

**MINUTES of MEETING of AUDIT COMMITTEE held in the ROOM 4, VICTORIA HALLS,
HELENSBURGH
on FRIDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2006**

- Present:** Councillor Gary Mulvaney (Chair)
- Councillor Donald MacMillan Councillor John McAlpine
Councillor John Tacchi
- Attending:** Charles Reppke, Head of Democratic Services and Governance
Bruce West, Head of Strategic Finance
- Also Present:** Jim Robb, Head of Integrated Care
Councillor George Freeman

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ian Ross, Christopher Valentine and Councillor Elaine Robertson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. SOCIAL WORK AND FREE PERSONAL CARE EXPENDITURE AND GAE

The Committee considered a report providing further information with regard to aspects of the report on Social Work expenditure/GAE submitted by the Head of Strategic Finance to the Council on 28 June 2006 and also to the further report submitted to the Audit Committee on 13 July 2006.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. To note the further information provided in the report, and to commend the Head of Strategic Finance and the Head of Integrated Care for the clarity of the information provided.
2. To note:
 - (i) That with the exception of 2003/04, overall expenditure on Social Services has exceeded GAE.
 - (ii) That in terms of expenditure on older peoples services, the Council has significantly underspent its allocation in the past six years, with the exception of 2002/03; the underspend last year being £2.7 million and a projected underspend of £4.9 million in the 2006/07 budget, almost 20% of the GAE allocation.
 - (iii) That in relation to expenditure on Children and Families, the Council has significantly overspent the GAE allocation; last year by

£4.5 million and a projected overspend by £4.5 million in 2006/07 budget.

- (iv) Specifically in respect of free personal care, that since its introduction, the Council has spent significantly more than GAE in each financial year. In 2005/06, £5.9 million was spent on free personal care compared to a GAE allocation of £3.8 million.
 - (v) Despite the recurrent overspending in respect of free personal care compared to GAE, a further £902,000 is currently required on a recurring basis to fund 137 people on the waiting list.
 - (vi) The Scottish Executive guidance on free personal care circular CCD5/2003 which states inter alia –
 - i. Clause 10 – Food and Diet ‘Food preparation and provision of meals are not included. However assistance to manage special diets and the assistance with the preparation of specialist meals [e.g. pureed foods] is included
 - ii. Local authorities will need to have in place agreed eligibility criteria for assessments of need and priorities for the provision of and access to services based on need. Many authorities will have these in place already and there is no requirement on authorities to change these arrangements. Following a needs assessment, payment towards personal care should commence when the authority is in a position to arrange or provide the required services. It is important that people receive services on the basis of prioritising the care needs of older people rather than on individuals’ ability to pay.
 - (vii) The cost implications of Council run care homes on the Social Services budget. The cost in 2005/06 accounting for 22% of £20.3 million expenditure on older peoples services.
 - (viii) That the Council is undertaking a strategic view on Social Work which is due to report in October 2006 and which should contain recommendations on this issue to the Strategic Policy Committee, and a report on the review should be considered by the Audit Committee in December 2006.
3. To recommend that the strategic review of social work include a Value For Money audit and options appraisal of Council run care homes.
4. To recommend to the Strategic Policy Committee that in future there should be a report within the ‘Budget Pack’ by the Head of Strategic Finance advising of the comparison between GAE allocation and proposed budget allocation for the current, previous and future years, disaggregated by individual service category within departments.

(Reference: Report by Head of Strategic Finance dated 26 June 2006, Reports by Director of Community Services dated July and September, Circular No. CCD5/2003 and Free Personal Care Enquiry – Correspondence from COSLA, submitted).

