

9. AUDIT SCOTLAND REPORT - SOCIAL WORK IN SCOTLAND

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy providing details of the Audit Scotland report on the national audit of social work published in September 2016, which was attached as an appendix to the report.

The audit was carried out to examine how effectively councils were planning to address financial and demographic pressures facing social work in Scotland. A number of key challenges were identified details of which were outlined in the report.

Thirteen recommendations for councils and IJBs were summarised in the report which covered social work strategy and service planning, governance and scrutiny arrangements, workforce and service efficiency and effectiveness.

The Head of Social Policy advised that whilst West Lothian was significantly affected by financial and demographic challenges, the council benefitted from its long-term financial management strategy. West Lothian IJB adopted a robust strategic commissioning approach which incorporated a number of key service redesign programmes aimed at transforming the way the council delivers services across whole systems. The IJB was also developing new approaches aimed at increasing community capacity.

The Committee was also advised that the role of the CSWO was well defined and supported in West Lothian and was linked effectively into council and partnership governance arrangements.

The report highlighted the need for transformative measures to be developed and implemented to address the challenges and complexities ahead for social work and social care in Scotland. The Audit Scotland report was well received by the CSWO network, Social Work Scotland and the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor, however it has been acknowledged that the recommendations would be extremely challenging to achieve both locally and nationally.

The Head of Social Policy then responded to questions from members of the Committee. During the course of the discussion the Chair highlighted that seven of the thirteen key recommendations were allocated to the IJB. He recommended that a schedule be put in place to map the work being carried out relating to the IJB.

It was recommended that the Committee notes the key messages contained in the report with respect to the challenges ahead and note the recommendations made by Audit Scotland.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report and the recommendations made by Audit Scotland; and

2. Noted the recommendation that a schedule be put in place to map the work being carried out relating to the seven key recommendations allocated to the IJB.