

For general release

REPORT TO:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Date: 18th January 2022
SUBJECT:	Children, Young People & Education Budget Challenge
LEAD OFFICER:	Debbie Jones, interim Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Debbie Jones, interim Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

The plans and recommendations in this report focus on ensuring that all Croydon's children live a happy, healthy life, free from harm and that they have every opportunity to thrive and become fulfilled adults.

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	As part of its assurance process on the 2022-23 Council Budget, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee has asked its three Sub-Committee to identify and scrutinise specific budget proposals to deliverable, sustainable and do not create undue risk.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	The Children & Young People Sub-Committee is asked to review the information provided on the identified budget proposals and reach a conclusion on the following:- <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The savings are deliverable, sustainable and are not at unacceptable risk.2. The impact on service users and the wider community is understood.3. That all reasonable alternative options have been explored and no better options exist.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To scrutinise the proposed savings in the Children, Young People and Education directorate members identified three areas to review and challenge in more detail:
1. Review of Children with Disabilities care packages 0-17
 2. The impact of the reduction in spend on the adolescent service
 3. The funding gap for unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- 1.2 The information in this report together with case study details to be presented at the committee meeting will enable committee members to challenge that:
- The savings are deliverable, sustainable and are not at unacceptable risk.
 - The impact on service users and the wider community is understood.
 - That were appropriate in the coming year, all reasonable alternative options have been explored and no better options exist.
- 1.3 All three of the savings areas selected by the committee have been reviewed and monitored at the Children's Continuous Improvement Board over 2021/22. In addition the CYPE Directorate Management Team receives a monthly exception report on all of the MTFS savings project plans. This report draws upon the most recent progress updates.

2. MTFS overview 2021-24

- 2.1 Following the transfer of the 18-25 transition service to the HWA directorate from April 2021 the original MTFS savings and growth for children with disabilities 0-25 were apportioned across the services as follows:

	Original £000's	0-17 service CYPE	18-25 service HWA
Growth	6,110	1,976	4,134
Savings	384	124	260

- 2.2 Whilst the growth is a one-year allocation the savings will be cumulative over 2021-24. For the 0-17 service the total over the lifetime of the MTFS will be £372,000.

- 2.3 The MTFS savings are therefore:

Ref.	Area	21-22 £000's	22-23 £000's	23-24 £000's
CFESAV 04	Review of Children with Disabilities care packages 0-17	124	124	124
CFESAV 03	Reconfiguration of Adolescent Services	1,068	0	0

3. Review of Children with Disabilities care packages 0-17

- 3.1 2022-23 will be the second year of a three year review programme. The project plan at appendix 1 sets out the activity taking place under the following headings:
1. Rolling reviews of care packages, family support and direct payments
 2. Work collaboratively with the ASC SEN to facilitate a seamless transitions service for CYP aged 14+
 3. Review of Calleydown Respite Unit
 4. Commissioning: Review, commissioning and procuring CWD service: short breaks and personal care and equipment
 5. Systems, business processes and payments including integrated case recording and finance system, oversight of payments processes, improved end-to-end across dept. and council (placement, non-placement and staffing spend)
- 3.2 Detailed reviews of the support and care provided for individual children alongside up to date assessments of needs is addressed under the first heading. Case study examples will be provided to the Committee to provide more granular detail on the service approach to ensuring that packages of care are focused on meeting children and families' needs, keeping children safe and families together wherever possible.
- 3.3 Changes in the costs of packages of care is not the only action required to make a sustained reduction in spend in this area. Improved value for money that balances costs and quality alongside greatly improved business systems and payment processes are also essential.

4. Reconfiguration of adolescent services

- 4.1 The proposals for this service restructure were presented and challenged at the Children's Improvement Board in January 2021, and a progress update was provided in May 2021.
- 4.2 Three case-holding teams of practitioners including social workers, youth and family support staff have been reduced to one non case-holding team. A significant number of staff from the service have been deployed into posts across children's social care, ensuring that some of the expertise built up has been embedded in day to day practice.
- 4.3 Children's cases where risks of harm arise outside of family relationships i.e. extra-familial harm or contextual safeguarding are now worked by practitioners and managers across the social care statutory system. Knowledge and skills in this area requires continual focus to achieve consistency for all children proportional to their needs.
- 4.4 The restructure of the children looked after and care leavers' service took longer than anticipated and was fully implemented by October 2021. The dedicated team of Adolescent Support Workers in the new

structure of Children in Care & Young People's Service is re-focusing to include supporting safeguarding for care experienced adults (care leavers). Developing the post-18 response to extra familial harm continues to be an area of focus in the new services. However it must be noted that staffing changes and recruitment challenges have impacted on the level of expertise across the CSC system.

Young Croydon

- 4.5 The development of the Young Croydon suite of services to respond to extra familial harm with a multi-disciplinary approach rather than through council-only services has been supported by the appointment of an experienced interim Service Manager who has been in post since October 2021. The Service Manager is taking a key role in reviewing practice, systems and processes that will contribute to our evaluation of the impact of service reduction.
- 4.6 Young Croydon will draw together services that respond to adolescents alongside the Youth Offending Service working collaboratively with the Public Protection Met Police Teams, specialist commissioned services, CAMHS and Health response services
- 4.7 Our quality assurance of practice in this area identifies the need for continual training and development in both practitioners and managers given the dynamic nature of extra familial harm.
- 4.8 In light of the tragic deaths of children and young people over last year we are reviewing how services work together across children's services and across the council, and of our capacity to respond in this dynamic sphere of extra familial safeguarding.
- 4.9 As part of the Croydon Renewal Plan new indicators have been developed to monitoring the number of adolescents entering and leaving care. A small suite of measures, including for example those around children missing from home, care and education could be developed to provide more rounded assurance on potentially vulnerable young people and to set out how this intelligence informs preventative actions.

5. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and young people

- 5.1 Work is underway to review and where necessary update the underlying assumptions in the financial model that identifies the budget gap due to the disproportionate number of children and in particular care leavers accommodated in Croydon.
- 5.2 Whilst the number of unaccompanied children coming into Croydon's care has continued to reduce the number and proportion of care leavers aged 18+ has not reduced at the same rate.
- 5.3 A detailed update on the financial modelling and the impact on future budgets will

be presented to the Committee meeting.

Appendix 1

Project Plan MTFS SAV04: Review of Children with Disabilities care packages

0-17

CONTACT OFFICER:

Debbie Jones, Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education