

**PROVISION OF SERVICES TO CHILDREN'S HEARINGS SCOTLAND –
CHILDREN'S PANEL**

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed future arrangements to support the work of The Children's Panel in Argyll and Bute.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To delegate to the Executive Director of Customer Services to enter into and keep under review the terms of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS).

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The Scottish Government has determined to alter the support arrangements to children's panels and have created a new national body, Children's Hearings Scotland, to oversee new working practices. There remains however a need to provide support to the successor body to the Children's Panel Advisory Committee, which will in future be termed the Area Support Team (AST).
- 3.2 Officers have been involved in discussions with officials from CHS and the Scottish Government on the details of how the new arrangements will operate and whilst there remains some uncertainty over how the system will operate, there is a clear strategic direction that the Council can endorse.
- 3.3 As a result of the changes the CHS will take on responsibility for payment of expenses for Panel and AST members, and this will have a positive budgetary affect for this Council.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that existing staff should be able to provide the services as required by the SLA, but until this has had a full annual cycle there remains some uncertainty about what the eventual time commitment from staff will be. If additional resource is required this would be reported to Council and, in the view of officers, could clearly be adequately covered by the positive budgetary impact referred to above.

- 3.5 It will be important to keep the new arrangements under review to ensure that services to both families and the volunteers who support the panel system are not diminished but are in fact improved by the implementation of the new methods of working.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The intention is that the Head of Governance and Law will be the Clerk and will, as is the current practice, delegate most of the activities to staff within the Governance teams.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy - kept under review
- 5.2 Financial - likely to be a positive impact on budgets from the second half of 2013/14
- 5.3 Legal - none
- 5.4 HR - none
- 5.5 Equalities – new arrangements will be kept under review
- 5.6 Risk - kept under review
- 5.7 Customer Service – new arrangements will be kept under review

Executive Director of Customer Services

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