

## General Update

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to update members on areas of current work which do not feature elsewhere in the agenda.

### **Recommendations**

2. The Executive Group is invited to:
  - i. give in-principle agreement to the proposals for piloting key provisions of the Carers Act, outlined at paragraphs 4 to 5, and;
  - ii. note the remainder of the report.

### **Carers Act**

3. The Carers Act (Scotland) places significant new duties on local authorities to provide carers' assessments and support those who have eligible needs, and is scheduled for enactment from April 2018. The Act contains a significant number of Ministerial powers to make regulations on a wide range of matters, including eligibility criteria, the scope and content of carers' support plans, and assessment timescales for those caring for the terminally ill. In the lead up to enactment, attention is turning to developing regulations and guidance on these, and other, matters.
4. Member councils have been concerned that there is significant potential for unintended consequences in other parts of the system should these regulations result in an overly-prescriptive approach which limits councils' ability to support carers (and those they care for) flexibly, and in line with the personalised, outcomes-focused approach to which we are committed. To help mitigate these risks, Scottish Government are proposing to pilot key provisions of the act as part of the process of developing regulations.
5. It is our sense that this could help address some of the concerns our members have highlighted, including around where cost pressures are likely to arise. Executive Group members are therefore invited to give in-principle agreement to conducting piloting work, with the caveats that this must be cost-neutral to the participating local authority, and that pilot areas would be agreed in discussion with the relevant Chief Social Work Officer and COSLA policy staff.

### **Reform of Adult Social Care**

6. Executive Group members have considered a number of papers on the Reform of Adult Social Care in connection to the twin pieces of work which have been instigated in respect of the NCHC and Care at Home. However, since then, Scottish Government have referenced the reform work and the need to plan for the long term capacity in care within the context of their Programme for Government. As such, COSLA officers have been exploring how we might be able to helpfully redefine the reform of adult social care agenda to take account of this and be wider and more strategic than the specific work of the NCHC and Care at Home agendas. Initial discussions have touched on the potential to look at risk in the form of financial sustainability and demand, giving leadership and focus to the work around SDS, and the issues and opportunities presenting themselves by virtue of the devolution of social security powers. The MSG is being asked to commission a proposal paper around this as a strategic and shared piece of work on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Any further proposals will be brought to the Executive Group for consideration.

## **ILF Scotland**

7. The work being done on developing proposals for new support for independent living through ILF Scotland is focussed on the provision of short-term funding for life transitions. With only £5m additional core funding aspirations are limited. A final meeting of the ILFS Working Group is scheduled to take place on 11th November when final draft proposals will be discussed. Members will be updated on these at the next Health & Well-being Executive Group meeting.
8. In addition COSLA and ILF Scotland continue to build on the commitment to partnership working on independent living through work being done on reviewing and improving employment support policies. A central issue for this concerns the consistency and the desire for greater alignment with local authority policies especially in regard to the employment of personal assistants. ILFS are also now involved in the work of the Charging Guidance Working Group in order to maximise opportunities for alignment of charging policies.

## **Funeral Poverty/Payments**

9. The Scottish Government recently held a series of three round-table events chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities. The purpose was to explore the options for tackling funeral poverty and how the DWP Funeral Payment might be better replaced when these resources are devolved to Scotland (as part of the wider devolution of Social security(Disability) Benefits. All three events have been attended by a COSLA official with COSLA Community Well-being Spokesperson, Harry McGuigan attending the final meeting; this discussed more specifically the role of local authorities and explored the option that councils might wish to provide a low cost funeral option.
10. Members may wish to know that following on from the round-table events a National Funeral Poverty & Funeral Payments Conference will take place on 16th November 2016. It is hoped that a member of the Community Well-being Executive Group will attend that event.

## **Welfare Reform**

11. Members may recall the COSLA undertook a survey on Mitigation and Monitoring the impact of PIP in early 2014. The survey had identified a range of activities that Councils were undertaking to mitigate the negative impacts of the replacement of DLA with PIP. Following a recent Leaders paper on Welfare Reform which included a section on the emerging and forecast impact on local economies of Personal Independence Payment, Leaders decided that the suggestion to run a follow-up survey should be acted on. Officers will work with local authority advisors on a pro forma which secures relevant information including the picture built up by council that have been able to collect monitoring data.

## **Public Health – Strategic Links**

12. Following ongoing discussion about the need to improve strategic relationships between local government and the Public Health Function at the Health & Well-being Group a letter was sent to Dr Andrew Fraser, Chairman of the Directors of Public Health Scotland inviting the nomination of a Director of Public Health to provide representation for each of our policy focussed Executive Groups. A response was received which welcomed the suggestion and indicated that a nominee would be identified shortly. Members will be advised of further developments.

## **British Sign Language**

13. The BSL National Advisory Group (NAG) which is working on producing recommendations for Scottish Government Ministers on the content of the first National BSL Plan met recently and discussed a series of ambitions in the areas of early years, education, post school education, employment and democracy. The next NAG will meet at the end of January where they will discuss a further series of ambitions including health and social care. A public consultation on the content of the of the first BSL National Plan will take place between March and June 2017 and the finalised plan is scheduled to be published in October 2017. We will provide more details to Executive Group as the development work on the plan progresses.

## **Technology Enabled Care**

14. Members agreed at the February meeting to jointly draft a new Technology Enabled Care & Digital Innovation Delivery Plan with the Scottish Government. This was to run for five years alongside the Scottish Government's eHealth Strategy (2014-17) and its successor. However, as work progressed on developing the new Delivery Plan, and thinking started on the next version of the eHealth Strategy, it became clear that there is a real need for greater alignment in all digital activity across the breadth of health and social care.

15. The time is right to develop a fresh, broad vision of how health and care services in Scotland should be transformed, making better use of digital technology and data. This is supported by the Chair of the Local Government Digital Transformation Board, who is a member of the eHealth Strategy Board (the senior Board for digital transformation in NHS Scotland). The development of the new Local Government Digital Office provides the opportunity to integrate the strategic planning of national government, local government and NHS Scotland.

16. This vision should be ambitious to recognise the strong drivers and important opportunities for digital, and should allow the advancement of all policy options, including a digital first, informatics driven, person-centred strategy. At the same time, it should recognise the need to maintain and build on the digital infrastructure and processes already in place. Based on an ambitious timescale, the aim would be to publish the new Digital Health and Care Strategy for Scotland in Summer 2017, supported by a delivery roadmap and an integrated governance regime. Strategy development will be guided by wide stakeholder engagement, supplemented with advice on experiences beyond Scotland provided by an international panel.

17. Our ambition must be focused and appropriately managed and must be supported by adaptable leadership and governance. There are many examples worldwide of ambitious digital health and social care programmes that have failed to meet expectations. Our approach of collaboration and iterative/incremental development should be continued, but at pace, to ensure this is not repeated in Scotland.

18. Members are therefore asked to note that officers will work to jointly develop an ambitious Digital Health and Care Strategy with the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland – a strategy which encompasses all ICT, digital services, telehealth and telecare, digital innovation, business and clinical intelligence, predictive analytics and data use interests in health and social care. This will further improve the delivery of and outcomes from joined-up health and social care in Scotland, as well as boosting opportunities for longer-term service planning, population health, science and economic development goals. Initial engagement on this will commence in the next week or two and will be coordinated by Scottish Government. As the strategy is developed we will bring more detailed papers to Executive Group for consideration.

**November 2016**