

**Councillor Mark Macmillan**  
**Leader of the Council**  
Paisley South West



James Johnston  
Clerk of the Finance Committee  
Scottish Parliament

Dear James

**Finance Committee Call for Evidence – PREVENTION**

I refer to your invitation to interested parties, issued 4<sup>th</sup> September, seeking evidence relating to the prevention work carried out by Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs).

Renfrewshire Council welcomes the Committee's focus on this crucial aspect of Public Sector reform in Scotland. We are pleased to have the opportunity to support the Committee and provide evidence on both the significant innovation in prevention and early intervention being taken forward by the Council and its Community Planning Partners and to highlight what we see as the main challenges and barriers to the decisive shift to Prevention recommended by the Christie Commission.

We note the Committee's view that despite a political consensus in support of a preventative approach, that progress has been extremely slow. While that may be the case at a macro level, our submission shows that Renfrewshire Council and its partners have made substantial progress with preventative initiatives aimed at addressing identified high priority needs for the citizens of Renfrewshire.

As we argue in our submission, we believe strongly that the critical constraint to the decisive move towards prevention is financial. Renfrewshire Council and its partners have the aspiration and willingness to prioritise preventative measures but are trying to do so while also managing a diminishing level of resources and an increasing level of need.

There is a pressing need for the Scottish Government to act far more decisively and bring forward mechanisms that would result in a material element of its budget being directed towards large scale change funds to support the type of preventative focussed initiatives being pioneered in Renfrewshire. We would urge the Committee to call on the Scottish Government to show a level of ambition that matches the scale of the challenge in Scotland and to use the full range of its devolved powers to do this.

I am deeply committed as the Leader of Renfrewshire Council to influence positive change nationally and see public sector resources targeted more effectively towards preventative measures that will address the acute deprivation and socio-economic inequality that continues to blight Scotland. I believe Renfrewshire's experience would allow it to make a valuable contribution to this debate and would therefore welcome the opportunity to personally attend and the discuss the Council's submission directly with the Committee.

Yours sincerely

**Councillor Mark Macmillan**  
**Leader of the Council**



**Renfrewshire Council Response.**

**Finance Committee**

**Call for evidence: Prevention**

**October 2015**

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Renfrewshire Council welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Finance Committee relating to the progress being made in delivering the decisive shift to prevention.

Our response is made up of three parts. In section one, we have provided a general overview of our views on this important topic. This draws from our experience of implementing preventative focussed initiatives with our community planning partners in Renfrewshire over the last five years and reflects on the impact that the wider national public sector fiscal and policy environment in Scotland has had on this activity. We have also make reference in this section to some specific examples of the significant preventative work being undertaken within Renfrewshire.

In section two we provide further detail on a number of specific preventative and early intervention initiatives taken forward within Renfrewshire.

In section three we specifically provide a response to each of the questions contained within the Committee's call for evidence.

We hope the Finance Committee finds our input to be of value and we would be delighted to present to the Finance Committee on aspect of our submission and provide further detail on any aspect of the early intervention and prevention work that has taken place in Renfrewshire

## **1/ General Overview on Renfrewshire's views on the shift to prevention and specific examples**

We note the Committee's view that despite a political consensus in support of a preventative approach, that progress has been extremely slow. While that may be the case at a macro level, Renfrewshire Council and its Community Planning Partners have made substantial progress with preventative initiatives aimed at addressing identified high priority needs for the citizens of Renfrewshire. This includes tackling poverty, reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing homelessness, improving children's life chances, improving adult health and social care outcomes and increasing the resilience of the local economy and the vibrancy and sustainability of our communities.

### ***1.1 The diversion of austerity***

We would ask the Committee to note that initiatives like these have been taken forward despite Renfrewshire (and many other Councils across Scotland) having to deal with austerity driven real-term budget reductions and increasing demand on high cost services such as social care.

Over the last 5 years, Renfrewshire Council has seen its staff numbers reduced by around 2000 and its core budget 17% in real terms (compared to an equivalent 10% real terms reduction in the Scottish Government's allocated budget). Despite this unprecedented reduction unfairly distributed towards Local Government, the Council has largely maintained, and in many areas increased, service quality. This has been achieved as a result of very robust financial and change management processes, strong political leadership and corporate governance and a dedicated and skilled workforce.

Delivering this level of austerity driven change, while maintaining high quality services, has absorbed an enormous amount of focus and energy from our management and staff. This places very real constraints on the amount of resources and staff time available for preventative based initiatives with less immediate financial payback. Despite this, Renfrewshire Council has been able to prioritise both financial resources and staff time to support several large scale and sector leading preventative based initiatives (as referred to in Section 2 below).

We would urge the Committee therefore to take account of this fact when considering the perceived "lack of progress" towards prevention. The fact that Renfrewshire (and many other Councils across Scotland) have coped well with the unfairly distributed budget reductions imposed by the Scottish Government and been able to bring forward a number of significant preventative focussed innovations, is more worthy of commendation than criticism.

### ***1.2 Ambition constrained by funding and worsened by flawed distribution mechanisms***

Renfrewshire is an ambitious council and we want to ensure the preventative approach is scaled-up. This however takes both human and financial resources. It is not a lack of aspiration or willingness from the Council or its partners to prioritise preventative measures and services that is the constraint, it is simply the requirement to manage a diminishing level of resources and an increasing level of need.

As a consequence of the Council's strong focus on sound financial management, Renfrewshire has been able to make a number of significant investments from its own resources in preventative focussed programmes. This includes our £6m "Tackling

Poverty” programme to reduce the impact and causes of child poverty within our communities and £10.5m in our “Invest in Renfrewshire” employability programme which has seen youth employment fall to its lowest level in a decade. Our ongoing investment in the award winning “Street Stuff” programme delivered in partnership with St Mirren football club has also seen recorded vandalism and youth disorder fall by 75% over the last five years.

In addition we have invested significantly in a range of initiatives both as a Council and in partnership with other community planning agencies and with the third sector. This includes (but is not limited to) our Families First initiative, which established a ‘whole family’ approach to addressing poverty and inequality with health, social work, education, benefits and employment advisers working together initially in two localities (now extended to five). In the first thirteen months of this initiative over £1million in unclaimed welfare and other benefits were put into the pockets of the poorest families in Renfrewshire and the Families First initiative has been recognised as having national significance and international standing in tackling poverty in a recent evaluation by the University of Glasgow.

We have also made significant investment in credit unions, expended resources from our reserves to mitigate some of the impact of the cuts in welfare and to supplement the Scottish Welfare Fund, introduced free school meals outwith term time for children who qualify, increased by 50% our early years teaching complement, increased teachers for looked after children and adopted an Early Years Strategy to address and prevent inequality and the attainment gap becoming embedded at the start of a young person’s formal educational journey.

Despite these efforts, our ambition would be to do so much more to address the significant inequalities across our communities if we were able to access a level of funding commensurate with this need.

We have previously highlighted the funding inequalities implicit in the Scottish Government’s process for the distribution of government grant across local authorities and the negative impact this has on Councils such as Renfrewshire with significant pockets of deprivation. (see Renfrewshire Council’s response to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee with evidence to support the scrutiny of the Scottish Government Draft budget for 2014/15 – Sept 2013).

This situation has not changed since our previous submission and levels of deprivation still have very limited influence on the Scottish Government grant distribution system to local authorities. For example, education accounts for over half of the Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) distribution process which underpins the distribution of the majority of the Government’s revenue grant, yet only 5% of the value of the education related GAE lines are distributed on a basis which has a deprivation factor included. As a result, a school pupil from an affluent region of Perth & Kinross attracts the same level of grant support as a school pupil in Ferguslie Park, the most deprived ward in Scotland. The implicit assumption being that it requires the same level of funding to provide a similar level of service – this is purely an input perspective and consequently there is no recognition of the level of need of each child nor any recognition of the higher investment required to support children from much poorer communities to aspire to and achieve similar outcomes to those achieved by children from affluent neighbourhoods.

This is a funding approach which far from helping to direct resources to assist in closing the inequality gap for children across Scotland, merely places, even the most innovative and high performing councils such as Renfrewshire, in a position which makes it more difficult to avoid inequality in educational attainment perpetuating for the most excluded children in our society. The Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services ('The Christie Commission'), which reported in 2011 reported that 'In education, the gap between the bottom 20 per cent and the average in learning outcomes has not changed at all since devolution.' (para 2.12 pg 7).

Across the revenue grant distribution process, only Social Work has any material recognition of deprivation factors and even here, the influence is limited with population derived statistics having the over-riding influence. Despite the major spend areas in local government being education, social work and economic regeneration and the widely accepted influence/inter-relationship between the need and cost for these services and deprivation levels, deprivation factors have a very marginal influence on the distribution of resources.

We would urge the Committee to push for a change in the Scottish Government's process for the distribution of government grant across local authorities to take more account of deprivation factors. This would allow innovative Councils such as Renfrewshire to channel more resources to preventative based initiatives that can improve outcomes for our most disadvantaged communities.

### **1.3 Positive, but constrained impact of change and challenge funds**

The Scottish Government's Children's and Older People change funds have led to positive developments but the impact has been limited due to the level of funding allocated to them.

In Renfrewshire's adult services, specific Change Fund monies were allocated to local partnerships over a 4 year period which allowed partners to test new ways of working which focused on prevention and early intervention e.g in-reach District Nursing services at the hospital, care at home re-ablement services and anticipatory care planning. All of these have had a positive impact, but the ability to scale these up, both within Renfrewshire, and take the learning across other Councils is constrained by the relatively modest size of the change fund budgets compared to the scale of the need and opportunity across Scotland.

We welcome the additional funding being made by Scottish Government through the Attainment Challenge fund but as with the previous Change Funds, the resources being allocated do not match the scale of the challenge. We also have significant concerns about the lack of transparency in the allocation process and the major discrepancy between the level of funding being provided per pupil to the first tranche of Councils and the second. For example Dundee City Council (one of the tranche 1 councils) will receive approx £380 per pupil for those primary schools with more than 70% pupils from SIMD categories 1 & 2, whereas Renfrewshire Council (one of the tranche 2 councils) has been given an indication that it will only receive around £100 for its equivalent primary schools. This lack of transparency and consistency in the Scottish Government's approach is counter-productive to the cause of closing the attainment gap (which is something we all aspire to achieve) since it creates winners and losers amongst councils and mitigates against the development of strong partnership working between Local and National Government, based on trust and openness.

More fundamentally however, these funds are simply not of the scale needed to address the extent of need and deliver the decisive step change towards prevention needed to bring the public sector onto a more sustainable long term financial footing.

#### **1.4 Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal is an example of the level of ambition needed**

The ground breaking £1.13bn Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal economic development programme is an example of the scale of ambition needed to deliver the step change the Committee wishes to see take place. This local authority led initiative will see long term investment in a number of major infrastructure developments across the Clyde Valley, delivering significant economic benefits for the region, including an estimated 28,000 new jobs and 16,000 jobs during the construction phase. Given the strong correlation between secure, well paid employment and a range of health and wellbeing indicators, significant efforts will be made by the 8 Councils and local partners to ensure deprived communities across the Clyde Valley benefit from these new jobs.

The Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal therefore represents one of the most significant prevention focussed initiatives in Scotland and is an example of local authority innovation and partnership working at its best.

#### **1.5 Time for decisive action by Scottish Government**

There is a pressing need for the Scottish Government to act far more decisively by bringing forward mechanisms that would result in a material element of its budgets being directed towards large scale Challenge/Change funds to support preventative focussed initiatives.

This would allow large scale investment will be needed over a number of years to provide the "pump priming" funding necessary to implement and sustain the preventative measures until the reductions in down-stream demand for "symptom treating" services are reduced and the associated savings realised. Options could include:

- Top slicing the current budget. Even a 1% per annum for the next three years would create a change fund of around £300m/annum. One of the key findings of The Christie Commission was the high level of resources devoted annually to alleviating social problems and tackling 'failure demand' – demand that could have been avoided by earlier preventative measures. In Renfrewshire we have made significant steps by investing in preventative initiatives and services. In the meanwhile we still have to meet the need 'failure demand' creates, hence the need for new and additional resources for a step-change in the approach to prevention.
- Using the new devolved powers for tax raising and/or borrowing to create a change fund of a scale appropriate to the challenges faced and over a timescale sufficient for prevention based investments to deliver the medium and long term financial benefits.

These resources should be targeted at areas of the country where health, economic and social inequalities are greatest and invested with those Community Planning Partnerships with robust delivery plans and a track record of success. More efforts would be needed to support sharing of learning across Community Planning Partnerships, coupled with robust audit arrangements to encourage adoption of this learning and best practice across all areas.

## **2) Examples of Preventative initiatives taken forward within Renfrewshire**

Renfrewshire Council, with its partners has implemented a range of programmes and approaches aimed at shifting service provision and support to vulnerable adults, children and families from a reactive approach to one of early intervention and prevention.

For much of the work undertaken Renfrewshire has been ahead of the curve. For example in children's services where the Renfrewshire Children's Services Partnership has been working to improve outcomes for children in Renfrewshire using a needs-based /strategic commissioning approach.

Work in adult services relating to the Reshaping Care for Older people and subsequent integration of adult health and social care have been legislatively driven but a great deal of activity has been undertaken to develop strategic commissioning skills and community capacity building networks locally.

Some of the examples where Renfrewshire has invested in prevention include:

- 2.1 The ground breaking £1.13bn **Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal** economic development programme is an example of the scale of ambition needed to deliver the step change the Committee wishes to see take place. This local authority led initiative will see long term investment in a number of major infrastructure developments across the Clyde Valley, delivering significant economic benefits for the region, including an estimated 28,000 new jobs. Given the strong correlation between secure, well paid employment and a range of health and wellbeing indicators, significant efforts will be made by the 8 Councils and local partners to ensure deprived communities across the Clyde Valley benefit from these new jobs.
- 2.2 Renfrewshire's **Tackling Poverty Commission** was the first of its kind in Scotland to look specifically at child poverty at local level and its recommendations in March 2015 with a call to organisations in Renfrewshire and beyond to step up the fight against child poverty. Renfrewshire subsequently developed its Tackling Poverty Strategy which aims to prevent people from experiencing poverty in the first place, as well as mitigating the impacts of poverty and supporting people to lift themselves out of poverty. The strategy sets out a clear vision and six priorities:
  - Income and employment - Increase the number of households who can access employment that provides an acceptable standard of living.
  - Managing money - Prevent financial crisis and support low income families to make the most of their money.
  - Health - Improve levels of physical and mental health of children in low income families.
  - Attainment - Close the educational attainment gap between children from low-income families and their better off peers.
  - Neighbourhoods - Create neighbourhoods where people want to live and can afford to live.
  - How organisations should work - Narrow inequalities by working in a way which is inclusive, effective and evidence-based.

- 2.3 **Street Stuff** is the Safer Renfrewshire Partnership's primary diversionary project with partners including Renfrewshire Council, St Mirren Football Club, Engage Renfrewshire, Police Scotland, and Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. Street Stuff delivers diversionary activities for young people in antisocial behaviour hotspots throughout Renfrewshire. This includes street football, and five 'Boxes' (mobile containers with games consoles; music and other activities aimed at young people). In addition, there is access to stadium facilities at St Mirren including professional gym equipment, table tennis and an indoor dome pitch. Activities are programmed and targeted to take place in key areas where evidence shows that diversionary activities will help to reduce youth antisocial behaviour. In 2014-15, over 25,000 young people have participated in Street Stuff events. Vandalism and Youth Disorder in Renfrewshire has fallen by 75% since Street Stuff was launched
- 2.4 In 2010 Renfrewshire Children's Services Partnership launched **Achieving Step Change**. All partners agreed to review how children's services were planned and delivered with a high level objective of improving outcomes for children in Renfrewshire. The data gathered enabled the partnership to jointly consider ways to shift from a reactive to a preventative and early intervention approach, with a number of evidence based programmes identified and implemented e.g. Triple P, Incredible Years, Functional Family Therapy, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, Families and Schools Together and Family Nurse Partnerships amongst others. Council and health services have worked intensively with third sector providers such as Action for Children and Barnado's.
- 2.5 **Invest in Renfrewshire** is an integrated economic development programme which brings together the full range of economic development functions under a single and recognised brand, designed to prevent young people from becoming unemployed. Youth unemployment in Renfrewshire is now at its lowest in a decade. There are 3 specific strands that are subject to regular and ongoing reports to the Economy & Jobs Policy Board:
- Invest in Business - Engaging with and supporting the growth of local businesses; helping businesses to find, keep and develop their local workforce, and providing financial support to increase the capacity of Renfrewshire companies.
  - Invest in Employability - Helping unemployed and under-employed people become employable, get and keep a job, and progress within work; and
  - Invest in Communities – supporting community economic development through community based approaches and third sector development.
- 2.6 A significant development supported by the Change Fund was the **multi-disciplinary approaches** developed at the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) between hospital staff and community health and social care staff. The strategic evaluation of the Change Fund highlighted staff feedback, particularly from hospital staff, about how helpful it was to person-centred service planning and delivery to have a team of Social Work assessment and home care organising staff based at the hospital, available to consult with patients and families on post-discharge care. The weekly multi-disciplinary case management system and the monthly managers' monitoring and service improvement practice has ensured



that the performance on reducing delayed discharge is maintained, even as demand rises continually as a result of demographic pressures.

- 2.7 A number of **community based services** such as Food Train and ROAR health and wellbeing clubs for older people have been supported through the Change Fund and the Integrated Care Fund. The Change Fund and Integrated Care Fund is also used to develop the handyperson service (part of Care and Repair) and options advice tailored to the needs of older vulnerable people, as well as the appointment of a Health & Well-being Co-ordinator to engage with our sheltered and amenity housing tenants.
- 2.8 The RES, District Nursing and Care at Home services provide rapid response teams that work with other community services to help reduce levels of avoidable admissions to hospital e.g. the Falls team.
- 2.9 Renfrewshire is one of seven areas in Scotland working on a European project which provides online tools to help people with long-term conditions manage their own health and wellbeing. The project, called **Smartcare**, focuses on preventing falls or supporting people recovering from a fall. It can also hold a person's health and social care information and their care diary.
- 2.10 The Renfrewshire CPP is involved in the **United4Health project**, which has three parts to it. The first is a website which helps people with diabetes manage their condition, the second is an electronic monitoring of people with COPD after they have been released from hospital and the third is electronic monitoring of people with Congestive Heart Failure.

### 3) Response to specific questions posed by the Committee

*Why has the progress of reform proposed by the Christie Commission been so slow?*

#### **Response**

We would challenge the view that progress has been slow when the context that the public sector has been operating in over the last few years is taken into account.

Over the last five years, Councils across Scotland have had to deliver major austerity driven change as a result of reducing budgets and growing service demand, while maintaining high quality services. This has absorbed an enormous amount of focus and energy from our management and staff. This places very real constraints on the amount of resources and staff time available for preventative based initiatives with less immediate financial payback.

We would urge the Committee therefore to take account of this fact when considering the perceived "lack of progress" towards prevention. The fact that Renfrewshire (and many other Councils across Scotland) have coped well with the unfairly distributed budget reductions imposed by the Scottish Government and, been able to bring forward a number of significant preventative focussed innovations, is more worthy of commendation than criticism.

*What are the main barriers to change and how do we address them in order to accelerate the rate of progress?*

#### **Response**

As highlighted in the introduction, we believe strongly that **the critical constraint to the decisive move towards prevention is financial**, not a lack of motivation, ideas, or a resistant culture within Councils or their community planning partners. We would urge the Committee to push for a change in the Scottish Government's process for the distribution of government grant across local authorities to take more account of deprivation factors. This would allow innovative Councils such as Renfrewshire to channel more resources to preventative based initiatives that can improve outcomes for our most deprived communities.

We would also recommend that the Scottish Government uses existing and future fiscal levers on borrowing and/or taxation to create the necessary levels of investment needed to fund a decisive shift to prevention.

We also believe that despite the best efforts of locally based Police and Fire and Rescue Officers, the Scottish Government's centralisation of these services has hindered their ability to play a full part in the development of strong, locally focussed partnership initiatives. A major centralisation such as this not only focuses the attention of senior officers on the structural change itself, but limits their ability to commit to local, longer term changes best while this centralisation process is underway.

Ensuring that all significant budget holders within CPP partners who influence outcomes understand and embrace agreed partnership targets is a key issue. There are difficulties with partners sharing budgets at the marco level, due to non-coterminosity of boundaries and different accountability arrangements for setting and monitoring

budgets. Renfrewshire CPP has carried out a budget exercise to identify the total public sector spend within Renfrewshire and our CPP Finance Managers group continues to look at ways of strengthening joint financial planning.

A barrier that we faced and overcame was the capacity of our third sector. It was a significant issue in terms of trying to move the adult services agenda forward at pace and there was a need to build and importantly fund, community capacity building activities across the third sector and to undertake area-based planning sessions to identify assets and gaps. This has taken several years to build and we are now locally in an excellent position where we are using Integrated Care Fund monies to support four Infrastructure Investment projects.

A further key barrier is the fact the financial (savings) benefits achieved as a result of an investment in a preventative initiative may not be realised by that organisation, but by another. For example, our financial investment in our "Street Stuff" initiative has reduced vandalism and youth disorder by 75%, which will have benefited the Police as a result of a reduction in calls and demand on Police time to attend local incidents.

*How do we ensure that the necessary culture change and greater levels of integration takes place?*

#### **Response**

Strong and trusting relationships between public sector and third sector leaders and managers is an essential prerequisite, based on a mutual understanding of the priorities and challenges they face, and a demonstrable willingness to support each other. The creation of opportunities for leaders and managers from different organisations to meet on a regular basis and invest time in building that mutual understanding would be of benefit.

Renfrewshire is currently developing a number of bilateral **Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPA)** with key local partners, as a mechanism to strengthen partnership working. The process adopted to develop the SPA is designed to facilitate a much greater mutual understanding of each organisation's strategic objectives, aspirations and challenges, and to identify the areas of strongest overlap. This allows those areas of strongest overlap to be identified and these then become the focus of the SPA and the basis of future collaborative activity. This ensures that both organisations finite resources are focussed on the key areas of mutual benefit.

We believe the SPA approach could provide a good model for strengthening relationships and trust between the Council and key local partners which over time will support informed discussions on service integration opportunities.

National and local partners also have to agree what the key issues are and the priority between these issues. Renfrewshire used an evidence based **Strategic Needs Assessment** to achieve that. Partners undertook a Strategic Needs Assessment where research, data and expert analysis were reviewed to assess the challenges and opportunities facing Renfrewshire. This process enabled partners to receive expert input on current thinking about key issues and to challenge their current ways of working.

*How do we create a culture of innovation?*

**Response**

The Scottish Government's Children's and Older People change funds have had limited impact due to the level of funding allocated to them. There is evidence however that they have fostered innovation, including within Renfrewshire, but we strongly call for much greater resources to be prioritised for these areas. Change funds are simply not of the scale needed to address the extent of need and deliver the decisive step change towards prevention needed to bring the public sector onto a more sustainable long term financial footing.

We believe strongly in the value and innovation that the third sector can bring and are supportive of models such as Public Social Partnerships to facilitate joint working between the public and third sector.

The Scottish Government's Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act will make it easier to engage in innovative delivery models with the third sector and supported businesses, but we would like to see stronger and clearer guidance from the Scottish Government that would encourage public bodies to use the Act to innovate and to help overcome inherent risk aversion.

*What opportunities does digital technology provide in reforming the delivery of public services towards prevention?*

**Response**

Firstly, the lack of access to digital technology or digital exclusion needs to be addressed before all opportunities are realised. In their Digital Participation in Action (July 2015) report, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) explain '*...one in five adults in Scotland lacks basic digital skills.*' This adds up to about 800,000 people aged 16 or over in Scotland and which extrapolates to 26,000 in Renfrewshire.

Renfrewshire is proud of its approach to Tackling Poverty and we will ensure that any resources allocated to the Digital Participation Plan, including those from the Tackling Poverty Programme, are targeted at supporting those digitally excluded individuals and groups impacted by poverty. We are creating opportunities to widen the availability of learning through free resources and exploring ways of coordinating digital skills training, resource and measurement across the council.

Secondly, we believe the use of "data analytics" can greatly support the prevention agenda by combining information from a range of sources to provide a much richer picture of our citizens and communities. This will allow a more accurate identification of the vulnerable within the community and better targeting of our constrained resources and more accurate monitoring of the impact of that investment.

As a recent example of this, we used our Geographical Information System (GIS) to combine a number of data sets comprising recognised predictors of Digital Exclusion, to identify the specific geographical areas within Renfrewshire which were likely to have the most people at risk of digital exclusion. This was then used to target the preventative interventions designed to address this issue.

Building a robust evidence base and mapping of potential influencing factors, will mean encapsulating data from a number of sources both from within and outside the council including NHS, Police, Scottish Government, Census, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, Development & Housing, Schools, Social Services, Community Resources, Third Sector etc. While much of the data that is needed already exists, it is scattered in separate service areas or within other organisations. Data needs to be integrated across the organisation for it to be meaningfully used in order to measure impact and outcomes on a multi-organisational basis across Renfrewshire.

Having recognised the strategic and operational value of data analytics, Renfrewshire is now creating a new Data Analytics and Research team within the Chief Executive's Department. This will draw together all of the analytics skills and experience across the Council into a single team focussed on providing the necessary data and evidence to support informed strategic decision making within the Council. Renfrewshire was one of two Councils chosen to work with National Services Scotland (NSS) and the Improvement Service to test out the benefits of Council's being able to access the data sets and expertise within the Information Services Directorate (ISD) of NSS. Renfrewshire has had an ISD Analyst on secondment to support its data analytics work for the last 12 months, the value of which was such that we have recently extended this arrangement.

*How should community planning be developed to support service integration and the focus on prevention?*

#### **Response**

One of the approaches that has helped build stronger mutual understanding and commitment to joint working with Renfrewshire's Community Planning Partners has been the use of **evidence based strategic commissioning**.

Renfrewshire was one of the first areas in the United Kingdom to commit to a strategic approach in children's services which promotes a prevention and early intervention approach. The approach was developed following a comprehensive review of policy and legislative responsibilities, a review of the effectiveness of a range of services and approaches and using information gathered directly from over 12,500 children and young people who participated in an epidemiological study of need. This study was carried out by the Social Research Unit at Darlington, an internationally renowned charity established to promote improvements in children's lives.

Central to the policy approach was a commitment to introduce a range of evidence based programmes, some aimed at supporting parents, some aimed at all children and families and some aimed at a targeted population. Across Renfrewshire there are now a range of evidence based programmes which are making a positive impact on outcomes for children, young people and their families. It is important to note that the evidence based programmes are delivered in the context of complimenting universal services, the Early Years Strategy, the Families First approach and are based on developing respectful relationships with children, young people and their families.

Renfrewshire's experience of creating an **independent, expert commission** to review child poverty has also acted as a strong catalyst for change and partnership working. Renfrewshire's Tackling Poverty Commission was the first of its kind in Scotland to look specifically at child poverty at local level and its recommendations in March 2015 with a

call to organisations in Renfrewshire and beyond to step up the fight against child poverty.

Renfrewshire subsequently developed its Tackling Poverty strategy which aims to prevent people from experiencing poverty in the first place, as well as mitigating the impacts of poverty and supporting people to lift themselves out of poverty. The strategy is being delivered through a unique, **outcome focussed programme management approach** involving all Council Departments and a number of Community Planning Partners. The Council allocated a dedicated £6m budget to fund this programme, which comprises over 50 discrete projects managed within a robust programme governance structure and using a multi-faceted performance dashboard to monitor progress.

This is the first time the Council has used a rigorous programme governance structure to manage a major outcome focussed multi-partner initiative, but the experience to date suggests this could be a good model for future similar initiatives.

The Council is currently developing a number of bilateral **Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPA)** with key local partners, as a mechanism to strengthen partnership working. The process adopted to develop the SPA is designed to facilitate a much greater mutual understanding of each organisation's strategic objectives, aspirations and challenges, and to identify the areas of strongest overlap. This allows those areas of strongest overlap to be identified and these then become the focus of the SPA and the basis of future collaborative activity. This ensures that both organisations finite resources are focussed on the key areas of mutual benefit.

We believe the SPA approach could provide a good model for strengthening relationships and trust between the Council and key local partners which over time will support informed discussions on service integration opportunities.

We have undertaken recent work on **area-based planning of services** using Renfrewshire's Geographic Information Services (GIS) capabilities and co-productive approaches to capacity planning, particularly with the third sector led Health and Well-being Network. This has raised the level of interest in getting involved in planning and development amongst third sector groups and organisations. A third sector steering group now works together to develop the capacity plan and promote partnership working. A number of events have taken place to bring potential partners together and to learn from good practice in the various localities.

*What lessons can we learn from other countries in delivering a preventative approach?*

**Response**

Within Renfrewshire we have learned from the USA and Australia on their approach to utilise evidence based programmes for our early years strategy. We have also looked at approaches developed within the Scandinavian countries for reducing the attainment gap in education.

*What are the implications for the provision of public services if the decisive shift to prevention does not take place?*

**Response**

As highlighted in our response, a steady move towards prevention is taking place in Renfrewshire, but it is largely being funded from within our own resources. This limits progress and our ability to scale up initiatives.

Even this progress however will be at risk if Scottish Council budgets continue to be reduced in real terms. We note from our monitoring of the impact of budget reductions in England that many Councils south of the border are re-trenching around the provision of core statutory services. This "meagre form" of Local Government will severely limit the opportunity for the type of innovation and partnership working necessary to drive forward far reaching preventative initiatives.

At our best, Scottish Local Authorities are a huge force for good in society, focussing on tackling inequalities and creating an environment within which all our citizens, communities and businesses can thrive. The English experience is clearly demonstrating how this force for good is being jeopardised by an unprecedented funding squeeze from a Government that does not seem to believe in public service.

We are concerned that a lack of ambition within the current Scottish Government and unwillingness to use devolved powers to deliver the scale of investment needed to achieve a decisive shift to prevention, could end up creating the same outcome for Scottish Local Government as is happening in England.