Audit Report. 		
7.3	<p>Covering Report and Draft 2022/23 Annual Accounts</p> <p>The Finance Manager introduced the report advising the Committee Audit Scotland has completed the audit of the SCRA's 2022/23 accounts and has submitted a draft independent auditor's report to the Accountable Officer. The auditor has issued a draft audit opinion on the financial statements and on the regularity of the financial transactions.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues arising from the Accounts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue Grant in Aid and Reserves 		

	Item	Timescale	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pensions ○ General Fund ○ Rent, Right of Use Assets and Obligations ("IFRS 16") • Audit Scotland's Annual Audit Report (AAR) • Audit opinion and Letter of Representation (ISA 580) <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Finance Team will address the suggestions for improvements to the Performance Report made by the Committee, while continuing to follow best practice. • The report contains a lot of acronyms and abbreviations. A glossary would be helpful. This will be included in next year's Performance Report • For future reports, it would be helpful to the reader if the Performance Report started with the operational side of the organisation i.e., a focus on the services we currently deliver. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the 2022/23 accounts for presentation to the Board, subject to the amendments discussed. • To approve the Letter of Representation (ISA 580) for presentation to the Board. • The Chair will issue a letter to Audit Scotland, requesting continuity of the team going into next year. 		
8.	Quality Assurance and Performance		
8.1	<p>Reporter drafting of the statement of grounds under section 67(2)(m) of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011</p> <p>The Head of Strategy and OD introduced the findings of the case sampling exercise on Reporter drafting of the statement of grounds under section 67(2)(m) of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. The Head of Practice and Policy introduced the action plan.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report contains detail and analysis of the case sampling exercise undertaken on reporter drafting of the statement of grounds where the ground selected as reflecting the principal concern for the child is section 67(2)(m), namely that their conduct has, or is likely to have, a serious adverse effect on 		

	Item	Timescale	Action
	<p>the health, safety or development of the child or some other person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus of the exercise was to assess compliance with Practice Direction 7 on 'Section 67 Grounds - Decision Making and Drafting the Statement of Grounds' (<u>Practice Direction 7</u>) with particular emphasis on the essential and relevant facts for this ground. • This is the first-time grounds under section 67(2)(m) have been the topic of a case sampling exercise, and there are several conclusions which can be taken from it. • Some assurance can be taken from the findings in respect of the essential and relevant facts for this ground, with most aspects of this having positive findings of well over 90% • There are slightly less positive findings for the question about whether the statement of grounds contained sufficient specification, with 89% of cases in the sample assessed as yes. • Because of the importance of the inclusion of the essential facts for the ground, and the need for sufficient specification, the outcomes for the 19 children whose statement of grounds had a negative response for one or more of these categories was checked. 16 of them are now subject to compulsory supervision orders, and for the remaining three, the grounds were discharged by a children's hearing because an order was not considered necessary. The committee can be assured that there does not appear to have been any detriment caused to these children or young people by the drafting of the grounds. • Almost a quarter of the cases sampled included facts that were not assessed as being relevant to the 'm' ground, suggesting that this is an area for improvement. • The question of evidence not fact in grounds is one that has been asked in previous exercises on the drafting of grounds. In the report on 'Decision-making and Drafting of Grounds in Cases involving Domestic Abuse' from August 2022, 30% of the grounds sampled included some evidence not fact. The finding of 32% of cases in this exercise indicates that there has been no improvement in this aspect of drafting grounds. • There is also room for improvement in the use of language, with 22% of the cases including some 		

	Item	Timescale	Action
	<p>language that was assessed as not being straightforward and easy to understand. Reviewers described the language in some of these cases as not child friendly, and there were also examples of legal and professional language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When put together with the question about use of the language of criminal law, one third of all the cases in the sample included examples of language not assessed as straightforward and/or of criminal law. • The reporter has a wide discretion in drafting, in relation to style and content. The presence of these language issues therefore does not mean that the statement of grounds is incompetent or unlawful. However, Practice Direction makes clear that language is important for several reasons, including for the child's and relevant person's understanding and participation in the process. • While less than a third of all cases were assessed as being fully compliant with Practice Direction, some assurance can be taken from the number of cases, 96 in total (80%) assessed either as being fully in line with Practice Direction or containing examples of minor non-compliance in one or two areas only. • Although not a primary focus of the exercise, the findings about the decisions recorded where the child or young person is referred on offence grounds, but the reporter arranges the hearing in terms of another ground, highlight the need for updated guidance on consistent recording, and consideration of a new category of decision which reflects the common scenario of bringing conduct rather than offence grounds. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the management action plan. 		
8.2	<p>Case Sampling Programme 2023/24 Update The Head of Strategy & OD introduced the update.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Quality Assurance case sampling programme for 2023/24 was approved by Audit & Risk Committee in February 2023. The findings of the exercise on 'Reporter drafting of 'm' grounds 'is before the August committee, and planning is complete for the exercise on 'The Reporter's preparation for proof' due to run from mid-August 		

	Item	Timescale	Action
	<p>through September.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is currently significant interest in, and scrutiny of the outcomes for referrals made by the police when a child is charged with an offence. This interest is for several reasons and stems from various sources, including the Children (Care and Justice)(Scotland) Bill, which if enacted will enable all 16 and 17 year olds to be referred into the children's hearing system, and the 'Hearings for Children' report published in May, which urges that the reporter should continue to use their discretion to bring grounds other than offence ones for young people who come into conflict with the law. There has been increased scrutiny of and interest in outcomes for offence referrals, making it necessary for our organisation to be satisfied and able to provide assurance that reporter decision making for the children referred is justified, based on the appropriate factors, rights respecting, and in line with the Decision-Making Framework. <p>Approval is therefore sought as a matter of relative priority to replace the exercise on 'Participation rights in children's hearings' due to run from mid-November through December, with this exercise focussing on offence referrals.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve a change to the 2023/24 case sampling programme, with an exercise on 'Reporter decision making on offence referrals' to replace the exercise previously approved to run in November/December 2023, and reporting to the committee in February 2024. 		
9.	Internal Audit		
9.1	<p>Annual Plan 2023/24 Chloe Main, BDO, introduced the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan will include the following reviews. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Management Framework Corporate Governance Financial Planning Workforce Planning Partnership Engagement Locality Review – Quality Improvement Follow Up Executive sponsors have been assigned to each 		

	Item	Timescale	Action
	<p>review. The Executive sponsors will be responsible for identifying the relevant colleagues who should be involved in each stage of the Internal Audit review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The budgeted number of days is subject to change, following the completion of the planning stage of each review. <p>Issues arising during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Risk Management Policy and Framework will be included within the Corporate Governance review. Strategic and Operations risk registers will be reviewed by the Committee at its November meeting, in line with the current workplan. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 		
10.	<p>PENSIONS UPDATE</p> <p>The Head of Finance and Resources introduced the report, which is a summary of key items discussed at the Pensions Committee/Pensions Board meeting held on 15th June 2023.</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of the following items were included within the report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Audit Annual Audit Plan Internal Audit Annual Assurance Report 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 Valuation Assumptions General Governance Matters Investment Review Engagement and Voting Activity Merger Update Joint Investment Strategy Panel Update (JISP) The Head of Finance and Resources will prepare regular reports on pensions matters to the Audit and Risk Committee. The Accountants and the Head of Human Resources prepare regular reports on significant changes to LGPS regulations when these occur and discuss developments with the JNCC. 		

	Item	Timescale	Action
	Standing Items		
11.	Topical/Regulatory Issues/Governance Issues None		
12.	New Risks While no new risks were identified, the recurring risk around staff pay and continuing budget issues was discussed.		
	Date of Next Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 23rd November 2023, By TEAMS 		



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Chief Executives Report

**Accountable
Director:**

Neil Hunter

Date: 20 September 2023

Recommendation:

1. To note the Chief Executives update report

Reason for Report

At request of Board

Resource Implications

In line with revised budget

Strategy

In line with Corporate Plan

Equalities Duties

Indicate whether an Equalities and Human Rights Impact assessment (HRIA) is required and has been completed. Describe in the body of the report any issues/findings/adjustments that have been made.

Equalities	Impact	Assessment
Required/Completed		

☐

Yes

☒

No

Issues/action points:-

Consultation

Document Classification

Open

1. Staff Partnership

1.1 The National Partnership Forum (NPF) met on 21 August and focussed on the following areas:

- An update on the review of the SCRA/UNISON Partnership agreement which will focus on restatements of our ongoing commitments to partnership working across the organisation, updating and refreshing areas of the agreement which may be have become dated, full alignment to the Scottish Government Fair Work principles, an update on roles and responsibilities and a focus on effective implementation support for both stewards and managers. SCRA will take the opportunity to promote the partnership and encourage further uptake of trade union membership at the staff event.
- An update from the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee on the 2023/24 pay negotiations. UNISON are currently balloting members on SCRA's initial pay offer
- Forward planning for the 2023 staff survey, discussing new areas for development. A core planning group will be established in early October.
- Updated from NPF sub groups on Inclusion and Diversity, Health and Wellbeing, HR Sub Group and an update from the recently established Programme Board in which UNISON are fully engaged. (see agenda item 13 for a fuller update)
- An update on SCRA's 2022/23 full year results, progress on the annual accounts process and an early discussion on 2023/24 revenue and capital forecasts. The required scale of the in year support required for SCRA was noted and the 2 tranche process at autumn and spring budget reviews to resolve this. The difference in operational and organisational stability which has been achieved through an agreed full budget which meets our assessed needs was noted, as was the need to resolve the budget drift issues with SG as we move into a rapid series of changes and almost certain expansions to SCRA's work.
- A wide ranging discussion on current policy work being undertaken in relation to the UNCRC Bill, Childrens (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill (CCJB) and the Hearings for Children report recommendations.

2. Strategic Partnerships

2.1 Childrens Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP)

2.1.1 CHIP will meet on 12 September and the substantive item will be the process for Ministerial consideration of the Hearings for Children report and the developing governance arrangements which are being proposed for oversight and forward decision making. More details are shown at Board agenda item 13. The core of the proposition is a redesign Board jointly chaired by Scottish Government and COSLA, ensuring all key accountabilities for successful future delivery of the Hearing System are covered.

2.2 Youth Justice Improvement Board (YJIB)

2.2.1 Whilst the YJIB has not met for some time the substructure of the Board has continued to work well with a focus on the CCJB. The Parliamentary Education, Children and Young Peoples Committee, which is the lead Committee for this Bill,

published its stage 1 report in June 23. here's a link to it [here](#). There is strong support at this stage about raising the age of referral. The Committee has focused in on the issues of capacity and investment which chime with SCRA's principal concerns. The Committee has also taken a very constructive approach to children's rights, definition of a child and alignment with Scotland (and Parliaments) commitment to UNCRC incorporation. The stage 1 report stretches to 100 pages, but the key issues of relevance for SCRA are:

- An ask of Ministers to re-examine their assumptions underpinning the financial assessment of the Bill. SCRA are already contributing to this reassessment
- A wish to see referrals to the hearing system used to the maximum age of 18, and not pulled back to an earlier age for practical reasons.
- A concern about length of time of key processes in the Hearings system and how these could be further improved (we will make the links in the next stage to the issues of investment and capacity and precarious funding of the hearing system)
- Further more systematic review of adjoining legislation which is impacted by this Bill – particularly in areas such as parental rights and responsibilities as a child attains 16 as well as the evolving nature of children's own rights and obligations with age
- Further debate on the 'cliff edge' of 18 and how we manage this in Scotland given what we know about age, stage, social and neurodevelopment
- Further work to be done in relation to sufficiency of information to victims and those who may have been harmed by a child's conduct, further co-ordination and expansion of aspects of this

2.2.2 Other aspects of the report relate to both children's hearings and wider aspects of children's right relating to issues such as deprivation of liberty, presumption against imprisonment, age appropriate justice processes etc.

2.2.3 Stage 2 of the Bill will start sometime in the Autumn, and at this stage there may be some amendments suggested. SCRA has regular and helpful dialogue with SG and the Bill team and are in a good position to guide and influence how the Bill is shaped. Whilst it is too early to say when the Bill will be implemented, but it looks unlikely to be before late 2024, and more likely to be in early 2025.

3. Sponsor Liaison

3.1 Our regular sponsor team liaison/accountability meeting took place at the end of July. We rehearsed issues of system operation and resilience and SCRA raised some localised issues of recruitment and retention in areas such as Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Tayside. We are well aware of the challenges being faced by other parts of the public sector in this regard – but this is the first time for a number of years that SCRA are experiencing similar difficulties. Senior Operational Managers and the Head of HR are continuing to monitor the situation and put a range of mitigations in place to offset risk as far as we can.

3.2 We highlighted and discussed the recent spike in activity being experienced by SCRA in relation to increased use of social media to inappropriately and potentially illegally post and transmit information about the conduct of children's hearings. This

is a constantly evolving challenge for SCRA and partner agencies and the preferred platforms change rapidly.

- 3.3 We have faced difficulties in getting some social media platforms to remove material that may breach our legislation on transmission/broadcast of material and have picked up again with Police Scotland other agencies what we might be able to do together to protect children's privacy. We are also looking at how other public bodies deal with similar issues.
- 3.4 Police Scotland have been enormously helpful and we are looking at ways we can use their traction and influence with social media platforms to have information removed more quickly. SCRA's [Dealing with Social Media](#), recently updated (April 23) continues to give very clear advice and direction on what we should do when we discover a child's information has been posted.
- 3.5 The Director of Children and Families at the Scottish Government recently visited the South East Locality to talk to staff, find out more about the critical work of the Children's Reporter, participate in a mock hearing and meet with Panel Members. The visit went well and the Director has written to staff to thank them for their openness in describing many of the issues, pressures and future opportunities within the wider hearings system.

Other areas discussed at our sponsor liaison were:-

- Practice and legislation
- HSWG recommendations, planning/progress/timelines
- Finance 2023 – 25
- Pay policy and negotiations
- SCRA's Quarterly Organisational Performance/Monthly Overview Reports
- Risk register – noting progress against the agreement to develop a joint risk register in line with the Ryan Review

4. Public Services Reform (PSR)

- 4.1 The March 2023 Chief Executives report highlighted the programme of work under the banner of Public Services Reform which is being led across Scottish Government and Public Bodies in response to the public funding constraints. SCRA response fully to the request for detailed information at that time. Additional correspondence [attached here](#) has now been received from the Director General (DG) (Education and Justice). This sets out the requirements for Accountable Officers in the run up to the 2024/25 budget setting process. These requirements are focussed around the Scottish Government's policy priority missions as follows:-
 - Equality (tackling poverty and protecting people from harm);
 - Opportunity (a fair, green and growing economy);
 - Community (prioritising our public services).
- 4.2 The specific asks of Accountable Officers are by September 29th:

- To provide personal written assurance that we are delivering our services efficiently and considering all options for short term affordability
- To detail what steps we are taking on longer term reform and all options being pursued to reduce forecast pressures
- Understand and describe the nature of and barriers to future reform of how we deliver services at reduce costs

4.3 This letter, the universality of its approach and its corresponding requirements come at a difficult time for SCRA. The organisation is currently running a revenue deficit of just under £6m, rising to nearly £9m in 2024/25 if unchecked. The dual expectations of the CCJB and the medium term Hearings for Children are assessed as in the short term generating thousands of more referrals to Childrens Reporters.

4.4 We intend to respond in detail and robustly to the asks in this letter. There is no short term prospect of SCRA being able to generate savings of any significance given the position we have been placed in over the last 4.5 years. Our Programme Board is working hard to identify short term efficiencies and effective ways of redesigning the way we work. Any cashable savings must be redeployed back into propping up our service and its staff as we try and navigate our way through how we will meet future demands. There are no immediate or safe opportunities to meet some of the DG's expectations and we need to be clear about this from the outset. The CCJB and the Hearings for Children report recommendations can and should act as the framework/blueprint for future reform in the Childrens Hearings system given its focus on collaboration, outcomes for children, rights and participation. To make legislative and policy initiatives a success they need investment not short term further short term reductions in resource of further financial instability which only result in SCRA's statutory duties to children being placed at risk.

5. Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC)

5.1 The SCRA Property Team have carried out an initial exercise and have assessed the risk we are carrying in relation to RAAC is low as there are only a small number of buildings in the high risk categories i.e. concrete flat roofs constructed between 1950s and 1990s. Some of SCRA's properties are very old buildings, for example the hearing centre in Selkirk is a 17th Century Building.

5.2 SCRA has identified all the buildings that fall into the affected timeline and of these a very small number require investigations to be carried out to determine whether RAAC is present. This involves both owned and leased properties and may only require a desktop exercise to confirm whether RAAC was used in its construction. Where necessary, physical surveys/investigations will be carried out and the Property Team will contact the organisation's surveyors to arrange surveys to ascertain the presence of RAAC and its condition.

5.3 SCRA are responding to a request from the Deputy First Minister to all public bodies. The response will cover the current position for all SCRA buildings and confirm the actions SCRA will be taking to assess the RAAC risk. Further updates across the service and with building users (such as Panel Members) will be provided as more information becomes available.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF REPORTER

Accountable Director: Principal Reporter/
Head of Human
Resources

Date: 20 September 2023

Recommendations:

1. To note the intention of the Principal Reporter to review the role of the Reporter in response to the rapidly changing policy, practice and operational environment
2. To approve the planned consultation and review process of the core role of Reporter
3. That the Board will receive updated reports at key points of the review process – specifically at the conclusion of Phase 1 and highlighting financial implications, risks and other significant issues

Reason for Report: For Board approval

Resource Implications: Additional Resources required to support the process

Consultation: EMT, UNISON

Equalities Duties Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment will be required at an early stage. This report seeks support in for the review. EHRIA will be completed once the review process has been approved by the Board

Document Classification: Not Protectively Marked

1. Background

- 1.1 The Board will be aware of the transformational changes that SCRA is currently considering/planning. These changes are being planned as a result of our own continuous improvement programme, the implementation of the Children's Care and Justice Bill (CCJB) and the Hearings for Children Report a key part of Keeping the Promise. SCRA is currently considering what these changes will mean and the impact that they will have on roles, workforce and partnerships.
- 1.2 Even before the final conclusion, legislative changes and approval of hearing system redesign recommendations, it is clear that the role of the Reporter will change, develop and potentially expand. For example, we know that the planned introduction of 16/17 years old to the Hearings System will bring more complexity of need, more leading of contentious evidence and an increased risk profile in aspects of referral (e.g. potential increases in referral of offences with elements of significant harm). In addition the Hearings for Children report recommends that the Reporter works in an increasingly relational way with children and young people at an earlier stage and in advance of developing grounds. The recommendations on changes to the current grounds hearing model and our work at court, are additional significant changes. All of these will have a fundamental impact on the skills, knowledge, experience and learning needs for our core role.
- 1.3 As well as the impact of the rapidly changing external environment SCRA has, over the past few years, consistently heard from our Reporters, via the staff survey, responses to pay awards and directly to members of EMT, that the role of Reporter is no longer remunerated in the same way as public sector comparators like Procurator Fiscals and other public sector legal roles. Whilst these are only a few of the comparators we assess against, SCRA has committed to undertaking a full pay and benchmarking exercise on the role of Reporter, in partnership with UNISON, during 2023/24. This process commenced in August 2023.
- 1.4 The role of Reporters and its associated grade has not been reviewed or assessed by SCRA in well over 15 years. Whilst the fundamentals of the role have not significantly changed during that time, the absence of any systemic process of review goes some way to understanding how the role has fallen behind some key comparators. A copy of the current job description is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.5 Although the focus of the review will be on the core role of Reporter, it will be invariably challenging to conclude that exercise without considering the impact of the outcome on associated roles, like Senior Practitioner, Assistant Reporter and Locality Reporter Manager.
- 1.6 It is anticipated that to conclude this review in full, this will need to be undertaken in two phases. This is due to the fact that SCRA and key partners, such as Children's Hearings Scotland, will have a need to undertake some in-depth redesign work around how we support the hearings process and the role

of the Reporter in Hearings and Court with the introduction of a professional paid Chair.

- 1.7 This paper sets out a draft process, structure and timetable for the review of the role of the Reporter.

2. Process

- 2.1 As this review will be of interest to a large group of SCRA's workforce, it is important to be as inclusive and transparent in our planned consultation as well as being clear on the process to help manage expectations on the timescales and outcomes.
- 2.2 As stated in 1.6, it is proposed that this review is undertaken in two phases, firstly to collect baseline information and secondly to enable full and detailed consideration and assessment of all the dependencies and transformational change elements that might impact on the future role of the Reporter. An indicative draft plan is attached at Appendix 2 albeit we will require to be flexible in our approach to respond to emerging themes, issues and expectations on the role.
- 2.3 A key aspect of the initial planning process is to ensure that adequate resourcing is available for this key work. This resource has not yet been fully defined. However it must bring together three key components – credibility, and sufficient capacity and resilience to conclude the review programme. There will be a requirement to provide consistent leadership and support for the project team alongside a strong communications and engagement strategy. To deliver this it is intended to appoint a project lead for this review and consideration will be given to the option of either seconding a lead LRM (or other internal Reporter experienced role within the organisation) or appointing an external consultant to undertake this exercise (or elements of both).
- 2.4 The Children's Reporter is a unique role insofar as you can't train as a Reporter outside of SCRA – you can bring transferrable social work and/or legal skills with you - but you must complete a two year Professional Development Award on appointment to SCRA. As a consequence the preference would be to appoint an internal lead to work alongside the HR Team, and in partnership with UNISON. This will add a significant level of credibility to the review.
- 2.5 It is anticipated that the process itself will involve the following:-
 - project review of key information
 - surveying postholders and line managers on current and future developments of the role
 - planned series of face to face consultation with postholders, aligned roles and Senior Team
 - consultation with key partner bodies such as CHS, Sponsor Team on the redesign work which may impact on the functions and responsibilities of a Reporter.
 - underpinned by a robust communications strategy throughout the review

- underpinned by regular discussions on progress and findings of the review with the Board and Sponsor Team
- assess timescales further as the review progresses to ensure that all aspects of the role are considered including the impact of any new legislation which is not currently being progressed until 2025.

2.6 The draft plan at Appendix 2 details a timeline well into 2025. It is acknowledged that this might seem an overly lengthy process and one which postholders might be challenged by. However, the transformational change elements will take some time to fully consider and understand, as well as align themselves with any potential legislative changes. It is our intention to conclude the review of the role with a job description that can support the organisation and postholders for the next 10 years and so it needs to capture all expected changes within this review period.

2.7 We have committed to working in partnership with UNISON on this review.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Board are asked to:-

- To note the intention of the Principal Reporter to review the role of the Reporter in response to the rapidly changing policy, practice and operational environment.
- To approve the planned consultation and review process of the core role of Reporter.
- That the Board will receive updated reports at key points of the review process – specifically at the conclusion of Phase 1 and highlighting financial implications, risks and other significant issues.

Appendix 1**JOB DESCRIPTION****1. JOB TITLE REPORTER****2. JOB PURPOSE**

Deliver an effective and efficient service to children and families in line with corporate strategies and policies and relevant legislation.

3. ORGANISATIONAL POSITION

Immediate Line Manager: Locality Reporter Manager

Peers: HO professional staff
Reporters
Locality Support Manager

Management Responsibilities: None

4. DIMENSIONS

Locality team staff, ranging from 4 to 25 people.

5. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Ensure the delivery of an effective and high quality service for children and families by the prompt investigation and assessment of referrals in line with practice guidance.
- Ensure decisions are made in the best interests of the child in accordance with SCRA policy and guidance.
- Prepare grounds of referral for any child who may require compulsory measures of supervision.
- Ensure referrals are processed and decisions communicated appropriately to children and families and other relevant parties in accordance with SCRA's procedures.
- Work closely with support staff to ensure the effective administration of the hearings process.
- Prepare and conduct relevant proceedings in court.
- Engage effectively with key local partners to influence and ensure co-ordinated action and service provision for children and families.
- Participate constructively as a team member to ensure consistency of practice and the development of effective systems, policies and procedures.

6. QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING, EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Degree in social work, law, education or other relevant discipline
- Evidence of continuing professional development
- Experience of working in a related field
- Understanding and knowledge of the operating environment of the Children's Hearing System and the issues affecting it
- Computer literate
- Excellent communication skills, oral and written
- Influencing skills
- Assessment and investigative skills
- Decision-making skills
- Team-working skills
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Time management skills
- Flexible and adaptable approach

7. COMMUNICATIONS

Internal: Locality Teams and HO staff.

External: Children and families, panel members, sheriffs, professionals in other agencies

8. PRINCIPAL CHALLENGE

To achieve the right outcomes for vulnerable children.

Appendix 2**Draft Review Plan – to be confirmed with Appointed Project Team**

Start Date	Description	Lead	Completion Date
Phase 1			
August 23	Commence pay benchmarking exercise on role of Reporter and gap analysis	Sub Group of JNCC - HR Team and UNISON	December 23
September 23	Board Approval on Review of Role of Reporter	Head of HR	September 23
October 23	Appoint Lead for role review	Head of HR	October 23
November 23	Assess impact on role of Reporter from Programme Protect, CCJB, HSWG report, staff survey and pay and benchmarking exercise	Project Lead and Head of HR, UNISON	December 23
January 24	Initial consultation exercise with Reporter workforce –survey plus face to face consultations sessions with Reporter, LRM, Senior Practitioner and Assistant Reporter workforces.	Project Lead and HR Rep - UNISON	April 24
March 24	Consider outcome of pay and benchmarking exercise on 24/25 pay offer development	Head of HR	April 24
Phase 2			
April 24	Consider data gathered from consultation exercises assessed against research from November 23. Also consider again further outputs and recommendations from Programme Protect and emerging redesign work Consider any additional capacity (external and internal) to ensure conclusion within timescales	Project Lead – HR Rep - UNISON	April 24 April 24
April 24	Engage with the joint design work team and with key partners re hearings scheduling and other	Project Lead	October 24

	activity and court work		
November 24	Feedback findings from review project and hold second consultation with workforce	Project Lead – HR Rep – UNISON	December 24
January 25	Develop new role description and person specification to include values based references and hold final consultation via survey to revised role	Project Lead – HR Rep	February 25
March 25	Conclude new role and job evaluation of new role	Job Evaluation Committee	March 25
March 25	Business case for additional investment in new role to Scottish Government	Head of HR	March 25
March 25	Consider outcome of Job Evaluation in pay 25/26 offer development	Head of HR	March 25
April 25	Revised role of Reporter effective from 1 April 25	Postholders	April 25
tbc	Backdate any additional investment in new role to effective date of 1 April 25	Head of HR	tbc

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Annual Procurement Report 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

Accountable Director: Head of Finance and Resources **Date:** 20th September 2023

Recommendation:

The SCRA Board is asked to:-

- a) Note Procurement activity during 2022/23 in line with SCRA's Corporate Procurement Strategy and the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.
- b) Note the ongoing contribution of the Procurement Strategy to SCRA's ongoing work.

Reason for Report: Procurement Duties requirement.

Resource Implications: Within existing budgets.

Strategy: Corporate Procurement Strategy 2020-24.

Equalities Duties Equalities Impact Assessment Required/Completed:

☐

Yes

☒

**No – annual update of
Procurement activity**

Consultation: EMT, SG Procurement.

Document Classification: Not protectively marked.

1. Background Information

- 1.1 In accordance with The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, SCRA is required to publish an Annual Procurement Report which should include:
- A summary of the regulated procurements that have been completed during the period covered by the report;
 - A review of whether those procurements complied with SCRA's Procurement Strategy;
 - The extent to which any regulated procurements did not comply, and a statement detailing how SCRA will ensure that future regulated procurements do comply;
 - A summary of any community benefit requirements imposed as part of a regulated procurement that were fulfilled during the period covered by the report;
 - A summary of any steps taken to facilitate the involvement of supported businesses in regulated procurements during the report period;
 - A summary of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years; and
 - Reporting on other matters as contained within SCRA's Corporate Procurement Strategy.
- 1.2 The report, attached at Appendix 1, also provides an overview of SCRA procurement performance across the year as well as the range and scope of the Procurement Team work and its criticality to the smooth operation and support of many aspects of SCRA's work.
- 1.3 In addition to the mandatory sections, the report also provides an update on other procurement activity including work in connection with Inclusion & Diversity, Cyber Resilience, Fair Work and Spotlight on Procurement.
- 1.4 A copy of the Annual Procurement Report will be published on SCRA's website and a link will be sent to the Scottish Ministers.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The SCRA Board is asked to:
- a) Note the Procurement activity during 2022/23 and the continued delivery of SCRA's Procurement Strategy.
 - b) The continuing contribution of the Procurement Strategy to SCRA's ongoing work.



Procurement in SCRA₁

SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Annual Procurement Report

For the period
1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

Published September 2023

VERSION CONTROL

VERSION NO.	REVISED BY	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES	DATE
1.0	Helen Mora	First Issued Version	31/07/2022
2.0	Helen Mora	First Issued Version	23/08/2023

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Summary of Regulated Procurements Completed
3. Review of Regulated Procurement Compliance
4. Community Benefits Summary
5. Supported Businesses Summary
6. Future Regulated Procurements
7. Non-regulated Procurements Completed
8. Procurement Performance
9. Other Procurement Activities
10. Continuous Improvement Activities
11. Annual Procurement Report Template
12. Ownership and contact details

- Appendix A: Summary of Regulated Procurements Expected to Commence in the next two financial years
- Appendix B: Summary of non-regulated procurements completed
- Appendix C: Annual Procurement Report Template
- Appendix D: Glossary

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About SCRA

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) is a national body focused on children and young people most at risk. SCRA was formed under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 and became fully operational on 1st April 1996. Our main responsibilities as set out in the Act are:

- To facilitate the work of Children's Reporters
- To deploy and manage staff to carry out that work
- To provide suitable accommodation for Children's Hearings

The Children's Hearings System provides the operational setting in which SCRA and its partner agencies work. The aim is to provide a safety net for vulnerable children and young people, and deliver tailored solutions which meet the needs of the individuals involved, while helping to build stronger families and safer communities.

SCRA's revised Procurement Strategy 2020-23 was approved by the Board in May 2020 and refreshed in March 2022 for the period 2020 to 2024. The Strategy details the principal aims of SCRA Procurement as follows:

- Deliver a professional and flexible procurement service to both internal managers and external suppliers through an inclusive procurement approach, ensuring that SCRA receives best value for money in the procurement of all goods, services and works in order to deliver an effective and efficient service to children and families.
- Contribute to SCRA carrying out its functions and the achievement of its purposes by ensuring that suitable contracts are in place, in particular to allow the dissemination of information and data and to ensure we have adequate premises for hearings to take place.
- Ensure full compliance with legislation and Public Sector Regulations, in accordance with the General Duties and Sustainable Procurement Duty, giving due regard to SCRA's needs and requirements to ensure operational effectiveness is maximised.
- Ensure SCRA's procurement practices contribute to the Scottish Government's objective for sustainable economic growth and contribute to the achievement of relevant National Outcomes.

The Strategy set out seven priorities for the four years covered by the Strategy. The priorities and progress to date are covered in the table at section 3.2.

The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive was clear in his Procurement Strategy foreword that the solid approach to procurement, captured in the strategy, allows SCRA Localities and Teams across the country to have the kind of access to specialist support and advice they need, now and in the future, to make wise, best value decisions about goods and services, to benefit from the scale of national contracts and to vision future ways of making things ever more efficient, responsive and adaptable to our changing needs.

1.2 Procurement Vision

Our vision for the future is one where the approach to procurement and contract management is inclusive and fully integrated into our business strategies and a culture of best practice is embedded which will deliver legally compliant procurement processes, ensuring value for money, sustainability, quality services and continuous improvement.

1.3 Looking Ahead

In developing plans for 2023/24 and beyond, the Procurement Team will ensure objectives align with the seven public procurement priorities published by the Public Procurement Group (PPG) in May 2021 and updated in April 2022: Leadership & Visibility, Sustainable Economic Recovery, Supply Chain Resilience, Maximise Impact of the Sustainable Duty, Climate Emergency, Achieving professional excellence and Developing use of systems to drive sustainable outcomes and support reporting.

1.4 Publication of Report

This report will be published on SCRA's website at www.scra.gov.uk.

2. SUMMARY OF REGULATED PROCUREMENTS COMPLETED

The following regulated procurements were completed in the period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

Date of Award	Contract Title/ Subject Matter	Supplier	Total Est. Value (Including Extensions (Ex. VAT))	Total Est. Value (Excluding Extensions) (Ex. VAT)	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date (Excluding Extensions)
19/09/2022	Enterprise Service Agreement Software	Softcat	£633,995	£633,995	19/09/2022	30/09/2025
31/08/2022	Provision of Postal Services	Royal Mail	£913,200	£684,900	31/08/2022	30/09/2025
27/10/2022	Stirling Furniture	Gresham Office Furniture	£76,883	£76,883	27/10/2022	31/03/2023
01/04/2022	Virtual Hearings Sandbox	Brightwire Technology Services	£63,800	£63,800	01/04/2022	30/11/2022
01/12/2022	Virtual Hearings Sandbox Extension	Brightwire Technology Services	£237,500	£158,333	01/12/2022	30/11/2024

* The above table does not include contract extensions which were taken during 2022/23.

3. REVIEW OF REGULATED PROCUREMENT COMPLIANCE

3.1 In compliance with Section 15(5) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and published Statutory Guidance, SCRA is now required to set out how it will ensure its regulated procurements will:

- Contribute to the carrying out of its functions and achievement of its purposes
- Deliver value for money
- Be carried out in accordance with the General Duties and the Sustainable Procurement Duty
- Ensure payment of invoices are made no later than 30 days after the invoice relating to payment is presented

3.2 Review of compliance with Corporate Procurement Strategy

Key Priorities	Compliance in 2022/23
1. Ensure full compliance with EU and UK Public Sector regulations	
For all regulated procurements comply with statutory requirements for addressing Fair Work Practices, including payment of a Living Wage	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed addressed by Scottish Procurement & Property Directorate (SPPD), Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) and Crown Commercial Services (CCS) in setting up Frameworks (Enterprise Agreement, Postal Services, Office Furniture, VH platform support) Statements on workforce matters, CSR, Environmental performance and Sustainability included in Invitations to Tender (ITTs) and evaluation criteria where applicable.
Develop a diverse range of suppliers, including SMEs, Supported Businesses and Third Sector	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed addressed by SPPD, YPO and CCS in setting up Frameworks (as above) and by including SMEs in non-regulated procurements. No opportunities for Supported Businesses.
Consider Community Benefit clauses in all contracts for goods and services over £50k in value	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed addressed by SPPD, YPO and CCS in setting up Frameworks (as above).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Cat C Community Benefits opportunities.
Ensure that regulated procurements are carried out in compliance with SCRA's sustainable procurement duty	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed addressed by SPPD, YPO and CCS in setting up Frameworks (as above). Sustainability Test included in Procurement Strategies and Evaluation Criteria included in tenders issued, where appropriate.
Comply with SCRA's Health & Safety Policy by ensuring that suppliers comply with relevant regulations and best practice	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed addressed by SPPD, YPO and CCS in setting up Frameworks and in SCRA tender exercises, where relevant.
Follow SCRA's established approach of consulting and engaging with those affected by its procurements	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate SCRA engaged with internal stakeholders either by setting up User Intelligence Groups (UIGs) or in discussions with business leads.
Ensuring SCRA's contracts deliver value for money	<p>Complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Strategies identify best route to market and ensure demand is justified. Business Cases include whole life costing where appropriate. Opportunities for collaboration actively considered.
Ensuring that SCRA pays its suppliers within 30 days and endeavour to make payment within 10 working days of receipt of a valid invoice	<p>Partly complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small improvement in 2022/23 payment performance, further improvement will be targeted again in 2023/24.
2. Promote continuous improvement	
Develop contract management practices across SCRA	<p>Partly complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to Contract & Supplier Management (CSM) guidance was assessed in 2022/23 and a number of improvement actions agreed with contract managers.
Develop and train staff involved in purchasing and/or managing contracts and suppliers	<p>Partly complied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Delegated Purchaser (DP) Training was carried out in 2022/23. Refresher Training is

	planned for 2023/24. Other training captured in Section 10.
Meet regularly with Property, IT, HR and Business Improvement Teams ensuring SCRA receives best value whilst meeting legal obligations	Complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings with IT, HR and Property Teams throughout 2022/23.
Develop relationships with Scottish Government Procurement and identify opportunities for collaborative working with other public bodies	Complied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good relationships with Scottish Government Procurement and membership of Cluster Group.

3.3 Review of regulated procurements

SCRA's Head of Finance and Resources reviewed all regulated procurements in the period April 2022 to March 2023, as shown in the table above, for compliance with the organisation's Procurement Strategy and Policy.

In summary all five of our regulated procurements:

- where relevant were tendered via PCS;
- complied with SCRA Procurement Policy thresholds;
- where appropriate, included statements in the ITTs on Fair Work Practices, sustainability including fair and ethically traded goods and payment performance for suppliers and sub-contractors.

Two were awarded under Scottish Government Frameworks by direct award, one was awarded by direct award using a YPO Framework, one was a direct award using a CCS Framework and the virtual hearings sandbox was awarded by Non Competitive Action (NCA).

4. COMMUNITY BENEFITS SUMMARY

- 4.1 Consideration is given to the inclusion of Community Benefit Clauses (CBCs) in our procurement exercises, however, there were no relevant procurements during the reporting period.

5. SUPPORTED BUSINESSES SUMMARY

- 5.1 SCRA actively take steps to facilitate contract opportunities for Supported Businesses where possible. Although initial enquiries were made regarding document scanning this was not pursued any further and no other suitable opportunities were identified during 2022/23.

6. FUTURE REGULATED PROCUREMENTS

- 6.1 A summary of regulated procurements expected to commence within the next two financial years is included at Appendix A. Details may be subject to change due to budget revisions/resource availability, in particular following the development of the organisation's digital plan for 2023/24.

7. NON-REGULATED PROCUREMENTS

- 7.1 A summary of non-regulated procurements and contract extensions with an estimated value above £20k, awarded in the reporting period, is included at Appendix B.
- 7.2 In addition 8 non-regulated procurements below £20k, with a total value of around £82k were awarded in the reporting period.

8.0 PROCUREMENT PERFORMANCE

8.1 Supporting national policies

Digital

SCRA and CHS further developed the new and future-proofed digital platform, CSAS, within the year. In addition there was significant investment in virtual hearings technology, and refresh of laptops. SCRA hearing rooms now have cloud based video conference and collaboration units and guest Wi-Fi provision. The Procurement Team have supported the Digital Programme Manager by providing procurement advice and leading on any tendering requirements.

Environment

The potential for environmental benefits are considered in procurement exercises and where appropriate sustainability is included as one of the criteria for tender evaluation with bidders advised that sustainability is a key feature of the Procurement Reform Bill and a focus of Scottish Government.

Procurement also contribute to the mandatory environmental reporting by completing the procurement section of the annual Climate Change Report.

There is now more prominence given to Climate Change in the organisation's Corporate Procurement Strategy and Sustainability Tests are routinely completed for all regulated procurements.

The Procurement Team support Business Managers and the Head of Property in their efforts to review historical electricity and gas consumption patterns with a view to reducing future emissions.

8.2 PCIP Healthcheck

The last Healthcheck took place in December 2019 and the next one is now programmed for 2024. The 2019 recommendations have been implemented however further improvement work is underway between Procurement and Finance Teams on recording Savings & Benefits.

8.3 2022/23 Published Spend Data

The following table was extracted from the data published by DXC Technology (formerly Spikes Cavell).

£5,985,344 Total Spend			£5,024,320 Core Trade Spend	
543 Input Suppliers	489 De-duplicated Total Suppliers	54 Duplicate Suppliers	82 SME Suppliers	2 Local Suppliers
2550 Transactions	£12,240 Avg. spend per supplier	3.43 % PCard Spend	36.88 % SME Spend	14.85 % Local Spend

Key:

Total Spend - the total amount of spend for the year.
 Input Suppliers - The number of suppliers, before de-duplication.
 De-duplicated Total Suppliers - The number of unique suppliers.
 Duplicate Suppliers - The number of suppliers which are duplicates of another supplier.
 PCard Spend - Percentage of transactions by value of spend that are identified as Purchase Card transactions in the extract.
 Transactions - The total number of transactions.
 Avg. spend per supplier - The average spend per unique supplier.
 Core Trade Spend - Core Trade is a sub-set of your supply base that includes all Trade Suppliers and Social Care Providers with whom you have spent £1,000 or more in the financial year.
 SME Suppliers - Small & Medium sized businesses where the supplier has less than 249 employees or where the annual revenue is less than £22.8m.
 SME Spend - Spend with SME as a percentage of classified suppliers.
 Local Suppliers - Spend with suppliers within the same local authority area as your organisation (based on Postcodes).
 Local Spend - Spend with local suppliers as a percentage of classified suppliers.

8.4 Contracted Spend

Of the total procurement spend of £5,985,344 in 2022/23, £5,584,309 was contracted spend (including non-regulated contracts). This represented c. 93.3% of all procurement spend in the year.

Procurement spend is closely monitored by the Procurement Team with support from the Contract Managers.

8.5 Spend with SMEs

During 2022/23, 36.88% of SCRA's Core Trade Spend was with SMEs, however, it should be noted that DXC (Spikes) still do not have sufficient data from all suppliers on their number of employees to be able to classify them, so the number of SME's is likely to be understated.

Of the five regulated procurements completed within the reporting period, all were awarded to SMEs. A further eight non-regulated contracts above £20k were awarded to SMEs and c. five contracts below £20k.

8.6 Invoices paid within 10 working days

During the year ended 31 March 2023 SCRA paid 77% of all invoices within the terms of its payment policy.

8.7 Collaborative working

SCRA utilises Scottish Government Frameworks where possible. In addition SCRA participated in the SG UIG for Interpreting, Translation & Transcription Services Framework and works with Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) where possible. We collaborated with CHS on the Internal Audit re-let which SCRA led and awarded early in 2023/24.

8.8 Savings & Benefits

Scottish Procurement have confirmed the full year savings that SCRA achieved from their use of Scottish Government collaborative framework agreements, were £121,293. This includes both Category A and B Frameworks. It should be noted that these are not savings which reduce SCRA's costs or help SCRA to operate within the approved level of Grant in Aid so are not counted as efficiency savings.

Savings from SCRA contracts (as distinct from Frameworks above) are captured on SCRA's Savings Tracker. Information on these savings has been captured throughout 2022-23 for regulated and non-regulated procurements, and the accumulated savings, largely based on the difference between the average of all tenders less the winning bid, amount to around £127.1k on the 13 procurement exercises where savings were calculated.

Savings are reported to SCRA's Board in the quarterly Budget Outturn reports.

9.0 OTHER PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES

9.1 Inclusion & Diversity

The Procurement Officer met with the Inclusion & Diversity Manager to discuss further opportunities for improving the process for completing Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIA), updates to the Corporate Procurement Strategy, procurement policies and processes to make these more inclusive.

Basic Impact Assessments are completed for all regulated goods and services procurements and individual works contracts over £100k. Where possible a joint EHRIA is completed for works contracts between £50k and £100k and for any non-regulated procurements which are likely to have more of an impact on equalities and the Strategy was recently updated to reflect a more inclusive approach.

For monitoring purposes, we have introduced some non-scored questions on diversity into our tender documents, including a question on whether an organisation is led by a female, someone from a minority ethnic background or by a disabled person.

The Procurement Officer will continue to work with the Inclusion & Diversity Manager during 2023/24 to ensure SCRA's procurement policies and processes continue to support inclusive procurement.

9.2 Policy development

In line with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act, SCRA's Procurement Strategy was revised in March 2022 with changes approved by the senior management team.

The Procurement Policy is now reviewed every year and will be updated in 2023/24 and approved by the senior management team.

9.3 Cyber Resilience

In January 2020, the Scottish Government advised that a Supplier Cyber Security Guidance Note had been developed to meet the commitment to develop a proportionate, risk-based policy in respect of supply chain cyber security for Scottish public sector organisations.

From 1st April 2020, the Procurement Officers have embedded cyber security in our procurement processes by considering the importance of cyber security before commencing each procurement and where relevant completing the Cyber Security Procurement Support Tool and including relevant wording in tender documentation and Terms & Conditions of contracts where required.

9.4 Fair Work

We updated our General Policy on Fair Work during 2022/23. We include a statement on Fair Work in all of our tender documents and where relevant and proportionate we include a scored question as part of the award criteria.

For monitoring purposes, we now include non-scored questions in all of our procurement exercises asking suppliers to confirm whether or not they are accredited real living wage employers and have signed up to the Scottish Business Pledge.

9.5 Spotlight on Procurement

The Procurement Team and Press & Communications Manager developed an article focussing on some of the key activities carried out by the Procurement Team and the article was published on SCRA's intranet site.

10.0 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY

10.1 Contract and Supplier Management (CSM)

New CSM guidance was issued in late 2020/21 to key Contract Managers. The Procurement Team now meet with Property, HR and IT Teams to review recent procurement exercises and plan for upcoming exercises. The Procurement Team consulted on what difference the CSM guidance has made and improvements identified will be taken forward in 2023/24.

10.2 Risk Management

The Procurement Team maintain a risk register which is regularly reviewed and updated. Risks tracked during 2022/23 include:

- Insufficient capacity and/or lack of training results in failure to deliver key Business Plan and Team Plan objectives.
- Increasingly complex regulations results in non- compliance with Corporate Procurement Strategy and/or challenges to contract awards.
- Failure to ensure continuity of contract cover results in disruption to key business systems/services.
- Ineffective contract management leads to poor supplier performance going unchallenged which results in major contract dispute or delivery failure.
- Due to current market conditions tender prices significantly exceed available budgets and/or lead to significant project delays.

10.3 Procurement Procedures

In order to keep track of the increasing variety of areas which need to be considered and completed for each procurement, many of which are dependent on the value of the procurement, a Procurement Procedures document was implemented and is updated when required. This includes both legislative and SCRA requirements.

10.4 Networks and Training

SCRA's Procurement Officers are members of a Cluster Group which met regularly throughout the year.

In addition the Procurement Officer attended the SG 17th National Procurement Conference & Professional Procurement Skills Training Zones during the reporting period.

Other training attended included:

- Microsoft Teams Drop In Session
- Scotland Excel Webinar – Stay Connected – Options for Urgent Procurements
- GDPR Refresher Training

11.0 ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT TEMPLATE

In accordance with Scottish Procurement Policy Note SPPN 4/2019 an Annual Procurement Report template has been completed and attached at Appendix C.

12.0 OWNERSHIP AND CONTACT DETAILS

The owner of SCRA's Annual Procurement Report is as follows:

Ed Morrison
Head of Finance & Resources
0131 244 8585
ed.morrison@scra.gov.uk

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF REGULATED PROCUREMENTS EXPECTED TO COMMENCE IN THE NEXT 2 FINANCIAL YEARS

Subject Matter	Type	Expected Contract Notice Publication Date	Expected Award Date	Expected Start Date	Estimated Value of the Contract or Extension
Legal Services - Principal Reporters Statutory Duties	Re-Let	N/A	TBC	01/06/2024	£140,000
Legal Services - Property & Related Matters	Re-Let	N/A	TBC	01/06/2024	£54,000
Secure Mailing Bags	Re-Let	01/09/2023	01/11/2023	01/12/2024	TBC
Supply of Electricity (SPPD)	Re-Let	N/A	31/03/2024	01/04/2024	£185,000
Water & Waste Water Billing Services (SPPD)	Re-Let	N/A	31/03/2024	01/04/2024	£240,000
Supply of Gas	Re let	N/A	01/03/2026	01/04/2026	£180,000
Winter Gritting Services	Re-Let	02/07/2023	28/09/2023	01/11/2023	£51,000
Cyber Resilience Assurance Services	New	TBC	TBC	TBC	£100,000
Edinburgh Hearing Suite Upgrade Furniture	New	N/A	04/09/2023	Sept 2023	£60,000
Dundee Remedial Works Principal Contractor	New	TBC	TBC	TBC	£90,000
Edinburgh - Smart Working - Principal Contractor	New	N/A	04/09/2023	Sept 2023	£298,000
Glenrothes - Reconfiguration of Hearing Suite - Principal Contractor	New	N/A	01/10/2023	01/12/2023	£50,000
Hearing Room Improvements – Principal Contractor	New	N/A	22/12/2023	10/01/2024	£60,000
Dumfries - Hearing Room Improvements – Principal Contractor	New	N/A	30/09/2023	22/12/2023	£50,000
Kilmarnock - Hearing Room Improvements - Principal Contractor	New	N/A	31/10/2023	30/11/2023	£80,000

Notes:

Contract Extensions shown above are not included in Section 9 of the template at Appendix C. Call Off's from Frameworks are included in the template.

Works contracts with an estimated contract value above £50k are included in the above table for information, however, these are non-regulated due to their value and not included in Section 9 of the template at Appendix C.

There may be some additional IT items to be added such as tech refresh and other digital projects (various exercises)

Appendix B

**SUMMARY OF NON-REGULATED PROCUREMENTS & CONTRACT EXTENSIONS
ABOVE £20K - AWARDED BETWEEN 01/04/2022 AND 31/03/2023 (Crawford -
Complete)**

Contract/PO Ref.	Contract Title	Supplier Name(s)	Est. Total Value (ex VAT)	Contract/ Extension Award Date
SCRA/2022/23	Alloa Refurbishment (Principal Contractor)	Affiniti Response	£40,173	01/12/2022
SCRA/2022/22	Confidential Shredding Services	Paper Shredding Services Ltd	£33,872	21/02/2023
SCRA/2022/31	Dumbarton - Hearing Room Works - Principal Contractor	Interact Interiors Ltd	£24,315	07/03/2023
SCRA/2022/20	Edinburgh - Workplace Design Consultant	Space Solutions Ltd (Scotland)	£40,869	09/11/2022
13/12/2022	Hamilton House Project Furniture	Flexiform	£52,940	13/12/2022
SCRA/2022/08	Hearing Room Improvement Furniture	Claremont Office Furniture	£23,133	20/07/2022
SCRA/2022/24	Hearing Room Improvements - Works	Ross & Laidlaw	£41,324	21/11/2022
SCRA/2022/15	Professional Mangers Award - Public Sector Leadership	Learning and Development Associates	£33,000	11/07/2022
SCRA/2021/23	Risk Management Software and Hosting	Softcat Plc (sub-contracted to Decision Time)	£49,149	12/05/2022
SCRA/2022/05	Stirling Reconfiguration 2022 - Principal Contractor	Interact Interiors	£128,766	31/08/2022
SCRA/2022/12	Taking Evidence by Commissioner (2022)	Heriot Electronics Ltd (T/a Heriot AV)	£25,200	04/11/2022

* Notes: Works contracts below £2m are classed as non-regulated.

Appendix C

Annual Procurement Report template

[NOTE: reference to contract is also to be construed as meaning a Framework Agreement]

1. Organisation and report details	
a) Contracting Authority Name	Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
b) Period of the annual procurement report	1 st April 2022 to 31 st March 2023
c) Required by s18 Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 to prepare an annual procurement report? (Yes / No)	Yes
2. Summary of Regulated Procurements Completed	
a) Total number of regulated contracts awarded within the report period	6
b) Total value of regulated contracts awarded within the report period	£1,978,318
c) Total number of unique suppliers awarded a place on a regulated contract awarded during the period	5
i) how many of these unique suppliers are SMEs	5
ii) how many of these unique suppliers how many are Third sector bodies	0
3. Review of Regulated Procurements Compliance	
a) Number of regulated contracts awarded within the period that complied with your Procurement Strategy	6
b) Number of regulated contracts awarded within the period that did not comply with your Procurement Strategy	0
4. Community Benefit Requirements Summary	
Use of Community Benefit Requirements in Procurement:	
a) Total number of regulated contracts awarded with a value of £4 million or greater.	0
b) Total number of regulated contracts awarded with a value of £4 million or greater that contain Community Benefit Requirements.	0
c) Total number of regulated contracts awarded with a value of less than £4 million that contain a Community Benefit Requirements	0
Key Contract Information on community benefit requirements imposed as part of a regulated procurement that were fulfilled during the period:	
d) Number of Jobs Filled by Priority Groups (<i>Each contracting authority sets its own priority groups</i>)	Not Known
e) Number of Apprenticeships filled by Priority Groups	Not Known
f) Number of Work Placements for Priority Groups	Not Known

g) Number of Qualifications Achieved Through Training by Priority Groups	Not Known
h) Total Value of contracts sub-contracted to SMEs	Not Known
i) Total Value of contracts sub-contracted to Social Enterprises	Not Known
j) Total Value of contracts sub-contracted to Supported Businesses	£0
k) Other community benefit(s) fulfilled	0
<u>5. Fair Work and the real Living Wage</u>	
a) Number of regulated contracts awarded during the period that included a Fair Work criterion.	4
b) Number of unique suppliers who have committed to pay the real Living Wage in the delivery of a regulated contract awarded during the period.	4
c) Number of unique suppliers who are accredited Living Wage employers and were awarded a regulated contract awarded during the period.	4
<u>6. Payment performance</u>	
a) Number of valid invoices received during the reporting period.	2550
b) Percentage of invoices paid on time during the period ("On time" means within the time period set out in the contract terms).	77%
c) Number of regulated contracts awarded during the period containing a contract term requiring the prompt payment of invoices in public contract supply chains	Not Known
d) Number of concerns raised by sub-contractors about the timely payment of invoices within the supply chain of public contracts	0
<u>7. Supported Businesses Summary</u>	
a) Total number of regulated contracts awarded to supported businesses during the period	0
b) Total spend with supported businesses during the period covered by the report, including:	£0
i) spend within the reporting year on regulated contracts	£0
ii) spend within the reporting year on non-regulated contracts	£0

8. Spend and Savings Summary

a) Total procurement spend for the period covered by the annual procurement report.	£5,985,344
b) Total procurement spend with SMEs during the period covered by the annual procurement report.	£2,207,395 (36.88% of Core Trade Spend)
c) Total procurement spend with Third sector bodies during the period covered by the report.	Not Known
d) Percentage of total procurement spend through collaborative contracts.	18.27%
e) Total delivered cash savings for the period covered by the annual procurement report.	£248,393
f) Total non-cash savings value for the period covered by the annual procurement report.	Not Known

9. Future regulated procurements

a) Total number of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years.	14
b) Total estimated value of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years.	£1,528,000

Appendix D

Glossary

Term	Description
Collaboration	When two or more groups of people or organisations engage in procurement work together for mutual benefit (CIPS).
Contract Management	The process of monitoring the performance of a supplier to contract.
Framework Agreement	An agreement or other arrangement between one or more contracting authorities and one or more economic operators which establishes the terms (in particular the terms as to price and, where appropriate, quantity) under which the economic operator will enter into one or more contracts with a contracting authority in the period during which the framework agreement applies.
Critical Suppliers	Those suppliers identified as business critical in terms of risk/value and business continuity.
Procurement Exercise	Full end to end procurement exercise documentation from strategy development to contract & supplier management.
Procurement function	The business management function that ensures identification, sourcing, access and management of the external resources that an organisation needs or may need to fulfil its strategic objectives.
Procurement Journey	Revised public procurement toolkit with guidance and templates on the procurement process or Construction manual when appropriate. The Procurement Journey will be enhanced on an on-going basis with feedback from users and any other identified good practice guidance and tools where appropriate to ensure a standardised approach to the supply base.
Procurement Officer	Individual who spends the majority of their time working in a role that adds value to the quality, cost and effectiveness of the procurement or acquisition of goods, works and services; impacting upon commercial relationships during one or more stages of the procurement cycle and contributing towards best practice contract and supplier management.
Procurement strategy	Strategy for procurement within an organisation (can be called policy).
Public Contracts Scotland	The national advertising portal used to advertise all Scottish Government goods, services or works contract opportunities.
Small Medium Enterprise (SME)	The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro.
Supply Chain	All activities, resources, products etc. involved in creating and moving a product or service from the supplier to the procurer.
Supply Chain Management	The coordinated set of techniques to plan and execute all steps used to acquire raw materials from suppliers, transform them into finished goods, and deliver both goods and services to customers. It includes chain-wide information sharing, planning, resources and performance measurements.
Supported Business	Either the organisation's main aim should be the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons, or the contract should be performed within a sheltered employment programme.
Value for Money	An economic assessment by the public sector as to whether a project represents value for money; the optimum combination of cost and quality to provide the required service.
Whole Life Costing	The costs of acquiring goods or services (including consultancy, design and construction costs, and equipment), the costs of operating it and the costs of maintaining it over its whole life through to its disposal – that is, the total ownership costs. These costs include internal resources and overheads.



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Head of Service: Lisa Bennett, Head of Strategy/OD

Date: 20th September 2023

Report Author: Lisa Bennett

Recommendation:

1. To note the progress update of Promise related work in SCRA
2. To consider and approve proposal for change to governance structures

Reason for Report: For Approval

Resource Implications: As noted

Strategy/Service Plan Implications: In line with current planning

Consultation: KTP Programme Manager
Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

EHRIA Duties: Not required – will be assessed at project level

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

1	Introduction
1.1	SCRA is committed to Keeping the Promise and to working positively and effectively with our partners to do so.
1.2	<p>The Board update in June focussed on two key updates –</p> <p>1) the publication of the Hearings for Children report – the output from the work of the Hearings System working group, providing a series of recommendations for consideration</p> <p>2) early plans for the approach to taking these forward with Scottish Government and Partners as part of a multi-agency response and programme.</p>
1.3	The purpose of this report is to give an update on how the work has progressed in relation to implementation planning internally, and as part of the multi-agency group.
1.4	It is also to provide an update on internal programmes work and propose a change to governance arrangements for one of those programmes.

2	Implementation Planning
2.1	Work has continued internally and with Partners to analyse and plan for what the recommendations could look like to implement.
2.2	A multi-agency planning group has been convened to determine the framework through which the recommendations will be planned, resourced, sequenced and delivered.
2.3	<p>The multi agency planning group comprises: Scottish Government, SCRA, CHS, COSLA, SWS and supports the governance arrangements that will be in place through the hearings redesign board;.</p> <p>A progress report tabled at CHIP on 12th September can be read at Appendix A</p>
2.4	The Planning group is currently working to determine the priorities, the workstream, the resources and the package of support that sits alongside this. The planning group will also be supporting the Scottish Government in the development of the paper that will go to the Minister for approvals – laying out the recommendations, the financial analysis, the impact on current policy, the risks, dependencies and conclusion of any impact assessments that have been completed.
2.5	Currently the Government, and linked organisations, are assessing the asks of the report against the asks coming through from other areas of policy e.g. CCJB, UNCRC etc to look for alignment/duplications/contradiction in the work requiring to be carried out – to ensure best use of time and resource as we move forward

	<p>2.6 Preliminary work on the recommendations has been to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determine the policy impact of each through the various Government departments, which will have a more in depth follow up later in the year, • undertake a financial analysis of the recommendations should they be implemented, all or in part and • to analyse the legislative impact of/change required for each.
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3	Early Work
	<p>3.1 Ahead of understanding the work that will receive Ministerial approval, a programme of work is being developed to take forward work that is classed as being 'improvement' or 'exploratory' – work that is non-controversial, that may already be in train or is an improvement to a current process, that doesn't have a reliance or dependency on approval of another recommendation or on a change to legislation and that can either be delivered this year or will help to inform work that is likely to come later.</p> <p>3.2 Scottish Government have asked for organisations to consider what work they can undertake aligned to the above parameters – as single agency, and in collaboration with others.</p> <p>3.3 SCRA and CHS have met a number of times to work through the recommendations in this 'pot' and are developing a proposal to go to Scottish Government for inclusion in the programme</p> <p>3.4 Internal consultation has been taking place with EMT, Managers and the Keeping the Promise team to consider what this work may be and how it could be resourced internally.</p> <p>3.5 Scottish Government have also got a number of proposals what work that could be initiated early, an example of which can be read at Appendix B and was tabled at CHIP on 12th September.</p> <p>3.6 Scottish Government have been very clear that work being led now should not be seen as making assumptions of what may or may not be approved – an example of this being the exploration of functions between SCRA and CHS.</p> <p>3.7 The Hearings for Children report talks clearly about an exploration to take place of the functions of CHS and SCRA, and further recommendations around specific areas within that such as scheduling and administration of hearings. The report directs that the Government will take a lead for this work and proposals have been made to that effect – however it is recognised that any detailed work of this nature, could and should only be undertaken once there is clarity around which recommendations are to receive Ministerial approval to be taken forward..</p>

4	Internal Programmes and Integration with Hearings for Children	
	4.1	SCRA have three programmes of work running currently – Care, Connect and Protect.
	4.2	Care During 2022/23, Care covered the internal Promise improvement projects – Child friendly scheduling, Sensory corners, pre-hearing planning etc. as well as all of the work that took place around reform – the Hearings System Working Group, the co-design project, internal consultation etc.
	4.3	A number of the internal projects have now moved into evaluation, a couple have been moved over to Protect to be included as part of the work there and a couple are complete and ready to be picked up at a later date. And of course, the HSWG work has now been published as Hearings for Children.
	4.4	The Hearings for Children work will determine the new Care programme – the new work identified to be taken forward this year, as well as the exploratory and preparatory work for the next stages. There are also a number of improvement projects that were on hold within SCRA, that are fully aligned with the recommendations, that will be picked up again through this programme.
	4.5	Protect The key focus of Protect over the past six months has been an exploration of what could improve our internal efficiency and effectiveness. The programme is set across three stages - steady, ready and go. Approval was given at the SCRA Programme Board for the elements of that exploration to be taken forward that were the building blocks to further change – this has been a key intention of this stage – that it would steady the current, unlock any current areas of inefficiency and ready everyone to move into the next stage of greater change.
	4.6	Connect Connect, the Digital Programme, will be working closely alongside Protect as it supports the programme through digital change and improvement, and any Care projects that have been evaluated and are ready to be implemented into the business will be part of this too - packaged to ensure full alignment, managed change and full governance.

5	Governance and Proposal	
	5.1	Current Arrangements A Keeping the Promise Programme Board, Chaired by Michelle Millar, was set up to oversee SCRA's work of responding to the Promise – and plan 21/24. The Board would approve and monitor work across both improvement – our Keeping the Promise Route Plan, as well as the Reform agenda – our role and input to the Hearings System Working Group (HSWG) and the Co-Design project that worked alongside that.

	<p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p> <p>5.5</p> <p>5.6</p> <p>5.7</p> <p>5.8</p> <p>5.9</p>	<p>All improvement plans were approved and progress monitored through the Board.</p> <p>Detailed briefings and de-briefs were held in relation to the work of the HSWG – and direction was provided in relation to approach, messaging and risk appetite. The arrangements supported the SCRA Chair in her participation in the Chairs Oversight Group alongside the Chairs of the Promise, CHS and the HSWG. This was used as an effective escalation and clearing house arrangement. This group was tasked with overseeing the HSWG programme and report. There is no indication that this arrangement will continue now that the report is published.</p> <p>The Board worked closely and provided the team with excellent support and guidance throughout but with particular focus as we neared the end of the HSWG process and prepared for (and fed into) the recommendations that later became the Hearings for Children Report.</p> <p>The Board also provided the team with assurance and support throughout in relation to the approach that we have taken to due process, full transparency and positive collaboration.</p> <p>The Hearings for Children Report was published in May and as outlined, this work has now moved into a new phase – a multi-agency response, led by Scottish Government to planning for implementation of recommendations that are to receive Ministerial approval</p> <p>The Proposal</p> <p>The proposal for consideration, now that we are in to a very different stage of work, is that the KTP Programme Board be stood down and all internal programmes be brought under one governance structure.</p> <p>That the Care Programme takes on the improvement work from the KTP Route Plan along with the projects that come from the Hearings for Children report – currently those proposed to Scottish Government, and then later, once approvals have been announced, the new projects determined.</p> <p>That the Care Programme report into the SCRA Programme Board which has a full programme management framework around it and that Programme Protect currently reports to.</p> <p>This will ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full and ongoing scrutiny, • approved and aligned governance procedure, • better opportunity to monitor alignment between programmes, • highlight dependencies or crossovers and • better enable handovers between them when they move to implementation.
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5.10	Coming under one programme board also provides one governance structure to be 'fed' as opposed to two – both taking considerable effort for all involved which could be more effectively utilised.
5.11	It is proposed that progress against the internal projects that respond to the Hearings for Children report will be provided to the Scottish Government's Hearings Reform Board as a regular paper – that has been used for monitoring internally and that has been approved by our Programme Board.
5.12	It is recognised that for SCRA Board, it is helpful to be kept abreast of activity related to Keeping the Promise, partnership working and how we are responding to the asks of the Scottish Government and other. To that end, it is proposed that a quarterly report of the programme work by put to the Board – for information. This would cover the work overseen by the Programme Board – both programmes Protect and Care.
5.13	Progress towards development of Hearings Redesign Board from Scottish Government can be read at Appendix C as tabled at CHIP 12 th September
5.14	Programme Connect – the programme concerned with our Digital Activity, also works in alignment with Care and Protect however already has robust governance processes in place, joint with CHS, that include suppliers. There is no intention to stand any of this down however we have put in place structures to ensure that the programme managers and Senior Responsible Owners are meeting regularly with Head of Strategy to monitor ongoing work plans and alignment.

6	Recommendation
6.1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the progress update of Promise related work in SCRA 2. To consider and approve proposal for change to governance structures

7	Appendices
7.1	Appendix A) Scottish Government progress report to CHIP Appendix B) Scottish Government project example to CHIP Appendix C) Scottish Government update on Hearings Redesign Board – report to CHIP

Appendix A) Scottish Government progress report to CHIP

**Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership
Progress Update on HSWG Response**

1. The independent Hearings System Working Group (HSWG) was established by the Promise Scotland in summer 2021. The group published its report "Hearings for Children" on 25 May. The report contained 97 recommendations (and a number of further sub recommendations).
2. Since the publication of the report, the Scottish Government has begun to prepare for a government response at the end of the year. An initial high level cross-government policy analysis of the report's recommendations was conducted across June and July.
3. Initial impressions include the observation that there are broad legal implications and a need to map current policy developments and understand them fully against the context presented in the report. There are also several areas where clarity is needed on the underpinning evidence for recommendations. The Promise Scotland have advised that they intend to provide Scottish Government with the evidence base for the report in the coming days.
4. We are anticipating that the evidence base will include details of the stakeholders included in the engagement for the HSWG report and reports of this engagement. This will be important as while Ministers are keen to understand the views of stakeholders, we, and The Promise Scotland are clear that we should not continue to ask questions of the same people.
5. As the recommendations in the report are not numbered we have developed a coding system with partner organisations to improve communication and understanding as work progresses. We would be happy to share this with CHIP members.
6. Given the scale and scope of the HSWG document, we have thematically grouped recommendations to fully understand intended outcomes, identify dependencies and ensure that the report's potential impact on the various system professionals and functions can be understood. The groupings have allowed us to identify which recommendations are likely to require legislative reform, and would therefore have to be subject to public consultation next year.
7. Our thematic grouping of the recommendations has also identified some areas where positive progress could be made without the need for legislative or significant structural change. These areas could potentially be progressed by relevant members of the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) under the supervision of the Children's Hearings Redesign Board. We are in the very early stages of considering these issues and will progress with care due to the range of interests involved. We will provide further details of this work at future CHIP meetings.

8. Officials have now begun an in-depth analysis of the recommendations involving legal expertise and other specialisms where appropriate. We expect the outputs of this exercise around the end of next month to inform a government response at the end of the year. Children's Hearings Team officials are also working with colleagues from areas such as the National Care Service, family law and child protection - to ensure that the recommendations are considered within the wider policy and strategic context. The intentions here are to baseline current activity, to ensure alignment and prevent duplication.
9. We have also established an initial Planning Group comprising officers from the key statutory delivery partners – SCRA, CHS, COSLA and Social Work Scotland. This group met three times across the summer, and has supported the coding work and early thinking on recommendations that could potentially be progressed without legislation. Importantly, no decisions have been made on any recommendations.
10. Officials from the Children's Hearings team have met with a number of key external bodies and groups since the publication of the report to hear views and provide updates on our approach to a response. We are keen to attend meetings and events where organisations would find this helpful.
11. We would also welcome written submissions from organisations that provide perspectives on the report (this does not have to be the whole report if organisations have a particular focus) and updates on any relevant or related activities. We would welcome responses by the week beginning 16th October.

Children's Hearings Team
Scottish Government
September 2023

Appendix B) Scottish Government project example to CHIP

Background

The Hearings for Children Report calls for everyone to have a clear understanding of children and families' rights and how these should be accessed and upheld across the hearings system. It also reiterates the need for all who work alongside children and families to have an understanding of the many different roles and responsibilities undertaken by the people who make the system work and of the referral process.

One way to help demystify the system would be to develop a new on-line resource that could link to the detailed information that is already available on the CHIP website and which in turn links to other resources.

Aim

To provide readily accessible, easy to understand information in plain language about the hearings system. This would start from initial social work/police/health involvement and include pre referral activity, referral/investigation, hearings, court (for hearings and other family law matters) and transitioning out of the system.

Information could include:

- guiding principles (updating of CHIP Vision and Values document)
- what each person involved does/can do at different stages in the process
- setting out clearly what children's rights are and how to ensure these are met
- providing links to individual agencies resources

How will we do this?

- Develop content to populate 'a child's journey through the hearings system' which could sit on the CHIP website. A landing page would show each person that may be involved with a child at different stages in the hearings process. Clicking on an image for that person e.g. police officer or social worker would show a couple of easy- read paragraphs about their role at that part of the process /provide links to their website/outline how the child can access support and give their views.
- A separate landing page could be developed that sets out how to access representation for children and carers at any stage, providing links to web pages for the Advocacy Service, The Law Society of Scotland and the Scottish Legal Aid Board.
- A 'how to make a complaint' page could include links to all CHIP partners processes

Asks of the Group

 **Approve the development of a resource as outlined above**

 **Volunteer to take part in a short life working group to advance this project**

Appendix C) Scottish Government update on Hearings Redesign Board – report to CHIP

**Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership
Update on Children's Hearings Redesign Board**

1. Papers previously submitted to the CHIP meeting outlined proposals for the governance of work relating to the redesign of the Children's Hearings system. Ministers have now approved the creation of a Children's Hearings Redesign Board and this is now in the process of being established.
2. The Children's Hearings Redesign Board will provide governance and oversight for the delivery of change to the Children's Hearings System, ensuring that any changes made are underpinned by clear and compelling evidence with demonstrable benefits to children and their families. Central to the effective operation of the board will be core principles of collaboration, co-operation, inclusion, respect and transparency.
3. The Board's remit will include work flowing from the HSWG report following the publication of the Scottish Government response. To ensure appropriate pace and progress members of the Board will be a small and focussed group of system leaders with the statutory responsibility for the day to day management and effective functioning of the Children's Hearings System.
4. The Board will be jointly chaired by Scottish Government and COSLA and will draw membership from the senior leadership of key statutory partners in the form of one member each from CHS, SCRA and Social Work Scotland (SWS). The Board will maintain close links with the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) to draw on its wider expertise.
5. The Redesign Board will be accountable to Ministers and COSLA and will provide progress updates to other connected strategic boards and groups as well as to the Promise Scotland and care experienced young people. We are working with key contacts to identify the best form of interaction with young people, building on the successful and trusting partnerships built by Sheriff Mackie in his role as chair of the HSWG.
6. We believe there is value in providing the Redesign Board with the opportunity to draw on the expertise of a small group of academic advisors who do not have a vested interest in the operation or funding of the system. We're currently exploring how this might operate in practice.
7. We anticipate invitations for membership of the Redesign Board to issue in the coming days with the first of regular, quarterly meetings taking place before the end of the year.

Children's Hearings Team
Scottish Government
September 2023

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Board Dates January 2024 to December 2024

Accountable Member: Board Chair

Date: 30th September 2023

Recommendation:

To approve SCRA's Timetable of Board and Committee Meetings from 4 January 2024 to December 2023

Reason for Report: Board Approval

Resource Implications: Within approved plans

Strategy: Within approved plans

Consultation: Board Members
Executive Management Team

Equalities Duties: Equalities Impact Assessment not required

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration

Schedule of Board and Committee Meetings 2024

Board Meetings - 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Board Meeting	Wednesday 31 January
	Wednesday 20 March
	Wednesday 19 June
	Wednesday 18 September
	Wednesday 18 December
Board Development Day	Wednesday 24 April
	Wednesday 13 November

Audit and Risk Committee - 10.30 to 1 p.m.

Audit & Risk Committee	Thursday 24 February
	Thursday 23 May
	Thursday 22 August
	Thursday 23 November

Remuneration and Nominations Committee

Remuneration & Succession Planning Committee	Wednesday 19 June
	Wednesday 18 December

CHS/SCRA Joint Meeting of Boards 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CHS/SCRA Joint Meeting of Boards	TBC
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