

**Appendix B - Balancing the Budget**

This appendix sets out details of the budgets which will be reduced to realign funding to council priorities and known pressures. The below includes the proposals relating to the scrutiny committee, the full list of budget proposals are included within the 17th October Public Cabinet report.

Cabinet Portfolio	Current Budget £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total £'000	Type of saving	Description	Director and Service Area	Consultation/EQIA required?	Reason and proposed approach
<b>Children and Young People, Learning and Skills</b>									
Family Safeguarding model	26,700 placements 18,100 staffing		1,820	1,820	Efficiency	<p>The Family Safeguarding model will improve the main statutory provision of Children's Social Care. Through implementing this new social work model of practice, savings are expected to arise through a reduction in demand for statutory services (for children under 12 years of age coming into care on becoming subject to a child protection plan). This will result in reduced demand and a consequent reduction in the number of social work teams required which will provide a staffing savings of £240k in 2024/25 and £520k in 2025/26. The reductions in the number of children entering care are also expected to lead to savings against placement budgets for those under the age of 12 of £0.9m in 2024/25 and £1.3m in 2025/26.</p> <p>There will be no adverse impact on the quality of service provided or outcomes for vulnerable children because the reduction in staffing will be matched by reduced levels of demand that the family safeguarding model is expected to deliver.</p>	Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Children's SC	Consultation not required EQIA for decision report only.	Proposal is to extend current policy and systems for service provision to reduce demand for most costly provision. No impact on service users. No likely equality impact.
Fostering redesign	20,600		760	760	Efficiency	<p>The Fostering Service improvement programme has delivered a service re-design that will provide efficiency savings. This is achieved through increasing the market share of the Council provided in-house foster placements and reducing the need for foster placements that are provided by external agencies at significantly higher cost. The new Fostering Service will also include dedicated specialist foster carer placements that will prevent the need for more children with complex needs to be placed in higher cost residential care. The new service also offers enhanced support for foster carers to prevent foster care break down which is both a better outcome for the child and prevents an additional expensive placement. Keeping children in foster care rather than residential care delivers better outcomes and is more cost effective.</p> <p>Key risks to achieving the savings include:                      1) Unable to recruit enough foster carers to support the changes. There is currently a national shortage, but this has been mitigated by the enhanced fostering offer, improved advertising, assessment and registration process that the new service provides.                      2) Other external factors, such as demand growth, will adversely impact on the market share of in-house carers. Mitigation of this risk is in place by providing more placements to meet the increased demand.                      3) Delays in the recruitment of the specialist resource may delay the delivery of the full reductions planned. This will be monitored by senior managers.</p>	Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Children's SC	No consultation unless services to be lost or reduced. EQIA for decision report.	If no loss of service provision or legitimate expectation of continuing support/ funding at current levels then no consultation required. Any changes which lead to loss or reduction of service/fee levels, should include consultation with relevant providers.
In-house residential phase 2 - High Trees	5,800		127	127	Efficiency	<p>This initiative is Phase 2 of the Council's own In-house residential placement redesign which will refurbish High Trees Children's Home. This will result in increased capacity at High Trees from the current 4 to a planned 5 beds. Although this will require an additional staffing cost this will be more than compensated for by a net saving compared to the average cost of an external residential placement.</p> <p>The key risks are:                      1) Construction delays due to industry problems in recruiting available staff which will impact on the building works being completed in time scale. Managers are working closely with colleagues in facilities management to limit this impact.                      2) That the new capacity in the home does not meet the target occupancy of 85% across all 5 beds. However existing occupancy targets are being met and there is confidence that there is sufficient demand to utilise the additional bed.</p>	Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Children's SC	Consultation and EQIA not required.	No change to services received or adverse impact.
In-house residential phase 3	26,700		30	30	Efficiency	<p>This initiative is Phase 3 of the redesign of residential services and cost reductions are expected to arise through greater use of further in-house capacity and reducing the need for external placements. However, these changes will require capital investment.</p> <p>The key risks are the same as those for phase 2:                      1) Construction delays due to industry problems in recruiting available staff which will impact on the building works being completed in time scale. Managers are working closely with colleagues in facilities management to limit this impact.                      2) That the new capacity does not meet the target occupancy of 85%. However existing occupancy targets are being met and there is confidence that there is sufficient demand to utilise any additional beds.</p>	Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Children's SC	Consultation and EQIA not required.	This capital project will not have any adverse impact on services or residents.
Reduction in inspection team following positive Ofsted inspection	250		130	130	Efficiency	<p>As a result of the Ofsted ILACS outcome being announced in May 2023 which now judges Children's Services as 'requires improvement to be good', it is anticipated that the level of resources in the inspection team can be reduced from 2025/26. The programme of improvement has continued and will do so through 2024/25. It is anticipated that the service will be in a further improved position by 2025/26 and can therefore reduce the amount of resource required to meet regulatory demands of inspection readiness.</p> <p>Any reduction will be dependent on meeting performance standards so the main risks will be limited to not achieving the quality of service predicted. Performance management is not strong within the service to mitigate this.</p>	Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Children's Services	Consultation and EQIA not required.	Internal resource changes only - usual HR consultation arrangements will be used if required.

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Review of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	2,900		90	90	Efficiency	The structure and the processes of the Integrated Front Door and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has been reviewed during 2023/24. More effective management of thresholds and demand have meant that staffing costs can be reduced safely with no impact on the service quality or provision. This financial saving can be delivered during 2024/25 (£410,000) as outlined in the MTFS that was agreed in February 2023. A further review is planned for next year to consider a potential further staffing cost reduction in 2025/26 which is expected to deliver an additional £90,000 saving.	Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Children's SC	Consultation and EQIA not required. Assumed partnership engagement is planned.	Proposal is structural, organisational and internal to service. It will require partner engagement as MASH is multi-agency but no direct impact on current or future service users.
Review of arrangements for children with complex needs	2,000	300		300	Efficiency	A review of arrangements for supporting children with complex emotional and wellbeing needs has been undertaken to provide a more effective and efficient service and to remove duplication in our processes. This will result in a realignment of the work of the Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Team, Intensive Planning Team and Neurodevelopmental Pathway Service. Alongside the insourcing of the Child and Adolescent Multi-disciplinary Service and practice interface with Youth Emotional Support Service will provide a more effective service offer. These changes will be complimented by further reviews across the service to ensure they provide the best outcomes to our children and young people.  All key risks have been addressed and mitigated within the aforementioned individual service reviews and where applicable the appropriate consultation processes.	Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Children's SC	Consultation with service groups and stakeholders, EQIA required.	Any proposal to alter current and established service provision and reasonable expectations that they will carry on will require consultation with those affected and other stakeholders involved in service provision. Protected characteristics groups likely to be affected.
Improved use of kinship placements	11,300	2,000		2,000	Efficiency	The placement recovery plan has been implemented to address a reduction in the number of kinship placements which provide a better outcome for children and prevent the need for other types of care placement. The expansion in the number of kinship placements will specifically help to reduce the number and proportion of agency residential placements for looked after children. This initiative will also help to reduce the number of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements by supporting more children to be placed through Kinship arrangements. The plans will increase the number of Kinship placements from the current 79 to 126. Each placement attracts an average weekly saving on the placements budget of £820 whilst also an improved outcome for the young person.  The main risk is related to ensuring families can provide the increased numbers in kinship placements. This is mitigated by the improvements in the fostering service to provide more timely assessments and effective support arrangements to the carers.	Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Children's SC, Fostering & CLA	No consultation required but consider focused on current users to help proposal. EQIA for decision only.	No loss of current service, amenity or legitimate expectation. Need to ensure proposals equitable in terms of those with protected characteristics. May wish to consider consulting current kinship carers to help inform details of proposals.
Second Local House Project in the Coastal region	22,400	1,000		1,000	Efficiency	The Council has already successfully adopted and implemented a Local House Project in the Crawley area which has been extremely successful. This is a scheme which helps to provide young people leaving care with a safe home, support to live independently and teaches them life skills such as cooking and money management. This proposal sees the implementation of a second Local House Project in the Coastal region, in response to the demand for this type of service in that area of the county.  The proposal duplicates the first House project, and a successful implementation will result in fewer residential placements being required. The reductions and efficiency savings are based on supporting 12 young people through the project.  The main risk is related to the mobilisation of the property, but work is underway with colleagues in facilities management to mitigate this and the service is confident that the expansion of the project will go ahead as planned.	Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Children's SC	Consultation and EQIA required focused on service users/stakeholders.	Likely to be limited to those affected where service provision will change living arrangements or service levels. EQIA to ensure equitable and fair proposals.
Improved joint working with Health	600 income	250		250	Income Generation	Improved joint working with Health in relation to Continuing Health Care packages is expected to reduce the costs on supporting children with eligible health needs.  Low risk as the work is already underway and agreements being developed with Health partners.	Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Children's SC and SEND	Consultation and EQIA not required.	No planned changes for service users or removal or reduction in expected service levels. Need to review likely scope of impact of changes arising from the dialogue with Health to see if consultation or EQIA suggested.
Historic teacher pension payments	1,200		50	50	Efficiency	The number of historic teacher pension payments funded through the General Fund has been in decline over the last three years. The level of decline seen over this time is expected to continue and as a result, the budget set aside can be reduced. Low risk.	Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Education	Consultation and EQIA not required.	Engagement with affected individuals and representative groups and related EQIA already undertaken through development of proposals.
Review of Home to School Transport	25,300	800		800	Efficiency	There are a range of initiatives being progressed which are expected to reduce the cost to the Council of providing home to school transport. This includes the increasing take up of independent travel training; review of single occupancy transport; pick up points; more efficient routes; increasing take-up of personal transport budgets; and income generation through greater use of the fleet during 'off peak' periods.  Risks are related to the take up of the options and the plans are being progressed with a view to mitigate these.	Director of Place Services and Director of Children, Young People and Learning Service area: Highways and Transport	Consultation and EQIA required. Limited and focused.	The proposal will mean changes to established service provision and loss of amenity. Likely to affect protected characteristic groups specifically. Focused consultation on service users/families/ schools and stakeholders advised.