

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28 OCTOBER 2011

TRANSPORT FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Governance and Scrutiny Committee of the publication of Audit Scotland's report on Transport for Health and Social Care.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report was published by Audit Scotland in August 2011. It looks specifically at the efficiency and effectiveness of transport arranged by the Ambulance Service, NHS Boards and Councils to take people to and from health appointments and social care services such as day centres. It also assesses how well agencies work together to plan and deliver transport for health and social care to meet local needs and identifies examples of good practice and potential savings.

3. KEY MESSAGES

- 3.1 The Report presents 4 key messages arising from the audit work carried out by Audit Scotland, details of which are summarised below:-
- Transport services for health and social care are fragmented and there is a lack of leadership, ownership and monitoring of the services provided. The Scottish Government, Regional Transport Partnerships, Councils, NHS Boards and the Ambulance Service are not working together effectively to deliver transport for health and social care or making best use of available resources.
 - Audit Scotland estimates that over £93 million was spent in 2009/10 on providing transport to health and social care services. This is likely to be a considerable underestimate as data on costs, activity and quality is poor. Audit Scotland contends that the public sector will find it difficult to make efficient and effective use of available resources without this basic information.
 - Joint working across the public sector and with voluntary and private providers is crucial for the successful and sustainable development of transport for health and social care. Improved joint planning could lead to more efficient services. There is scope to save money by better planning and management of transport for health and social care without affecting quality. Pilot projects show scope for efficiencies but these lessons have not been applied across Scotland.
 - Reducing or removing funding from transport services can have a significant impact on people on low incomes, older people and people with ongoing health and social care needs. However, the potential effect of changes to services is not often assessed or monitored and alternative provision is not always put in

place. The public sector needs better information on individual needs and on the quality of the transport services they provide.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The report contains a number of recommendations for all the key stakeholders. These are aimed at improving the quality of information used to plan services and assess the impact on service users and developing joint working across the public sector. The key recommendations for partners (Councils, NHS Boards, Regional Transport Partnerships and the Ambulance Service) are set out below.

The Scottish Government and Partners should:-

- Collect routine and accurate data on the activity, cost (including unit costs) and quality of services they provide and routinely benchmark performance and costs to ensure resources are used efficiently.
- Assess the impact of proposed service changes on users and other providers of transport.
- Ensure that staff have up-to-date information about all transport options in their area and provide better information to the public about available transport options, eligibility criteria and charges.
- Integrate or share services where this represents more efficient use of resources and better services for users, including considering an integrated scheduling system
- Ensure that transport for health and social care services is based on an assessment of need and that it is regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure value for money.
- Use the Audit Scotland checklist (attached at appendix one) to help improve planning, delivery and impact of transport for health and social care through a consistent, joined-up approach.

5. FOLLOW UP ACTIVITY

5.1 The Audit Scotland report contains a self-assessment checklist. In accordance with established practice, Audit Scotland will be carrying out follow-up investigations to assess the current position of partner organisations with respect to 2 key categories: spending and efficiencies and partnership working.

5.2 This checklist has been completed and is attached at appendix 1. The three main themes identified in the checklist are awareness and knowledge of current provision, understanding and involvement of service user needs and integration and development of services with partner organisations.

5.3 Central to understanding the quality of the current provision is the information available regarding services. Within the department of Educational and Social Services current information on journeys, vehicles and costs are available, with all

fleet vehicles on the Masternaut system. Assessment of the efficiency of the current service has been carried out and no improvements in the route planning and efficiency of the current service were identified, beyond those already implemented by the service with a saving of £50,000. Further work on the development of management systems and the collection of relevant information (including the establishment of performance indicators) is being undertaken.

- 5.4 Understanding of available information from other council areas and partner providers has been more difficult to identify and work with Strathclyde Passenger Transport via the integrated Ayrshire Transport Group has provided limited comparable information. The Group has, however, established a link to partner providers, which will allow further development of Audit Scotland's recommendations.
- 5.5 Involvement with, and knowledge of, service users and their needs has been central to the development of the current approach, although it has grown from individual service requirements, resulting in the mixed provision currently operating within East Ayrshire and across Scotland. It is important that the transport arrangements are seen as an integral support to the social care service within the Council, and integration is only achieved if it can continue to support service user needs. The opportunity to enhance options across internal fleet vehicles, community transport, private sector minibus and taxi contracts - with the balance of choice being available to support the complexity of needs and logistical arrangements of such diverse service users - is desirable.
- 5.6 Through Community Care Services and links with the Community Health Partnership, a range of engagement arrangements are in place and continue to be used to involve service users and seek their views on transport as part of the wider shaping of the service. The development of alternative models such as independent travel schemes can be beneficial to people who use services and are often transferable to other situations. As indicated in the report however, small changes in routine can also have disproportionate negative impacts (for instance in employment opportunities for family carers). Future strategies require to build on existing arrangements to engage service users, involve partners and monitor the impact of any changes.
- 5.7 Further work is required to develop opportunities to integrate partner transport arrangements. A pilot scheme has been identified to consider closer working on transport provision within the Cumnock area, where a number of establishments (Cumnock Academy, Riverside Centre, Ayrshire Community Hospital and Coalfield Community Transport) are all located within the same street.
- 5.8 In order to strengthen our arrangements for responding to such National Audit Reports, and to ensure that all Elected Members are made aware of the publication of such Reports, a copy of Audit Scotland's Report together with this covering report will be made available to Elected Members via the dedicated Members' Portal.

6. FINANCIAL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. There are no new policy implications arising from this report. The arrangements which the Council will put in place to ensure an effective response to the issues raised within Audit Scotland's Transport for Health and Social Care Report highlight the Council's commitment to continuous improvement in adherence with the statutory Best Value responsibilities contained in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Governance and Scrutiny Committee:-
- (i) note the publication of Audit Scotland's Transport for Health and Social Care Report;
 - (ii) consider the key messages of Audit Scotland's Transport for Health and Social Care Report as summarised in section 3 of this report;
 - (iii) note the recommendations made by Audit Scotland, and further, note the self-assessment checklist contained in appendix one, and this Council's relative position;
 - (iv) otherwise note the contents of this report.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
14 October 2011

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Transport for Health and Social Care – Audit Scotland Report prepared for the Accounts Commission (August 2011).

Any person wishing to inspect the above background paper or seeking further information should contact Eddie Fraser, tel.: (01563) 576546, or Andrew Kennedy, Tel.: (01563) 576089.

Implementation Officer: Eddie Fraser, Head of Service, Community Care

APPENDIX 1

SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIPS, THE AMBULANCE SERVICE, NHS BOARDS, COUNCILS AND OTHER PARTNERS TO IMPROVE TRANSPORT FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

	Assessment of current position					Comments
	No – action needed	No – but action in hand	Yes – in place but needs improving	Yes – in place and working well	Not applicable	
Spending and efficiencies						
We routinely collect data on the activity, cost and quality of services we provide			✓			Costs of Council Services are clearly determined. Additional information is being sought from Strathclyde Passenger Transport.
We routinely benchmark performance and costs to ensure resources are used efficiently			✓			Some benchmarking activity takes place. However, more management information is required and additional indicators to be developed through SPT
We regularly review funding arrangements for transport for health and social care to ensure that they maximise value for money and reflect levels of local need			✓			The Council has reviewed its current position. A strategic plan is required for future delivery
We work with the voluntary sector to reduce the impact of short-term funding on the provision of transport for health and social care		✓				The voluntary sector is funded on an annual basis.
We have improved how we arrange transport services within our own organisation and considered the need for a central team or co-ordinated approach			✓			At a Council level improvements have been made. However, local partnership working arrangements require further strengthening.
We have reviewed the timing of appointments and care services to make sure that transport provision is considered			✓			Where appropriate, timing of appointments and care services has been reviewed.
We have reviewed the use of taxis and considered scope for efficiencies				✓		The Council has reviewed its position in this area, and will

within our own organisation and in partnership with others						explore opportunities to further involve community transport.
Working in partnership						
We have worked with partners to clarify responsibilities for planning and delivering transport for health and social care				✓		The Transport for Health & Social Care Working Group has been established. It is comprised of the Council and its partners.
We have put systems in place to routinely engage with service users to ensure that their views inform the development of transport for health and social care services				✓		A range of methods have been put in place, in conjunction with community care, to involve service users.
We assess the impact of proposed service changes on users and other services, taking account of transport needs				✓		A range of methods have been put in place, in conjunction with community care, to involve service users.
We ensure that transport for health and social care services are based on an assessment of need and regularly monitor and evaluate them to ensure value for money				✓		Assessment of needs is central to the shaping of services, and options considered are designed to maximise value for money.
We have ensured that staff are well informed about all transport options in our area so that they provide good information to the public about available transport options, eligibility criteria and charges				✓		Relevant staff from within the appropriate Council services have an appropriate level of knowledge which they impart to the public as required.
We have put in place a plan to integrate or share services where this represents more efficient use of resources and better use of services for users, including considering an integrated scheduling system		✓				A pilot project to integrate services in the south of the area is proposed. A group has been formed to take this forward.
We collect information on the personal characteristics of people who need transport for health and social care to allow monitoring of equality and diversity and to develop services to meet their needs				✓		Through the Single Shared Assessment, the Council collects information on personal characteristics of its service users. This can be broken down by ethnic origin and disabilities.

<p>We involve the voluntary sector in planning and delivering transport for health and social care to meet the needs of the local population</p>		✓				<p>A pilot project to integrate services in the South of the area is proposed. A group has been formed to take this forward, involving community transport providers.</p>
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