

FOLLOW-UP: MATTERS FOR CLARIFICATION FROM THE LAST MEETING

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REASON FOR REPORT

To follow-up any clarifications and information requests agreed by the Committee undertaking their role scrutinising the decisions and reports from the last Cabinet meeting. These matters are for noting only and not for call-in. If a particular Member wishes for further clarification on the information provided below, this will be for the Committee to determine.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

That the Committee note the information provided.

CABINET – 13 FEBRUARY 2020

The Committee gave consideration to the reports and the decisions made by Cabinet at this meeting and sought further information or clarifications in the reports as set out below. The information is provided below by Council officers.

Committee clarification	Officer response
<p><u>Budget monitoring report</u></p> <p>Vacant youth service posts - on Page 24, para. 55, looking at the budget position of the Housing, Environment, Education, Health & Wellbeing area, it states that the budget overspend is mitigated by a number of factors, including from hard to recruit vacant posts within Youth Centres. The Committee would like to know which posts.</p>	<p>The reduction in spend against budget is as a result of vacancies amongst Youth and Community Workers.</p> <p>Recruitment is underway to fill these roles. Seventeen applicants have been shortlisted for interview, which are taking place on the 2nd and 4th March 2020.</p>

Budget monitoring report

Grant on supporting families - On Page 27, para. 66, under the Demographic Growth - Looked After Children, it mentions that the service has implemented new ways of working, with the use of a grant of £400k, to support vulnerable children and prevent them from entering the care system. The Committee would like to know where the grant came from and what the new ways of working are to support young people and families to remain in their existing environment rather than being brought into the care system.

Hillingdon successfully bid for £400K from the Government's *What Works Centre* for children's social care. The Centre sought local authorities to work on a devolved budget project. The project focussed on devolving budgets to social workers in order to help them directly support children and families. The project sits within the Adolescent Team in Children's Social Care.

Hillingdon utilised devolved budgets to help vulnerable adolescents who are at a moderate to very high contextual risk of youth violence, child criminal exploitation (CCE), child sexual exploitation (CSE) and missing episodes. All of the young people supported by the team are eligible for a devolved budget.

Alongside spends on individual children the team have commissioned a training package to be used with a number of families and therapeutic group breaks for up to 56 children.

As a research project, there are no restrictions as to what the funds could be used for and participants have been encouraged to think creatively, with the overall purpose being to improve outcomes for young people, including reducing risk and preventing unnecessary episodes in care.

The service is also commissioning a Virtual Reality training resource that will support families in identifying risk and safeguarding their children.

Budget monitoring report

Budget breakdown - On page 29, para. 78 under the Provider and Commissioned Care budget the report mentions a number of overspends and underspends creating the current budget position for the area. The Committee would like a clearer breakdown by service area of the relevant underspends and overspends.

(see para.78 below)

'Provider and Commissioned Care (£621k underspend, £81k improvement)

78. The service is projecting an underspend of £621k as at Month 9, an improvement of £81k on the Month 8 position. However, it should be noted that this position includes a projected overspend of £650k on the Early Years Centres and an overspend of £194k on SEN Transport agency staffing costs, which is being mitigated by underspends across the Children's Centres, the cost of catering and through implementing a new approach to managing the Better Care Fund capital grant, where the reported position reflects a £919k positive revenue impact in 2019/20.'

Provider services and commissioned care deliver front line care & services to residents in residential care, day care, supported living, extra care, Early Years Nurseries and Children's Centres as well as a range of business management services.

In front line services a contingent labour budget is operated to ensure that at all times there is sufficient and immediate resource available to Care Managers, i.e. staff sickness, training etc., This means that residents service level does not drop and staff are not put under pressure.

The underspend across front service budgets indicates that each service has not needed to draw down as much of the contingent budget as expected. This is difficult to predict as demand is variable depending on levels of sickness absence, or increase support for residents who may be unwell, for example.

Early years centres do not currently have a base budget as the funding has historically been from the DSG. A BID review has been agreed to enhance the operating model of these services and ensure they are self-funding through income such as fees and the 2 and 3 year old 30 hours funding.

Children's centres are also currently undergoing an agreed BID review. The staffing structure in the 16 children's centres will be reconfigured and the current underspends are reflective of a period of no recruitment whilst the review was completed. The new structure will provide improved staffing and service delivery model across the front line services.

<p><u>Budget monitoring report</u></p> <p>SEND capacity plans - On the SEN Transport budget, Members welcomed the more detailed budget information in the Part 2 report on the future of the service.</p> <p>The Committee were conscious of the link between SEN Transport and SEND capacity in local schools. Therefore, the Committee sought further information on what the Council's plans are to increase the capacity in schools / within the Borough of SEND places and provision.</p>	<p>The Council has been awarded grant funding to commission additional SEND school places and improve existing facilities in existing special and mainstream schools. This will provide an additional 125 places.</p> <p>In addition, the DfE have commissioned and will deliver 3 new special Free Schools in the Borough and re-model 1 existing school. These are currently progressing through the planning process, and are anticipated to open from September 2022 onwards. In total, these projects will provide an additional 209 additional needs school places in the Borough.</p>
<p><u>The Council's Budget 2020/21</u></p> <p>Transfer of posts to DSG - The Committee discussed the Dedicated Schools Budget deficit and on Page 27, para. 98 of the budget report it states under the Social Care savings:</p> <p>(see para.98 below)</p> <p><i>'Two further savings are proposed within Service Transformation including a SEND review targeting early intervention and support (£161k) with a transfer of posts from the <u>General Fund to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)</u>, with efficiencies within the DSG expected to absorb the additional cost and a transfer of the Mental Health Service's team to be managed in-house (£123k) with £110k relating to the impact of withdrawing from the Section 75 Agreement and a minor £13k relating to staffing costs.'</i></p> <p>The Committee asked which post types are being transferred to the DSG.</p>	<p>The new DSG funded posts that were added into this structure were to create the SEND Advisory Service and brought together the Intervention, Inclusion and Early Support teams into one cohesive team to work in a multidisciplinary way with education settings and children, prior to statutory intervention.</p> <p>The overarching aim of the new structure is to increase the number of children and young people with additional needs being supported in a mainstream setting, reducing the demand for statutory Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA). This approach as part of the SEN pathway model is a key element in generating savings of £1.114m over a 3 year period on the cost of High Needs placements within the DSG.</p>