

# Children and Young People Portfolio – Summary

## Performance Summary

1. The Early Help redesign has been approved and work is underway to implement the new proposals, with the aim of completion by December 2021. Throughout the whole of the last year, demand has remained at 100% above pre-pandemic levels, which has placed significant pressure on the service at a time when the operating model was forced to adapt to pandemic working conditions. This provides a context for the slight drop in the outcomes achieved.
2. Three West Sussex County Council-run children's homes have now been rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. Orchard House in Cuckfield, Teasel Close and High Trees, both in Crawley, were all praised as homes where children 'thrive' and are kept safe as inspectors awarded each of the homes their highest rating.
3. West Sussex has joined the recently implemented regional rota system for receiving Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), which is aimed at managing what is a national significant pressure. The system is based upon a local authority working towards a cap of the proportion of the UASC population set at 0.07% of the total child population. West Sussex can expect to receive up to three children in each rota cycle. This is in addition to UASC who arrive via other means including from detention centres. The rota will ultimately increase significantly the number of asylum-seeking children in our care; currently standing at 80 children (under 18), and 144 young people over the age of 18.

## Our Council Performance Measures

Children & Young People		2021/22 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Performance Analysis	Actions	Year End Forecast
1	Percentage of re-referrals to Children's Social Care within 12 months of the previous referral  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	23.0%	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21		Re-referral rate has significantly dropped, indicating that May figure was an anomaly. We are closely monitoring re-referrals through robust management oversight.	Not applicable	G
			27.3%	22.3%	18.9%	↗			
2	Percentage of Early Help Plans closed with outcomes met  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	72.0%	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21		Slight decrease in outcomes met from last month. To understand this performance outcome better each hub has been provided with a breakdown on the outcomes in their area. They have been tasked to discuss in their teams and feedback to the performance meeting in July.	Not applicable	R
			70.2%	68.3%	67.8%	↘			
7	Stability of children looked after placements – (3 or more placements during the year) - WSCC position in national stability index  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	10.0%	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21		The number of children subject of multiple moves in a year has again reduced, even taking into account the additional move our new asylum-seeking young people are subject to as they utilise our supported quarantine property. The proportion of children subject to 3 + placements of children with a permanent plan of being in care is 9.9%.	Not applicable	A
			11.8%	13.5%	11.0%	↗			
8	Support for care leavers to achieve their aspirations – percentage of care-leavers aged 19-21 who are in Employment, Education or Training  Reporting Frequency: Annually	64.0%	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21		Over half of our care leavers are in employment, education or training.	Whilst this is near the target, and has remained so in spite of the impact on Covid 19 on the job market for young people in particular, we want and expect this number to be higher at the end of the year as we improve the clarity of our work around transitions and Pathway Planning.	G
			66.0%	62.0%	53.9%	↘			

9	Positive outcomes on child protection in 12 months - percentage of Child Protection Plans that result in 'step-down' within 12 months  Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	80.0%			Jun-21	Timely intervention to support children subject to child protection plans and their families remains an area of focus for senior managers and development of practice.	This should support an improvement to this target however it is accepted this will take time to shift.	R
			New Measure - No Data	New Measure - No Data	47.2% ↓			

[Website link to Our Council Performance Measures here.](#)

## Finance Summary

### Portfolio in Year Pressures and Mitigations

Pressures	(£m)	Mitigations and Underspending	(£m)	Year end budget variation (£m)
Covid-19 pandemic forecast expenditure	£0.039m	Assumed funding from Covid-19 grant	(£0.039m)	
Placement costs for mainstream children	£1.800m	Anticipated cost avoidance once in-house disability residential homes reopen	(£0.900m)	
Placement costs for children with disabilities	£1.400m	Anticipated cost avoidance once in-house mainstream residential homes reopen	(£0.900m)	
Spend on vulnerable children and families under S17 Children's Act 1989 Children In Need	£1.430m	In-house residential staffing underspend	(£0.800m)	
Friends and family fostering allowances	£0.500m	Additional grant income in relation to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children	(£0.300m)	
Savings at significant risk (In-house residential, improved joint commissioning, early help and lease of vacant properties)	£0.856m	Other minor variations	(£0.256m)	
Social care staffing	£0.270m			
<b>Children and Young People Portfolio - Total</b>	<b>£6.295m</b>		<b>(£3.195m)</b>	<b>£3.100m</b>

### Key Financial Issues and Risks Arising

Key Financial Issues and Risks Arising		Narrative	Cost Driver	Baseline	Q1		Action	Trajectory
CYP 1	Placement Mix of Children We Care For (CWCF)	Despite the overall number of Children We Care For being lower than forecast, there are more children than budgeted for in more costly externally provided placements than those provided internally which cost less.  This is leading to a pressure on the placement budgets. Baseline shows the % upon which the budget was set.	% mainstream children in external residential placements	10.4%	12.4%	↗	As at the end of June, the mainstream placement budgets are forecast to overspend by £1.8m. There are some mitigations in place:  1. Underspending within the in-house residential service, caused by Covid-19 related delays to reopening.  2. Anticipated levels of cost avoidance which will be achieved through the remainder of the year if current children being cared for in external placements can be moved into our own provision.	↗
			% mainstream children in external foster care placements	25.5%	28.6%	↗		
			% mainstream children in internal foster care placements	30.3%	28.3%	↗		

## Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

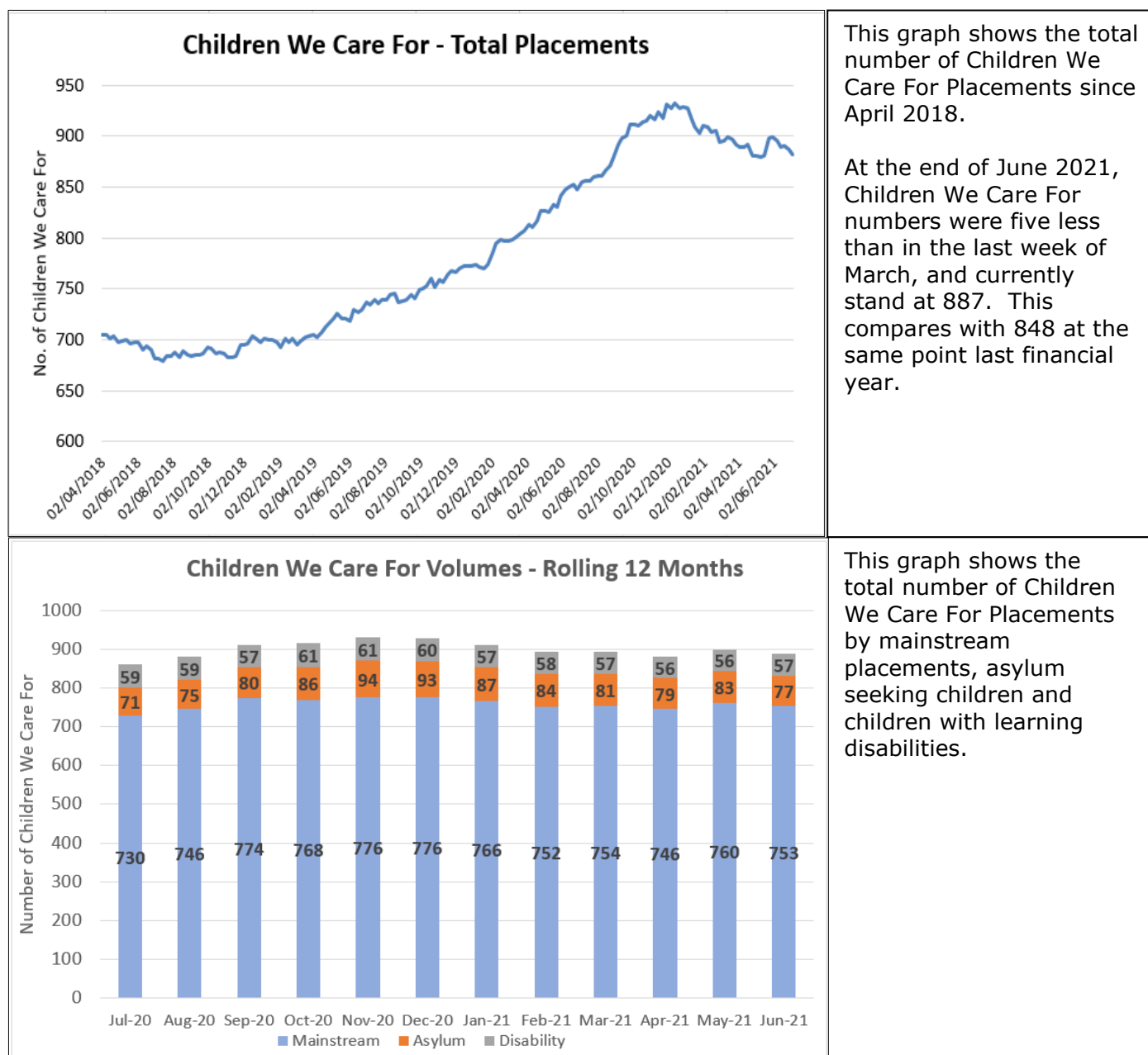
4. The Children and Young people's Portfolio is currently projecting a £3.1m overspend. The main financial issues affecting the budget are described below:

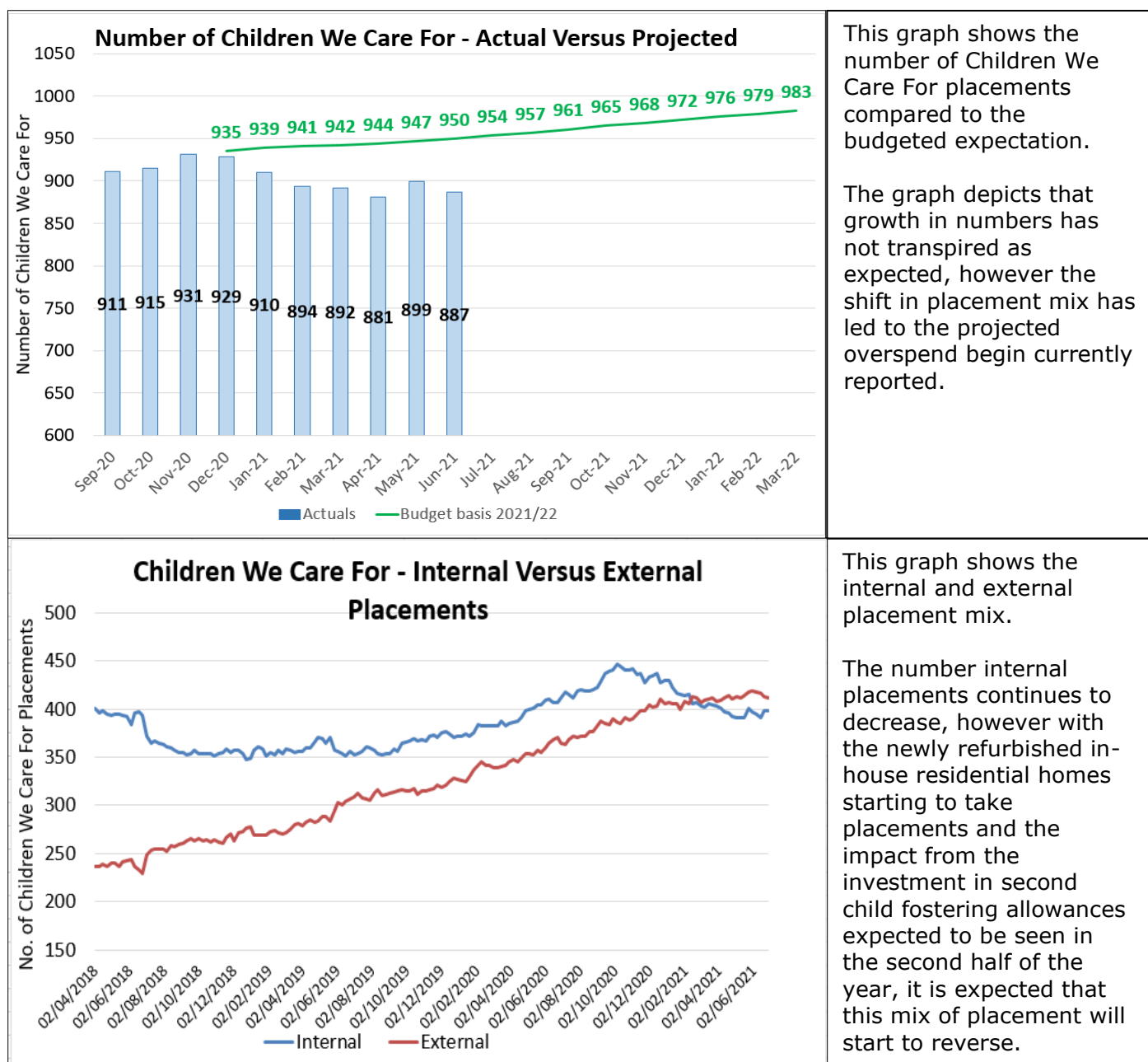
- **Mainstream placement costs** – Despite the total number of Children We Care For being lower than the demand modelling upon which the budget was set, the mix of placement types and their associated costs are leading to a pressure on the budget.
- **Placement costs for children with disabilities** - The pressure is primarily being caused by a small number of young people with high needs or in a period of crisis.
- **Spend on vulnerable children and families under S17 Children Act 1989 Children In Need** – This budget is projecting an overspend based on the higher levels of demand experienced during the first quarter of the year (April to June) following the Covid-19 impact on vulnerable children and families.
- **Friends and family fostering payment review** – We are currently having to review the policy relating to payments to family and friends of a looked after child placed with them and whether we need to adjust allowance levels for compliance. This may mean retrospective payments for some placements which could amount to up to £0.5m additional cost for the period from April 2021, but the full effect is subject to the review.
- **Saving at significant risk - Improved joint commissioning** – A £0.4m saving from increased Health Continuing Care contributions is currently at significant risk. Initially this was expected to be achieved by identifying a greater number of children whose needs meant continuing care eligibility threshold. However, since the saving was identified, the numbers and costs of children hosted by Health but where children's social care pay a contribution have increased – meaning that social care are now incurring additional cost in comparison to previous years.
- **Saving at significant risk - In house residential programme** – A level of cost avoidance arising from the revised operating model and reopening of three closed internal residential homes was modelled as part of the business case for capital investment. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and delays by Ofsted in registering the new provision, the re-opening of the homes was delayed meaning that the permanent delivery of the saving (£0.2m) will fall into 2022/23.
- **Savings at significant risk – Elements of early help restructure and lease of vacant properties** - A further £0.256m of savings is reported as at significant risk due to changes in the Early Help service saving assumptions and the withdrawal of Homes England grant for the empty homes programme.
- **Social care staffing** – the current projected overspend takes into account that 31fte newly qualified social workers will join the establishment during the summer. Given their need to develop experience in the social worker role and the support from existing staff

required to achieve this, it will not be possible to reduce the level of agency staff until later in the year.

- **Cost avoidance from in house residential reopening** – An estimated cost reduction of £1.8m is assumed in the overall projection. It should be noted that this cost avoidance will only mitigate the overspend projected on external placement budgets if children who are currently accommodated in external placements move into in-house homes, or if external placements are not repopulated when children leave them. Any move of placement for children requires a care planning process and it is not appropriate to disrupt a child's placement in order to save the authority money.
- **Additional income in relation to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)** – The current forecast includes £0.3m more income from the Home Office in relation to UASC. This is due to the actual income for Q4 of 2020/21 being higher than originally estimated.

## Cost Drivers Information





## Savings Delivery Update

- The portfolio has a number of 2021/22 savings included within the budget and one saving outstanding from the 2020/21 financial year. Details of these savings are included in the table below:

Saving Activity	2020/21 Savings £000	June 2021		Narrative
Lease of vacant properties to reduce intentionally homeless costs	100	44	G	£0.044m is the full year effect of one family who were accommodated under this scheme in 2020/21, plus the estimated in-year saving of one further family moving from bed and breakfast accommodation into the second property.
		56	R	The roll out of the project was delayed from March 2020 due to the pandemic. Since this time, Homes England have advised that they will no longer be making grants to the Empty Homes Programme. Without the capital funding to bring the properties to a habitable standard, the scheme is not financially viable.

Saving Activity	2021/22 Savings £000	June 2021		Narrative
National House Project	250	250	A	Local House Project is on track. Savings are profiled to be delivered in Q4, which is challenging due to the timescales associated with the delivery of the project.
Increase in Council's top slice of Early Years DSG to compensate for lost Central DSG grant funding used for wider benefit of children and young people	225	225	B	
In-house residential programme – reduced independent placement costs	200	200	R	Remaining cost avoidance arising from new operating model, after re-investment in the residential service. Saving is dependent on the re-opened homes achieving the average occupancy levels for the types of children and their associated costs as identified in the original modelling. Delays in re-opening Breakwater (formerly Seaside) and May House mean that the permanent delivery of this saving will not now be possible until 2022/23.
Reduce the number of solo placements and retainers	100	100	G	
Early help restructure (Year 2 savings)	550	450	A	The decision whether to proceed with the Early Help redesign will be taken by Cabinet on 27th July. In response to the public consultation, the proposal now includes the retention of 12 delivery points (previously 11 were planned). If the proposal is approved, this increase means that the cost of the new service will be £0.2m more than previously modelled, leading to a shortfall in savings. £0.1m of that shortfall is expected to be seen in 2021/22, with the remaining shortfall in 2022/23.
		100	R	
Increased grant funding towards support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children	450	450	B	

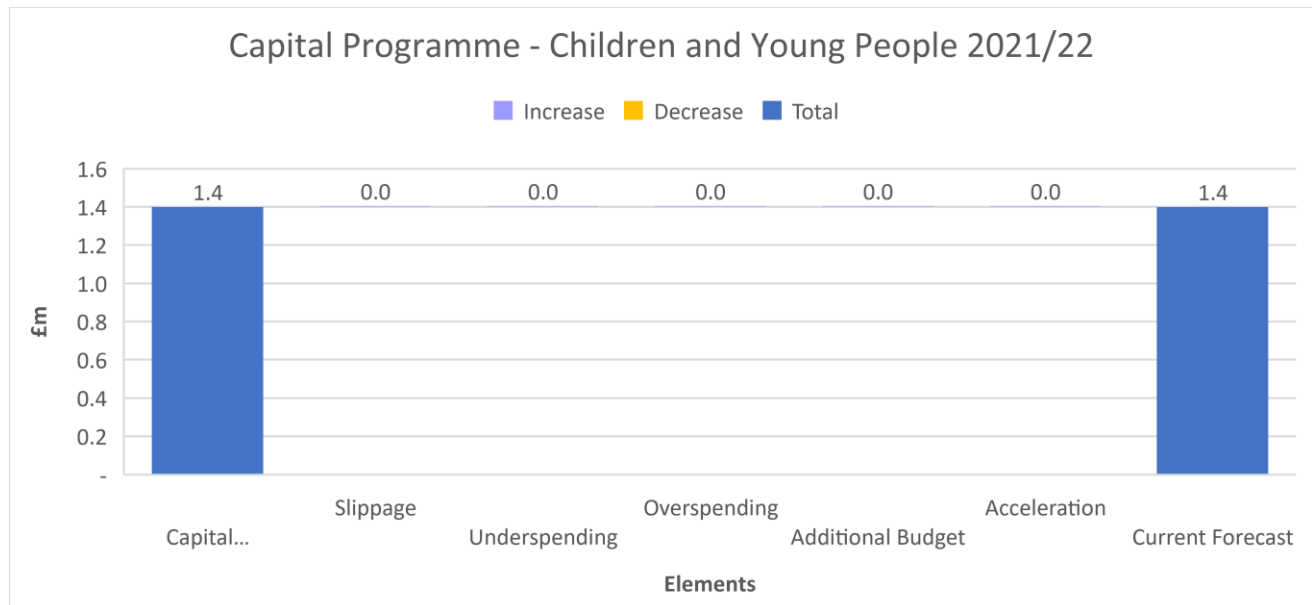
Saving Activity	2021/22 Savings £000	June 2021		Narrative
Improved commissioning for children's social care service - 16+ step down	1,800	250	G	
Improved commissioning for children's social care service - 16+ recommissioning		100	A	Whilst the bulk of the saving for this project will be delivered through new block contract arrangements, these will not be available until Apr 2022. However, a new spot framework will go live from 1st Sept 2021, which will offer some opportunity. The new framework will enable 'step down' from residential placements. This is only be possible under the flexibility and opportunities offered by the new framework
Improved commissioning for children's social care service - improved joint commissioning		400	R	Achievement of this saving is dependent on an increased number of children with disability receiving Continuing Health Care contributions towards the cost of their services. Staff are continuing to refer appropriate children and a monitoring process is being established to enable monthly reporting on progress of referrals.
Improved commissioning for children's social care service - reducing existing placement costs		700	A	A cohort of 62 children in residential and IFA placements is being regularly reviewed - all these placements have additional costs above and beyond the 'standard' costs. Staff are working with providers to identify unnecessary additional support or any situations where there is a more cost-effective alternative. In addition to this, the High-Cost Placements Panel is regularly reviewing those children in the highest costing placements to ensure that cost-effective provision is identified for the long term and that plans are put in place and monitored to enable transition into long-term provision. Commissioners are also now informing providers as a matter of routine that any additional funding will cease by default if the justification is not updated when contracts are reviewed.
Improved commissioning for children's social care service - U16 step down to fostering		350	A	Calculation of saving amount is based on 14 young people stepping down from external residential placements into independent fostering agency placements. Savings were due to start to be delivered from June 2021, however nothing has been forthcoming to date. There are 24 young people who are being considered to determine whether they are appropriate to step down. Staff are involved in the regular statutory reviews of each child within this cohort, along with potentially identifying new children to add to the cohort. The scope for step across placements has now been increased to include in-house fostering placements as well as IFA placements, which would offer a greater potential for savings.
Lease of vacant properties to reduce intentionally homeless costs (year 2 savings)	100	100	R	Year 2 savings relating to a project to lease vacant WSCC properties to YMCA to enable accommodation for Intentionally Homeless families. The project was substantially delayed from March 2020 due to the pandemic. Homes England have advised that they will no longer be making grants to the empty homes programme. Without the capital funding to bring the properties up to a habitable standard the scheme is not financially viable.
Review of Agency Staffing	231	231	A	The initial estimate of saving expected for the year to date is £0.067m, however further investigations are being undertaken with HR Resourcing to try to identify further reductions.

**Savings Key:**

R Significant Risk
 A At Risk
 G On Track
 B Delivered

## Capital Programme

6. The capital programme; as approved by County Council in February 2021, agreed a programme totalling £1.0m for 2021/22. £0.4m of expenditure, originally profiled to spend in 2020/21, was slipped into 2021/22, revising the capital programme to £1.4m. Since this time, profiled spend has remained the same giving a current full year actual spend for 2021/22 of £1.4m.



7. The largest projects included in the capital programme expenditure plan are:

- Orchard House Children's Home Improvements.
- Cissbury Lodge Children's Home Improvements.
- Seaside (Breakwater) Children's Home Improvements.

8. There are six projects within this portfolio; three of the schemes in delivery are rated green, indicating that the project is reporting to plan. There are three projects rated amber, indicating that there is an issue having an effect on the projects, but that it can be dealt with by the project manager or project delivery team. An update on the progress of the schemes not rated green are detailed in the table below:



Scheme	RAG Status at 30th June	Reason	RAG Status at 10th August	Updated Position
Children's In-House Phase 1 – Brightstar (formerly Cissbury Lodge)	AMBER	Main construction complete. Minor issues raised during handover with service being picked up within existing programme budget.	AMBER	Change Request pending to add budget.
Children's In-House Phase 2 – High Trees and 40 Teasel Close	AMBER	Increase in design-stage cost-estimates from initial budget estimate.	RED	Scope of works for Teasel Close expanded from initial temporary decant to enable longer-term usage. Business case to be presented in August.
Children's In-House Phase 2 – Orchard House	AMBER	Main works on track. Options for contact centre building currently over budget, remain to be considered.	RED	Contact Centre works on hold. New-build to be considered as potential most cost-effective option.

## Risk

9. The following table summarises the risks on the corporate risk register that would have a direct impact on the portfolio. Risks to other portfolios are specified within the respective appendices to this report.

Risk No.	Risk Description	Previous Quarter Score	Current Score
CR61	Death or serious injury of a child	15	15
CR69	Children's services will fail to deliver an acceptable provision to the community	20	20

10. Further details on all risks can be found in **Appendix 5** - Corporate Risk Register.