



Report to the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee

Title:	Children's Services - Budget Savings monitoring
Committee date:	Tuesday 28 June 2016
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Cabinet Member sign-off:	Lin Hazell

Purpose of Agenda Item

The Chairman of the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee invite us to attend the Select Committee meeting on Tuesday 28 June to:

- 1. Provide a progress review on the budget savings which were part of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTP) process this year.*
- 2. The Committee would like to hear specifically about the current agency staffing levels within Children's Services, specifically within the First Response team where it was virtually 100% run by agency staff at the time of the Budget Inquiry.*
- 3. The Committee would also like to receive an update on the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seekers in Buckinghamshire and a detailed financial breakdown on the costs associated with supporting them – how much of these costs are met by the Government?*
- 4. The final two areas where the Committee would be interested in receiving an update are around the options appraisal for the Fostering and Adoption service and*
- 5. The plans to reduce the support for short breaks for disabled children and their families.*

The information request has been provided in the report below.

Background

The MTP proposals were agreed by the Council in February 2016.

Key issues

- Demand is still high and the cost of every Child looked after is very significant. Despite some success in reducing children in placements, there are pressures on care cost budgets.*
- The staffing resource needed to manage demand is also high and even though agency numbers are reducing, there are still a significant number expecting to cost nearly £6m in 2016/17.*

Next steps

Any emerging pressures and mitigating actions will be reported to Cabinet in July.

1 - MTP overview

The MTP savings agreed for Children's Services were as follows:

Service	Activity	MTP Reason	Description	2016/17 £,000	2017/18 £,000	2018/19 £,000	2019/20 £,000
LA Care Services	LA Care Services	Service Efficiency	Fostering - Review of delivery model	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)
LA Children in Care	LA Children in Care	Additional Income	Bidding for external funding to support some children in further education.	(25)	(25)	(25)	(25)
LA Children in Need	LA Children in Need	Service Reduction	Continuation of new process and controls over s17 support	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
LA Prevention & Commissioning	LA Prevention & Commissioning	Service Efficiency	Use of a social impact bond (SIB) to create a multi-systemic therapy service.	0	0	(312)	(312)
LA Prevention & Commissioning	LA Prevention & Commissioning	Service Efficiency	Step down from residential care by moving children who are aged under 14 from children's homes into a family setting.	0	(610)	(1,120)	(1,120)
LA Prevention & Commissioning	LA Prevention & Commissioning	Service Efficiency	Regional commission supported living for vulnerable young people	(620)	(620)	(620)	(620)
LA Prevention & Commissioning	LA Prevention & Commissioning	Service Efficiency	Reduce the unit cost of residential care packages through jointly commissioning with other Local Authorities.	0	0	(150)	(150)
LA Prevention & Commissioning	LA Prevention & Commissioning	Service Reduction	Deliver transition support for children moving into adulthood (and adult services possibly) in a different way	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)
LA Prevention & Commissioning	LA Prevention & Commissioning	Service Reduction	Reduced support for short breaks for disabled children and their families.	(187)	(300)	(300)	(300)
CYP Children's (LA) Unallocated Budget	Childrens S Care & Learning Tran Saving	Service Efficiency	Allocation of Future Shape Savings	(527)	(736)	(736)	(736)
LA Management & Overheads	LA Management & Overheads	Service Efficiency	Youth Offending - Efficiencies and savings	0	(50)	(50)	(50)

- Against these all are on track to be delivered in full apart from Future Shape savings (highlighted orange)
- Future shape savings were based on delivery of digital savings of £164k in 2016/17 however the Business Unit is awaiting the appointment of a Digital lead for the Business Unit so this work is delayed. Whilst there have been a significant number of changes in the Business Unit establishment, the overall saving has not fully been delivered yet.

2 - Social Care staffing update

Staffing in Contact , Mash and Assessment

Assessment teams 35% agency reducing to 24%

Posts	Team				Notes
	Chilterns	Wycombe	Aylesbury	Total	
Social workers	7 (2 agency)	9 (5 agency)	9 (5 agency)	25 (12)	Reducing to 8 by early July
Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)	1	1	1	3	Newly qualified Social Workers
Team Managers	1	1	1	3	
Assistant Team Manager	1	1	1	3	
Total	10 (2)	12 (5)	12 (5)	34 (12)	

MASH - 29% agency reducing to 15%

- Permanent Team Manager started 7th June 2016
- Agency ATM interviewed and offered permanent position end of May 2016
- Two permanent ATM's in post, one due to leave on June 2016.
- Four permanent social workers in post (one currently on maternity leave – agency worker cover in place).
- One agency social workers in post.
- Six permanent Contact and Referral Officers (CARO) in post
- One agency CARO in post – offered and accepted permanent post start date 13th June.
- 2 permanent CARO's interviewed on 20th April offered permanent posts, one due to commence on 20th June, start date for second worker to be confirmed.

3 - Unaccompanied asylum seeker children update

National Context

Immigration minister James Brokenshire has confirmed that a new scheme for resettling unaccompanied children across the country will be introduced from July 2016 to relieve pressure on the so-called “gateway authorities” such as Kent County Council who currently have in excess of 1000 UASC .

In addition, there has been a further announcement of plans to resettle a further 3,000 children from the Middle East and Africa, who are at risk of abuse and exploitation, over the next four years.

Full details of both schemes are yet to be confirmed, but enhance Home Office Funding that has been available to Councils who have volunteered to support Kent of £41,610 per year for under-16s and £33,215 for 16- and 17-year-olds will end in July.

The increase in children nationally will place a significant strain on the provision of appropriate placements for children, with an increase in demand it is anticipated that there will be a further increase in costs of placements.

Local Context

Currently Buckinghamshire County Council has 19 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) out of a total population of 463 children in care. One of the children will be 18 this year.

13 of these children are placed in foster care at a cost of £810 per week (£42,235 per year) and 6 in supported lodgings because of their age and particular needs at a cost of £756 per week (£39,420 per year).

Funding currently is based on £95 per day (£665 per week or £34,657 per year) for under 16s and £71 per day (£497 per week or £25,915 per year) for 16 & 17 year olds). Clearly this is substantially less than the current cost of care.

We had income from the Home Office of £541,721 in 2015-16 and £561,053 in 2014-15 to offset most of our costs.

Availability of placements for children continues to be a real challenge, with little choice and 42 % of our children are currently placed out of County. This increases the child’s vulnerability and the costs to the Local Authority.

Although placement costs per se have not increased, the additional funding of supporting the needs of children in care as required by the provider such as providing therapeutic support, particularly in residential care has increased.

In preparation for the dispersal of UASC, a cross partnership plan will need to be developed to ensure that the children’s ages and needs can be appropriately assessed and met.

4 - Fostering and Adoption update

Fostering Service

- a. *In October 2015 the main independent fostering providers were invited to a conference on the future of fostering in Buckinghamshire.*
- b. *There is a significant shortfall in the number of foster carers in Buckinghamshire, this is both in the private and public sectors.*
- c. *Buckinghamshire's fostering service recruited more foster carers in the past year than all the IFAs in Bucks.*
- d. *An improvement partner from an external expert is being tendered for. This tender closes on 17th June. This will assist us in developing a stronger fostering offer.*
- e. *The innovations team is working alongside the head of service to consider future options for the service. This will be completed in August.*

Key Milestones;

August 2016- Innovation Team options appraisal

November 2016- fostering service improvement plan signed off

February 2017- fostering service improvement plan completed

March- review of options appraisal and implementation

Adoption Service

- a. *The Government's plan is for all councils' adoption services to be undertaken by Regional Adoption Agency.*
- b. *Bucks is in a region with Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire, The Bedford's, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.*
- c. *The lead is Coram adoption services*
- d. *The directors of the councils are deciding what the form of the agency will take.*
- e. *The aim is that by April 2017 the council has agreed the form of the agency.*

5 - Short breaks update

The short breaks budgets will meet the savings targets in line with the agreed MTP proposals. These were:

Service	15/16 Funding	Reduction in funding 16/17	Reduction in funding 17/18	Total
FACT Bucks	£10,000	£5,000	£0	£5,000
Pinpoint database	£5,000	£5,000	£0	£5,000
Community Short Breaks - Action for Children	£816,227 (this is 17/18 tender price)	£28,400	£28,400	£56,800
Residential Short Breaks Action for Children	£1,726,675	£55,000	£67,000	£122,000
Contract Carers	£70,000	£14,000 (6 months saving)	£14,000	£28,000
Early Years Short Breaks Action for Children	£88,000	£0	£3,200	£3,200
Funding to Children with Disabilities for domiciliary care & DP	£310,450	£80,000a	£0	£80,000
	Total	£187,400	£112,600	£300,000