

Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on: **2 November 2023 at 6.00 p.m.**

Meeting at: Walsall Council House.

Public access to meeting via: [Walsall Council Webcasting Portal](#)

MEMBERSHIP:

Chair: Councillor. Hicken
Vice Chair: Councillor. Jukes
Councillor. Garcha
Councillor. Harrison
Councillor. Horton
Councillor. Latham
Councillor. Nasreen
Councillor. Rattigan
Councillor C. Statham
Councillor Whitehouse
Vacancy

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor S. Elson.

Note: Walsall Council encourages the public to exercise their right to attend meetings of Council, Cabinet and Committees. Agendas and reports are available for inspection from the Council's Democratic Services Team at the Council House, Walsall (Telephone 01922 654767) or on our website www.walsall.gov.uk.

AGENDA

1.	Apologies To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Committee.	
2.	Substitutions To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.	
3.	Declarations of interest and party whip To receive declarations of interest or the party whip from Members in respect of items on the agenda.	
4.	Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda (if applicable).	
5.	Minutes of the previous meeting To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting that took place on 28 September 2023.	<u>Enclosed</u>
6.	Corporate Financial Performance – Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Position for 2023/24 To provide the budget monitoring position for period 6 2023/24.	<u>Enclosed</u>
7.	Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28 To receive a presentation and report on the draft revenue and capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee. To provide feedback to Cabinet on the proposals.	<u>Enclosed</u>
<u>Scrutiny</u>		
8.	Recommendation Tracker To review progress with recommendations from previous meetings.	<u>Enclosed</u>
9.	Areas of focus 2023/24 To agree the Committees' work programme and review the Forward Plans for Walsall Council and the Black Country Executive Committee.	<u>Enclosed</u>
<u>Overview</u>		
10.	Date of next meeting To note that the date of the next meeting will be 7 December 2023.	

The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

Specified pecuniary interests

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority;</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p>(a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either:</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
 - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
 - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
 - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 26 September 2023, 6:00pm

In Conference Room 2 at the Council House, Walsall

Committee Members present:

Councillor Hicken (Chair)
Councillor Jukes (Vice Chair)
Councillor Garcha
Councillor Harrison
Councillor Nasreen
Councillor Rattigan
Councillor C. Statham
Councillor Whitehouse

Officers present:

Isabelle Vanderheeren	Director, Early Help
Rita Homer	Director, Children’s Social Work
Philip Rutherford	Strategic Lead – Youth Justice
Nikki Gough	Democratic Services Officer

9 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Latham.

10 Substitutions

There were no substitutions.

11 Declarations of interest and party whip

No declarations of interest or party whip were received.

12 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no agenda items requiring the exclusion of the public.

13 Minutes

A copy of the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2023 was submitted.

[Annexed]

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2023, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

14 Youth Justice

The Strategic Lead – Youth Justice introduced the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). The Committee was presented with an overview of the annual youth justice plan to provide information on how youth justice services were provided and funded. It was noted that it was a statutory duty to provide an annual youth justice plan.

Members were advised that the principle aim of the Youth Justice Strategic partnership was to prevent and reduce offending and re-offending behaviour in children and young people and had three main national key performance indicators which were reducing the number of young people entering the justice system for the first time, reducing re-offending, and reducing the use of custodial disposals.

Further to this the youth justice annual plan identified 5 main priorities:

1. Transitions and resettlement.
2. Reducing serious youth violence.
3. Responding to disproportionality.
4. Identifying and responding to unmet need (health).
5. Voice of our children.

Further detail was provided on the disproportionality priority. The Committee was informed that national data and research suggested that compared to white children convicted of an offence, all minority ethnic groups were more likely to be male. They were convicted of offences with a higher-than-average severity, offences were more likely to involve a knife, and their cases were more likely to be heard at Crown Court. Members were advised that in Walsall there was a good understanding of local data and trends informed by a 2-year data review and monthly monitoring. This was in line with national themes.

The Strategic Lead stated that a documentary had been produced on the disproportionality faced by black and mixed heritage boys in the Youth Justice System in Walsall and the solutions that were needed with the aim of addressing the issues around disproportionality, narrowing the equality gap and improving outcomes for children growing up in the Borough.

In response to questions asked by Members of the Committee, Officers confirmed that the Police worked with the Youth Justice Service to address disproportionality issues and recognise such issues. Officers confirmed that this was a whole societal issue as evidenced by the Lammy review – stressing that all organisations had a duty to change. It was confirmed that language barriers had not presented an issue when young people were taken into custody, and translators were used when needed.

The Director (Early Help) stressed that young people were disadvantaged from birth, and throughout the education system. It was therefore important that the equality

gap was addressed to give children the best start in life – this was a partnership issue.

In response to challenge by Members, it was confirmed that a key performance indicator was to ensure that children of school age were achieving academically. The Youth Justice Service had links with the inclusion hub, and the employment and skills team. It was highlighted that when a young person entered the youth justice system opportunities had been missed. Officers stated that youth justice was an integrated team, and once young people were in the youth justice system, they were able to access the right resources and a coordinated plan (which they had to engage with). Officers stated that a partnership with social care was critical to support the whole family.

A discussion ensued in relation to the presence of appropriate adults at police interviews, the Youth Justice Lead stated that where a parent was not available the youth justice service provided an 'appropriate adult' to support the young person. Officers stated that the Police were provided with information in relation to the young person to ensure the needs of children were met. Members challenged how quickly this information was provided, and it was stressed that this should be done as quickly as possible to ensure the best interests of the child were met. Officers stated that children's services were working with the police to ensure that a 'child first' approach was taken, however it was acknowledged that the police focused on the investigation and that the appropriate adult would focus on the needs of the young person.

Resolved that:

- The Committee noted the annual youth justice plan.
- An agenda item on violence (youth justice) be scheduled for a future committee, with an invitation extended to partners.

15 Recommendation Tracker

The Committee received the tracker of recommendations from previous meetings, including progress made and outstanding items.

[Annexed]

Resolved:

That the recommendation tracker be noted.

16 Areas of Focus

Resolved that:

The Committee considered the areas of focus item and agreed that the following items should be added:

- Children with disabilities.
- An update on children's services.

17 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be 2 November 2023

There being no further business this meeting was terminated at 7:15pm.

Signed:

Date:

**Children's Services
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

DATE: 02 NOVEMBER 2023

**CORPORATE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL MONITORING
POSITION FOR 2023/24**

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr S Elson – Children's Services

1. Aim

- 1.1 To provide the budget monitoring position for Period 6 2023/24. The Chair requested that this item be considered by the Committee.

2. Recommendations:

The Committee are requested to:

- 2.1 Note the revenue and capital forecast for the financial year end 2023/24 for the services under the remit of the committee.

3. Report detail - Know

- 3.1 This report summarises the forecast revenue and capital financial position for 2023/24, based on the position to September 2023, for services within the remit of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as reported to Cabinet on 18 October 2023. The full Cabinet report can be accessed by the following link:

[Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24 - Cabinet 18 October 2023](#)

- 3.2 The forecast revenue outturn for 2023/24 for the services under the remit of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is an overspend of £2.45m after the net use of reserves of £3.69m, as shown in **Table 1**. The forecast revenue outturn shown is based on actual information from the financial system as at the end of August 2023, and discussions with managers regarding year end forecast and achievement of approved savings.
- 3.3. For completeness, the forecast revenue overspend for services under the remit of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee is an overspend of £0.83m. This gives a total forecast position of an overspend of £3.28m for Children's Services directorate as of 30 September 2023.

Table 1: Forecast revenue analysis 2023/24 by Service						
Service	Annual Budget	Year End Forecast	Net Use of Reserves	Action Plan	Draft Outturn after use of and transfer to Earmarked Reserves	Variance to Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children's Wide	0.84	0.80	(0.34)	0.00	0.46	(0.38)
Children in Care (CiC), in Care costs	39.04	43.69	(2.56)	0.00	41.13	2.08
Children's Social Care	22.68	23.58	(0.22)	0.00	23.36	0.68
Early Help and Commissioning Services	4.13	4.76	(0.57)	0.00	4.19	0.06
Total Services within remit of Committee	66.69	72.83	(3.69)	0.00	69.14	2.45

Please note the year end forecast above includes mitigating actions of (£0.37m) which have been identified across the Directorate.

3.4 The main variances are summarised in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Reasons for revenue outturn variance		
Service	Variance £m	Explanation of Year End Outturn
Children's Wide	(0.38)	Mitigating actions identified across the Directorate.
Children in Care (CiC) costs	2.08	Overspend linked to ongoing increases in costs of placements for CiC and changes in the mix of CiC, linked to placement sufficiency issues. Further detail is provided in Appendix 1.
Children's Social Care	0.68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £0.10m legal fees £0.20m home to school transport for CiC £0.12m unachievable social worker Recruitment & Retention saving £0.26m additional staffing costs linked to the introduction of Senior Social Worker posts and agency costs within the service.
Early Help and commissioning Services	0.06	Shortfall in traded income across performance and information services, in addition to minor variances across the service.
Total Services within remit of this Committee	2.45	

3.5 Reasons for Movements

The June forecast position reported to Cabinet in July 2023 was an overspend of £1.12m therefore there is a net increase in the overspend of £1.33m over the period. The key reasons for movements are detailed in **Table 3** below:

Table 3: Reasons for movements in variance

Service	Movement £m	Explanation of Movement in Year End Variance
Children's Wide	(0.38)	Identification of directorate action plan
Children and young people in care costs	1.57	A detailed breakdown is provided in Appendix 1.
Children's Social Care	0.14	Unachievable social worker R&R saving due to delays in recruitment and extension of current agency staff and further agency overspends.
Early Help and commissioning Services	0.00	No movement
Total Movements for Services within remit of this Committee	1.33	

3.6 Reserves

The total allocated reserves for 2023/24 for services under the remit of this committee are £5.89m, of which (£3.77m) has been used or committed to date and £0.08m will be transferred to reserves at the year-end, ringfenced for expected spend in 2024/25.

The use of reserves below is predominantly made up of:

- (£0.54m) external funding to support the Family Drugs & Alcohol Court Programme, Safeguarding Families Programme, & Regional Recovery Building Back Better Programme
- (£0.25m) corporate reserve to support the cost of complex cases for Children in Care
- (£0.96m) corporate reserve to support the cost of placement moves and uplifts for Children in Care
- (£1.10m) corporate reserve to support the cost of net inflow/ outflow pressures for Children in Care
- (£0.21m) Safeguarding Board and Youth Justice reserves
- (£0.35m) net use of Supporting Families reserve
- (£0.22m) external funding to support the Family Hubs programme
- (£0.05m) contribution towards Regional Adoption Agency

Table 4 below details the use of and transfer to reserves across the services within the remit of this committee.

Table 4: Summary of use of reserves and transfer to reserves				
Reserve Details	Allocated reserve	Use of reserve	Transfer to reserve	Balance of reserve
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children's Wide	0.58	(0.34)	-	0.24
Children and young people in care costs	3.38	(2.56)	-	0.81
Children's Social Care	1.01	(0.30)	0.08	0.79
Early Help and commissioning services	0.92	(0.57)	-	0.35
Total Reserves	5.89	(3.77)	0.08	2.20

3.7 Risks

For the services under the remit of this committee, there are total risks of **£5.03** which are not included in the above forecast. At this stage the risks are not a certainty and as such are not included in the monitoring position. There are high risks of £2.20m relating to Services within the remit of this committee. If any risks became a certainty, they would need to be included in the forecast position as an overspend, unless alternative action can be identified to mitigate these costs. A summary of the risk assessment is shown in **Table 5** below.

Table 5: Revenue Risks 2023/24				
Risk	Value £m	Ongoing £m	One Off £m	Actions to manage risk
High	2.20	2.20	0	Additional resource in place to support with placement moves and breakdowns. Placement uplifts currently being negotiated regionally.
Medium	2.22	2.00	0.22	Savings reviewed monthly as part of the monitoring process. ICB contributions reviewed monthly with the Lead Commissioner.
Low	0.61	0.61	0	
Total	5.03	4.81	0.22	

The high risks (Red risk) that could negatively impact the current forecast position are detailed in **Table 6** below:

Table 6: High risks		
Service	Reason / explanation of risk	£m
Children and young people in care	£1.1m risk of increased placement moves and step ups over and above current position £0.5m impact of outstanding placement uplift requests £0.5m risk of continued rises in average costs	2.11
Early Help and commissioning services	Increased rates and additional complex cases within the Short Breaks service.	0.10
Total High Risks		2.21

The medium risks include the risk of current ICB contributions towards placement costs reducing at the next review date, and amber savings not being achieved by the end of the financial year.

3.8 Service Transformation Plan Benefits

Included within the budget for 2023/24 for services within the remit of this Committee are £4.02m of approved savings. **Table 7** gives an update on progress towards implementing these benefits:

Table 7: Delivery of 2023/24 approved savings – services within the remit of this Committee					
Saving	Total savings £m	Delivered £m	To be delivered by 31/03/23 £m	Not fully guaranteed £m	At High risk of non-delivery £m
OP6 – Review of current establishment and reduction in the use of agency staff, following recruitment of permanent staff	(0.63)	-	(0.33)	(0.18)	(0.12)
OP43 – Strengthening Families, Protecting Children. This is a cost avoidance scheme for future placement projections which will reduce future growth need.	(0.08)	-	(0.08)	-	-
OP44 – Adolescent service - Turning Point - reduce number of adolescents coming into care	(0.56)	-	(0.56)	-	-
OP45/51 - Further Recruitment & Retention of Internal Foster Carers	(0.63)	(0.07)	(0.24)	(0.32)	-
OP46/52 - Specialist Foster Placements – New Horizons Foster Carer Scheme	(0.39)	-	(0.26)	(0.13)	-
OP47 - Sibling Group Focus – reduce the number of sibling groups entering care	(0.20)	-	-	(0.20)	-
New – Reduce placement disruption and identify opportunities to step down placements	(1.20)	-	(1.20)	-	-
OP49 – Efficiencies from the charging of revenue costs to the Supporting Families grant	(0.33)	(0.33)	-	-	-
Total approved savings for services within remit of Committee	(4.02)	(0.40)	(2.67)	(0.83)	(0.12)

Each benefit is “BRAG” categorised as follows:

- Blue (delivered);
- Green (on track to be delivered with no issues at year end of 2023/24);
- Amber (not guaranteed at this stage but no major issues expected, some management action needed to ensure delivery) or,
- Red - (at high risk of not being achieved either in part or in full and therefore either alternative actions are required or a plan to ensure delivery is put back on track).

3.9 Capital Forecast

The capital programme for the services under the remit of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as at the end of September 2023, is £0.53m. As at September, it was expected that £0.36m will be fully spent within the current financial year and the remaining £0.17m will be carried forward into 2024/25. A list of schemes within the remit of this committee is shown in **Table 8**.

Table 8: Capital Outturn 2023/24 – Services within the remit of this Committee						
Scheme	Approved Budget £m	Actual year to date £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Year End Variance £m	Proposed Carry Forward to 2024/25 £m	Variance Over / (Under) £m
Council Funded schemes						
Redesign of Children's Homes	0.13	0.03	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00
Refurbishment of homes to support Foster Carers	0.32	0.11	0.17	(0.15)	(0.15)	0.00
Family Hubs and Start of Life	0.08	0.00	0.06	(0.02)	(0.02)	0.00
Total Council Funded Schemes	0.53	0.14	0.36	(0.17)	(0.17)	0.00
Total Capital – Services within the remit of this Committee	0.53	0.14	0.36	(0.17)	(0.17)	0.00

Children in Care (CiC) Financial Monitoring Position for Q2 as at September 2023

Overview

Local Authorities in England have a statutory responsibility for protecting the welfare of Children and delivering Children's Social Care. In more serious situations Local Authorities may use their statutory powers to place children and young people in need on child protection plans or even take them into the care of the Local Authority.

Walsall's Social Care demand led pressures are in-line with the national picture and, although costs continue to increase, extensive work has been undertaken to effectively manage demand.

On-going placement sufficiency issues continues to be the biggest challenge for the service, which has been further compromised by changes in legislation. In September 2021, new legislation was introduced stating that no child under the age of 16 should reside in a placement that is not Ofsted registered. This has resulted in several unregulated/unregistered placement providers exiting the market, which has subsequently reduced supply, heightened demand and the related costs. This has been compounded by a lack of sufficiency of foster placements locally and nationally.

In addition to this, there has been further cost pressures throughout 2023/24 mainly caused by a larger portion of adolescents entering care with complex needs and vulnerabilities including exploitation, mental health difficulties and emotional dysregulation, some of who required Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. There are mitigations in place that include Walsall expanding the internal residential provision and the development of an offer for adolescents with complex needs. A cohort of large sibling groups also entered care in this period attributing the increased cost of placement. Overall, the number of children in care has reduced following the implantation of the family safeguarding model. The principles of the model have been applied to offers that support children to remain within families or seek to stabilise children through the provision of multi-agency coordinated support that aims to stabilise children and avoid placement moves that inevitably increase placement cost.

Children in Care of the Local Authority

It should be noted that the forecast position reported in year is calculated based on the number and mix of children and young people (C&YP) at a point in time and is adjusted for anticipated placement moves and inflow/ outflow for the remainder of the financial year.

Due to the on-going pressures described above, there was approved additional investment of £11.07m included in the budget for the financial year 2023/24, with savings of £1.86m identified during the financial year and a further £1.20m of unachieved savings carried forward from 22/23. During May, an additional £2.4m of investment was received to support with placement moves (£2m) and external residential framework provider uplifts (£400k).

As at quarter 2, the total forecast for current placement and support costs for 2023/24 is **£41.12m**. This forecast is based on the current mix of children in care and the projected future demand for the remainder of the financial year. The current budget is **£39.04m**,

therefore there is a forecasted overspend of **£2.08m**. The overspend is made up of the following:

- **£0.31m** full year impact for the increased demand over and above budget for the multiple sibling groups who entered care during January/ February.
- **£0.68m** increased demand for Remand placements and inflation (£149k offset by £59k reserve for inflationary pressures and additional remand grant allocation of £96k), with a further pressure of £685k following an extraordinary intake in January/ February of 7 YP.
- **£0.89m** pressure relating to placement moves expected during 23/24 offset by corporate reserves of **(£0.89m)**.
- **£1.70m** increased reliance on IFA, external residential, and mother and baby placements for those C&YP entering care up to Period 6, with an increasing number of sibling groups, in comparison to budget and to the prior three-year trends. See prior year trends below.
- **£1.10m** pressure if the net inflow/ outflow trends seen to date continues for the remainder of the financial year. This has been offset by corporate reserves of **(£1.10m)**.
- **(£0.31m)** additional UASC income through the increased number of hotel transfer and national transfer scheme claims, in addition to the use of lower cost placements such as supported accommodation.
- **(£0.32m)** underspend within internal residential, primarily due to vacancies, as the two new homes are not set to open until part way through the financial year.
- **£0.02m** minimal movements, primarily relating to care leaver payments.

To note, the forecast position for Period 6 now assumes the increased net inflow/ outflow seen to date within Children's Social Care Demand will continue over the remainder of the financial year. This pressure, which totals **£1.10m**, has been fully offset by centrally held corporate reserves. These reserves were previously held to offset the impact of placement moves. However, the pressure has not materialised as expected and as the position has remained static during the financial year, the reserve has been realigned to offset this emerging pressure.

Movement from June 2023

The forecasted outturn position for October 2023 has increased by **£1.57m** since June 2023. The main reasons for this movement are:

- **£0.04m** increase in remand pressures primarily due to the postponement of court dates for multiple young people due to the complexity of the case at £131k, which has been partially offset by an increase in the remand grant of (£96k).
- **£0.03m** increase in the placement move pressure, offset by (£34k) centrally held corporate reserve.
- **£1.32m** due to the increased net inflow/ outflow of C&YP entering care since P3, over and above budget. This is primarily due to an increased reliance on IFA's, External Residential and Mother & Baby placements, in addition to an increasing number of sibling groups entering care.
- **£1.10m** forecasted continuation of the increased net inflow/ outflow trends seen to date for the remainder of the financial year. This pressure has been offset by centrally held corporate reserves of **(£1.10m)**.

- **£0.18m** linked to other demand led pressures including care leaver payments, section 17 accommodation, and placement price increases linked to complex cases.

As part of the Proud Transformation Programme £1.86m of benefits have been identified during the financial year, with a further £1.20m of unachieved savings carried forward from 22/23, which specifically relate to Children in Care. £2.41m of which have been or are expected to be achieved by March 2024. There is a risk that the remaining £0.65m may not be fully delivered in this financial year. Extensive work is underway in the service to prevent further pressures on the financial position and support the full delivery of all identified benefits.

Children's Social Care Demand trends as at Quarter 2 2023/24.

Table 1 – Total number of Children in Care (CiC)

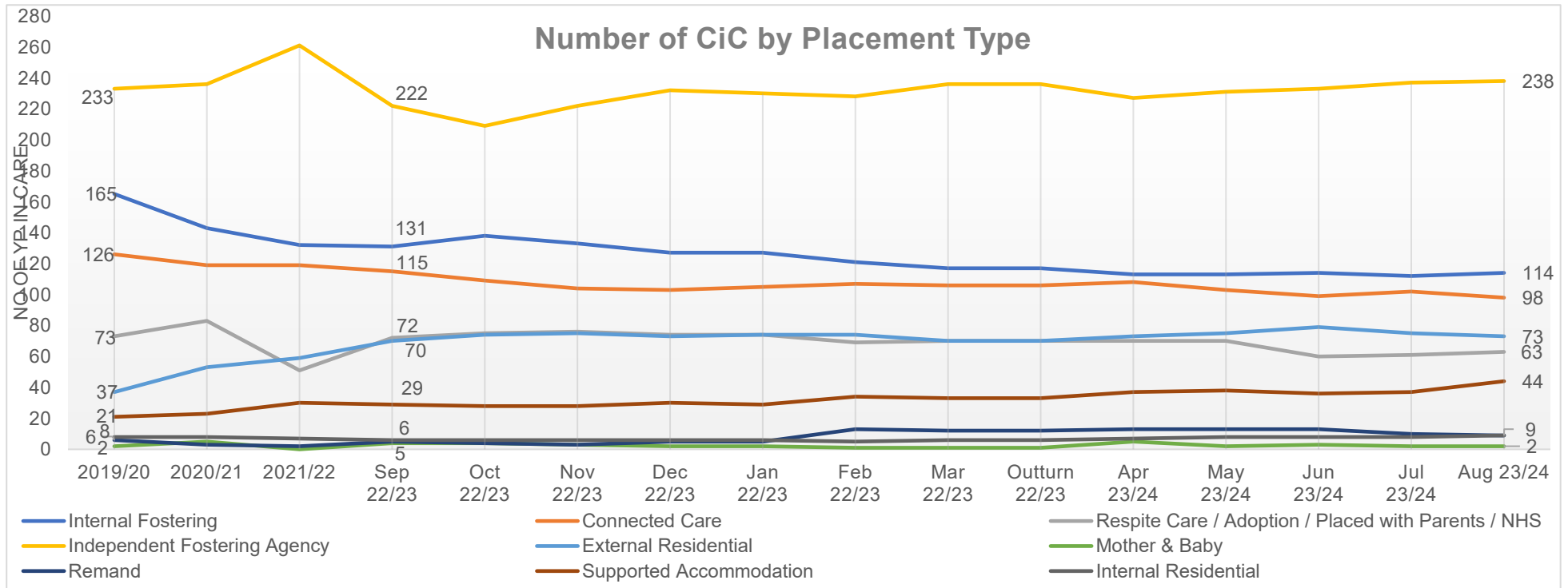
Year	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	Sep 22/23	Oct 22/23	Nov 22/23	Dec 22/23	Jan 22/23	Feb 22/23	Mar 22/23	Apr 23/24	May 23/24	Jun 23/24	Jul 23/24	Aug 23/24
Total CiC	671	673	661	654	647	650	652	652	652	651	653	653	645	644	650

Since the service transformation plans were introduced in 2020/21 the number of CiC has reduced from 671 in March 2020 to 650 in August 2023/24. However, despite the overall number of CiC and net inflow/outflow of children and young people (C&YP) in Walsall decreasing and beginning to stabilise, the overall costs relating to children in care have increased.

The introduction of new legislation for non-Ofsted registered placements; a rising number of large sibling groups; an increasing number of complex children; together with a higher proportion of children in care over the age of 15 are all factors which have contributed to the increased demand within the market and continuing placement sufficiency pressures.

Table 2 – Number of CiC by Placement Type

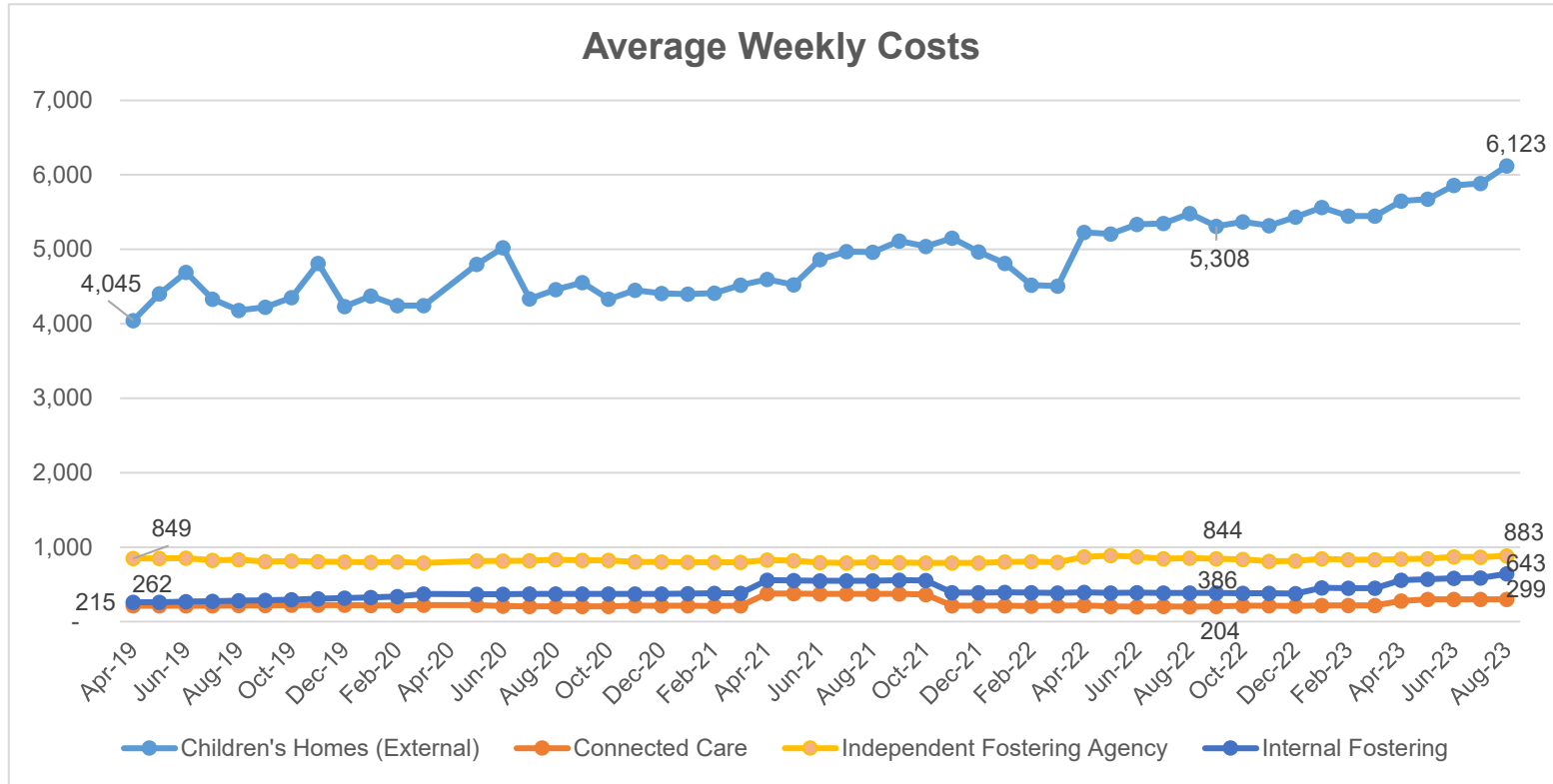
The graph below shows how although the number of CiC has decreased, the reliance on higher cost placements such as IFA's and External Residential has increased over the 12 month and 4-year period, with the number of IFA placements increasing from 222 in September 22 to 238 in August 23 and number of External Residential increasing from 70 to 73. In comparison reliance on lower cost placements has reduced, with the number of Internal Fostering placements decreasing from 131 to 114 and number of Connected Carer placements reducing from 115 to 98.



This increased reliance on these placement types is also seen within the net inflow/ outflow figures for this financial year, see the chart below for further information.

Table 3 – Average weekly cost of the four most utilised placement types for Walsall’s CiC

As per the chart below, the average weekly cost for an external residential placement has significantly increased from £4k to £6.1k (51%) over the last 4 financial years, and from £5.3k 12 months ago. This is significantly higher than the average weekly cost of an Internal Fostering placement of £643 p/w and Connected Care placement of £299 p/w.



In recognition of the financial impacts above, the service has focussed on stepping C&YP down to lower cost placements where possible. To date there has been 59 placement step downs with further step downs planned for the remainder of the financial year. These cost reductions have reduced the impact of the placement breakdowns and step ups seen to date, which have been financially heightened due to the placement sufficiency issues described above.

**Children's Services
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

2 NOVEMBER 2023

Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr S Elson – Children's

Executive Summary:

The draft budget, as reported to Cabinet on 18 October 2023, includes the latest medium term financial outlook (MTFO) for the four-year period from 2024/25 to 2027/28. It also outlines the draft revenue budget for 2024/25 to 2027/28 (including savings proposals identified to date for consultation), the draft capital programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28, and sets out the process and timescale for setting a legally balanced budget for 2024/25.

Our MTFO has been updated for all known pressures, including best professional assumptions around the cost-of-living impact, and that on rising demand on our services. Due to the size and breadth of cost pressures, this has had a significant impact on the assumptions in relation to the 2024/25 budget, with additional growth now required of c£57.69m, resulting in a budget gap of c£18.06m.

The Council is legally obliged to set a one-year balanced budget (2024/25), however a medium-term approach is beneficial to allow for sound financial planning and to support future financial stability. The proposals set out in this report do not yet balance the budget for 2024/25, so there will be a requirement to report back on changes and options to close the gap at the next meeting of Cabinet on 13 December 2023. All draft proposals are subject to changes arising from the Autumn Statement due on 22 November 2023, and a provisional settlement yet to be received (anticipated mid December). A number of savings proposals are also included for 2025/26 to 2027/28, with further options being identified to allow for a balanced budget over the period 2025/26 to 2027/28 aligned to the Council Plan and Proud activity.

The 2024/25 draft budget assumes a 2.99% general council tax increase and a further 2% precept for Adult Social Care in line with current referendum assumptions, with a 1.99% per annum increase thereafter. This is expected to be confirmed when we receive our draft 2024/25 settlement in December 2023.

The draft capital programme for 2024/25 totals £132.08m. It sets out capital investment funded from the council's own resources of £75.23m (funded by capital receipts and borrowing) and externally funded schemes of £56.85m (funded by capital grants) and represents a balanced programme for 2024/25. In addition, the report sets out a further three years of indicative proposals to 2027/28. Despite reductions in capital funding in recent years and going forward, the draft capital programme contains significant investment into regeneration initiatives, highways, education, and into adult and children's social care and housing to support vulnerable households through Health through Warmth and provision of aids and adaptations.

This report provides an extract of the Proud draft revenue savings proposals and investments / cost pressures for 2024/25 – 2027/28 by Proud Outcomes identified to date, which fall within the remit of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration. It also provides a summary of the draft capital programme for schemes within the remit of this Committee.

Feedback from the Committee on the draft revenue and capital proposals to date will be reported back to Cabinet on 13 December 2023 for consideration.

The revenue proposals set out in the report to Cabinet on 18 October 2023 do not yet balance the budget for 2024/25, so there will be a requirement to report back on changes and options to close the remaining c£18m gap at the next meeting of Cabinet on 13 December 2023, and subsequent report to this committee should any changes relate to services within the remit of this committee.

The final draft budget will be considered by Cabinet on 7 February 2024 for recommendation to Council on 22 February 2024. Any changes to draft revenue and capital budget proposals as a result of equality impact assessments and consultation will also be fed into the final budget report.

Reason for scrutiny:

To enable consultation of the draft revenue and capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee.

Recommendations:

That:

1. The Committee are recommended to consider the draft revenue budget proposals to date as attached that relate to the remit of this committee as shown in **Appendices 1 and 2**, and that feedback will be presented to Cabinet on 13 December 2023.
2. The Committee note that the revenue budget for 2024/25 is currently not balanced, with a gap of c£18m, and therefore a further report may be required to this committee if any changes to draft proposals outlined relate to services within the committee's remit.
3. The Committee are recommended to consider the draft capital schemes included in the draft capital programme attached that relate to the remit of this committee as shown in **Appendices 3 and 4**, and that feedback will be presented to Cabinet on 13 December 2023.

Background papers:

Various financial working papers.

Resource and legal considerations:

Cabinet on 18 October 2023 were presented with a list of draft Proud revenue savings proposals for consultation and a list of investment/cost pressures by Proud outcome, along with a draft capital programme over the period 2024/25 to 2027/28.

The full Cabinet report can be accessed at the following link:

[Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Cabinet 18 October 2023](#)

Maximising Outcomes through Budgeting 2024/25 onwards

Our approach to budget setting was established in 2020 with overall financial savings expected to be delivered via Proud activity. For 2024/25 Proud work streams will continue to provide the 'enablers' to allow Directorates to deliver through Service Transformation Plans (STP's).

Directors reviewed their STP's to identify how individual services can be transformed to generate further efficiencies, along with any short-term investment requirements to enable this to progress, linking their current and future service delivery with Council priority outcomes as per the Council Plan. This allows for identification of potential transformation activity and associated savings for future financial years. Those identified to date are outlined within the draft budget report to Cabinet on 18 October 2023, with further work in train to identify further opportunities to close the financial gap for 2024/25 and future years.

The Council Plan direction of travel approach sets out how the budget will be aligned to deliver the desired outcome i.e., through different amounts of delivery, coordination, influencing, signposting, or regulating. A review of the current delivery model will be undertaken alongside the direction of travel and re-prioritised where appropriate to maximise value for money and overall delivery of outcomes and ensuring the 2024/25 onwards budget is built and developed on this moving forward.

Investment / cost pressures

Further to the changes in assumptions, the draft budget 2024/25 – 2027/28 includes provision for growth and investment of c£133m (£57.69m of this is in 2024/25). Those investments relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 1** and total £29.81m over 4 years.

Savings proposals

The Proud service transformation plans have identified £13.58m of financial benefit for 2024/25 (including the review of the £8.10m identified in the budget report to Council in February 2023). There is also £9.37m identified for 2025/26, £7.91m for 2026/27 and £6.72m for 2027/28. Benefits / savings are classified into two categories:

1. Policy Proposals - which require an Executive decision to proceed, and which will be referred for public consultation and equality impact assessment. These total £333k in 2024/25 (£453k over the four years to 2027/28).
2. Operational Proposals – savings which officers have delegations to implement; examples include restructures, back-office savings, operational efficiencies. These total £13.25m in 2024/25 (£37.12m over the four years to 2027/28).

Some proposals require investment to support delivery. Such investment will only be allocated if the relevant saving proposal is included within Cabinet's final budget report in February, once consultation and equality impact assessment has concluded.

Savings proposals outlined in the report to Cabinet on 18 October 2023 will assist in closing the gap over the four years to 2027/28. A gap of £18.06m remains after the delivery of the £13.58m saving identified for 2024/25, with a further £14.24m saving requirement for 2025/26, £8.57m for 2026/27 and £9.36m for 2027/28. Through budget week and beyond, a number of themes were identified for prioritisation to take forward to support the 2024/25 position and also form the foundations of the medium-term financial strategy, building on the work of the Proud programme. Directors continue to work on identifying additional options for Members consideration, and further reports will be presented to Cabinet outlining further options to balance the budget for 2024/25 onwards. A work stream review of the STP's is taking place to ensure that they maximise opportunities from the Proud ways of working and capabilities, and therefore capture the full benefits; to ensure they capture innovative thinking; and to challenge any opportunities to accelerate identified savings.

Those savings proposals relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 2** and total £17.18m over 4 years.

Net investment / savings

The following summarises the net investment /(savings) by Directorate for 2024/25.

Net Investment/savings by Directorate 2024/25	Investment £m	Savings £m	Net £m
Adult Social Care, Public Health and Hub	28.61	(4.59)	24.02
Children's Services	14.09	(4.14)	9.95
Children's - Customer Engagement	1.30	(0.43)	0.87
Economy, Environment and Communities	3.73	(3.06)	0.68
Resources and Transformation	0.86	(1.35)	(0.49)
Central / Capital Financing*	9.09	0.00	9.09
Total Net Investments by Directorate	57.69	(13.58)	44.11

*Central investment includes £8.09m of pay and pension costs which will be allocated to services following a detailed review of salary budget requirements.

Therefore, when central investments are taken into account, all Directorates will see a net increase in budgets.

Draft Capital Programme

The draft capital programme for 2024/25 is balanced and totals £132.08m. It sets out new capital investment funded from the council's own resources of £75.23m (funded by capital receipts and borrowing) and externally funded schemes of £56.85m (funded by capital grants). In addition, the report sets out a further three years of indicative proposals to 2027/28.

Those council funded schemes relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 3** totalling £150k over 4 years, and external funded schemes of £64k at **Appendix 4**.

Contact Officers:

Colleen Male – Executive Director, Children's and Customer, ☎01922 652081,

✉ colleen.male@walsall.gov.uk

Vicky Buckley – Head of Finance and Assurance, ☎ 07983 604698,

✉ Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk

Ross Hutchinson – Head of Finance (Finance Business Partnering & ESS projects),

☎ 07415 308513, ✉ Ross.Hutchinson@walsall.gov.uk

Summary of New Growth and Investment 2024/25 to 2027/28 aligned to Proud Outcomes relating to the remit of this Committee.

Directorate	Ref No	Details of Growth by outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Children and young people grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	65	Additional children in care demand / cost pressures	4,212,446	1,338,826	1,493,561	2,106,315	9,151,148
	66	Foster care / Special Guardianship Order / staying put allowances and proposed change to current fostering fees (linked to saving OP57/60)	714,500	191,800	197,000	84,000	1,187,300
	67	Increase in social workers pay (full year impact of 2022/23 investment)	12,000	0	0	0	12,000
	68	Removal of saving OP59 due to legislation changes - Development of locality partnership offer in Early Help.	888,396	0	0	0	888,396
	69	Young Carers Service	24,058	17,184	0	0	41,242
	70	Ongoing costs for wrap around support (linked to saving OP64)	350,000	0	0	0	350,000
	71	Legal Fees	100,000	0	0	0	100,000
	72	Transport Costs for social care	200,000	0	0	0	200,000
	73	Additional Head of Service post (linked to saving OP64)	110,948	0	0	0	110,948
	74	Additional Children and Family Officer posts in Corporate Parenting (linked to saving OP62)	121,173	0	0	0	121,173
	75	Recruitment and Retention Pressures	271,948	0	0	0	271,948
	76	Placement costs - Inflationary increases for external framework placements	4,706,576	3,671,661	3,929,714	4,008,308	16,316,259
	77	Increase birthday/ festive payments to Department for Education guidance for Special Guardianship Orders, fostering, connected care	31,000	0	0	0	31,000
	78	Kinship carers - remove allowance age cap, pay all carers birthday, holiday, and festive allowances, and remove means testing	294,335	0	0	0	294,335
	79	Revenue costs for new internal residential home (linked to saving OP63)	0	671,859	0	0	671,859
80	Supported accommodation legislation post - fully funded from grant	37,355	0	0	0	37,355	
81	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) post - fully funded from grant	21,000	0	0	0	21,000	
Total Children and young people grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere			12,095,735	5,891,330	5,620,275	6,198,623	29,805,963
Total Growth and investment relating to the remit of this Committee			12,095,735	5,891,330	5,620,275	6,198,623	29,805,963

Benefits Realisation (Savings) for Proud activity by Outcome 2024/25 to 2027/28 relating to the remit of this Committee.

A: Summary of Policy Proposals by Outcome 2024/25 – 2027/28

None relating to the remit of this Committee.

B: Summary of Operational Proposals by Outcome 2024/25 – 2027/28

Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Operational Proposals by Outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Children and young people grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	OP57	Further Recruitment and Retention of internal Foster Carers - linked to investment 66	(600,000)	(600,000)	(600,000)	0	(1,800,000)
	OP58	Specialist Foster Placements	(244,000)	(244,000)	(244,000)	0	(732,000)
	OP59	Restructure of 'change grow live' following contract bought in house. Investment 68 identified to remove.	(888,396)	0	0	0	(888,396)
	OP60	Further recruitment and retention of internal foster carers into 2027/28 - linked to investment 66	0	0	0	(133,905)	(133,905)
	OP61	Full year impact of new internal residential homes	(467,400)	0	0	0	(467,400)
	OP62	Extend the Family Safeguarding programme into Corporate Parenting - linked to investment 74	(859,866)	(1,618,823)	(1,618,823)	(1,618,823)	(5,716,335)
	OP63	Placement sufficiency – opportunity to open further residential homes from 2025/26 - £600k capital investment in pipeline to support this - linked to investment 79	0	(678,054)	(339,027)	0	(1,017,081)
	OP64	Continued focus on placement step downs - linked to investment 70/73	(514,984)	(439,174)	0	0	(954,158)
	OP65	Adolescent Service - Early Help	(715,238)	(1,724,981)	(1,724,981)	(1,724,981)	(5,890,181)
Adolescent Service - Early Help (Linked investment)		402,657	19,620	TBC	TBC	422,277	
Total Children and young people grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere			(3,887,227)	(5,285,412)	(4,526,831)	(3,477,709)	(17,177,179)
Total Operational Proposals relating to the remit of this committee			(3,887,227)	(5,285,412)	(4,526,831)	(3,477,709)	(17,177,179)

APPENDIX 3

Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 – Council Funded Schemes relating to the remit of this Committee.

Development investment

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Children and young people grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	Children in care Foster Care refurbishment programme	This funding is provided to enable foster carers and special guardians for children in care by Walsall to enlarge their homes or in some circumstances, to obtain an alternative larger home.	150,000	0	0	0	150,000
	Total Children and young people grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere		150,000	0	0	0	150,000
Total Development Investment			150,000	0	0	0	150,000
Total Draft Capital Programme – Council Funded Schemes within the remit of this Committee			150,000	0	0	0	150,000

APPENDIX 4

Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 – External Funded Schemes relating to the remit of this Committee.

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Children and young people grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere							
Children, Education & Customer Engagement	Family hubs and Start for Life programme,	To support the implementation of the Family Hub and Start for Life Programme which is aimed at providing families with the integrated support they need to care for their children from conception, throughout early years and into the start of adulthood. The capital element of the grant will be used to purchase / improve current data records management systems linked to documenting outcomes of the programme initially and then may be required to purchase equipment needed to support the programme ongoing. Funding from Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care	64,250	0	0	0	64,250
Total Children and young people grow up in connected communities and feel safe everywhere			64,250	0	0		64,250
Total Draft Capital Programme – External Funded Schemes within the remit of this Committee			64,250	0	0		64,250

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Recommendation Tracker 2023/24

Committee Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action/Recommendation	Officer responsible	Status	Target Completion Date	Notes
27 June 2023	Areas of Focus	A work programme for the municipal year be produced and be circulated to members of the Committee.	Clerk	Complete	28th September 2023	A work programme for the municipal year be produced and be agreed by the Committee at the next meeting.
26 September 2023	Youth Justice	An agenda item on violence (youth justice) be scheduled for a future committee, with an invitation extended to partners	Phil Rutherford	In progress	April 2024	Scheduled for 11 March 2023.
26 th September 2023	Ares of Focus	The following items be added to the Committee work programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with disabilities. • An update on children's services 	Clerk	In progress	Aprill 2024	Added to the areas of focus.

Children's Services OSC Areas of Focus 2023/24

Committee date	26 September	2 November	7 December	29 January	11 March	16 April
Report Deadline	15 September	24 October	28 November	18 January	29 February	5 April
Budget setting process		X				
Q2 financial monitoring		X				
Family/Locality Hubs			X			
Early Help Strategy			X			
Social Worker recruitment and retention				X		
Private Fostering				X		
Youth Justice priorities and disproportionately	X					
Youth Justice Partnership – reduction of Youth violence (partnership invite)					X	
Children at Risk Exploitation						X
Safeguarding Annual Report 2022/23			X			
Intra familial abuse strategy						X
Young Carers				X		
Children with disabilities					x	



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

**Council House,
Lichfield Street,
Walsall, WS1 1TW**
www.walsall.gov.uk

2 OCTOBER 2023

FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan sets out decisions that are termed as “key decisions” at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken by the Executive (Cabinet). Also included on the plan are other decisions to be taken by the Cabinet (“non-key decisions”). Preparation of the forward plan helps the Council to programme its work. The purpose of the forward plan is to give plenty of notice and an opportunity for consultation on the issues to be discussed. The plan is updated each month with the period of the plan being rolled forward by one month and republished. Copies of the plan can be obtained from Democratic Services, Walsall MBC, Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk and can also be accessed from the Council’s website at www.walsall.gov.uk. The Cabinet is allowed to make urgent decisions which do not appear in the forward plan, however, a notice will be included on the agenda for the relevant Cabinet meeting which explains the reasons why.

Please note that the decision dates are indicative and are subject to change. Please contact the above addressee if you wish to check the date for a particular item.

The Cabinet agenda and reports are available for inspection by the public 7 days prior to the meeting of the Cabinet on the Council’s website. Background papers are listed on each report submitted to the Cabinet and members of the public are entitled to see these documents unless they are confidential. The report also contains the name and telephone number of a contact officer. These details can also be found in the forward plan.

Meetings of the Cabinet are open to the public. Occasionally there are items included on the agenda which are confidential and for those items the public will be asked to leave the meeting. The forward plan will show where this is intended and the reason why the reports are confidential. Enquiries regarding these reasons should be directed to Democratic Services (craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk).

“Key decisions” are those decisions which have a significant effect within the community or which involve considerable expenditure or savings. With regard to key decisions the Council’s Constitution states:

- (1) A key decision is:
 - (i) any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates or
 - (ii) any decision that is likely to have significant impact on two or more wards within the borough.
- (2) The threshold for “significant” expenditure/savings is £500,000.
- (3) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
NOVEMBER 2023 TO FEBRUARY 2024 (02.10.2023)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside the Council)	Decision maker	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Contact Member (All Members can be written to at Civic Centre, Walsall)	Date item to be considered
26/23 (5.6.23)	<p>Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>To provide an updated medium term financial outlook, draft revenue budget and capital programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28, including savings proposals, and to set out the process and timescales for setting a legally balanced budget for 2024/25.</p>	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Rate payers, voluntary and community organisations, Internal Services	Cllr Bird	18 October 2023
32/23 (3.7.23)	<p>Council Plan 2022/25 – Q1 23/24</p> <p>To note the Quarter 1 2023/24 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25</p>	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Elizabeth Connolly Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	18 October 2023
27/23 (5.6.23)	<p>Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24</p> <p>To report the financial position based on 6 months to September 2023.</p>	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	18 October 2023

48/23 (2.10.23)	Armed Forces Covenant To approve the new Walsall Armed Forces Covenant.	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Katie Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	18 October 2023
40/23 (4.9.23)	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) To seek approval for the adoption and publication of guidance on BNG, the publication of the Black Country Local Nature Recovery Map and Strategy, and its use as a working document	Cabinet Key Decision	The Black Country Local Nature Recovery Map and Strategy Sammy Pritchard Sammy.Pritchard@walsall.gov.uk David Holloway David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	18 October 2023
41/23 (4.9.23)	Willenhall Framework Plan: Phase 1 Developer Partner Procurement Outcome and Award To provide an update on the outcome of the developer partner procurement <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Kauser Agha Kauser.Agha@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services, Legal (external)	Cllr Andrew	18 October 2023
42/23 (4.9.23)	Sale of the Former Allens Centre, Hilton Road, Willenhall To seek approval for the sale of the former Allens Centre in Willenhall. <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Nick Ford Nick.Ford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	18 October 2023

43/23 (4.9.23)	Integrated sexual and reproductive health services and the Healthy Child Programme 0-19 Section 75 Agreement Extensions To seek approval for the extension of the Section 75 agreement for the delivery of integrated sexual and reproductive health services and the Healthy Child Programme 0-19.	Cabinet Key Decision	Esther Higdon Esther.Higdon@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services Walsall Healthcare Trust	Cllr Flint	18 October 2023
33/23 (3.7.23)	Winter Service Operational Plan 2023- 2028 To approve the winter service operational plan.	Cabinet Key Decision	Paul Leighton Paul.Leighton@walsall.gov.uk Graham Wallis Graham.Wallis@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Murphy	18 October 2023
44/23 (4.9.23)	Street Lighting Post-PFI Arrangements To approve the service delivery model for the street lighting service from April 2028.	Cabinet Key Decision	Katie Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Murphy	18 October 2023
45/23 (4.9.23)	Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2023/24 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) requires all local authorities to prepare an annual service delivery plan to reflect the work required of food authorities by the FSA, under the requirements of the Food Standards Act 1999 and the framework agreement on local authority	Cabinet Council Non-key Decision	Paul Rooney Paul.Rooney@walsall.gov.uk Page 35 of 46	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	Cabinet 18 October 2023 Council 6 November 2023

	Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the draft revenue and capital budget.					
38/23 (7.8.23)	<p>Treasury Management Mid Year Position Statement 2023/24</p> <p>To note and forward to Council, for consideration and noting (and in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2017), the mid year report for treasury management activities 2023/24 including prudential and local indicators.</p>	Council Non-key Decision	<p>Treasury Management Code of Practice.</p> <p>Richard Walley</p> <p>Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal services	Cllr Ferguson	13 December 2023
49/23 (2.10.23)	<p>Technology Strategy 2023/24 – 2027/28</p> <p>To approve the Technology Strategy, which outlines the Council's approach to investing in and implementing technology, which will support the delivery of the Council Plan and enable transformation change</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	<p>Sharon Worrall</p> <p>Sharon.worrall@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal services	Cllr Ferguson	13 December 2023
39/23 (7.8.23)	<p>Strategic Leisure Review</p> <p>To update on the performance and impact of the four leisure facilities. To approve recommendations around the current and future facility stock.</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	<p>Stuart Webb</p> <p>Stuart.Webb@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal services	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023
36/23 (7.8.23)	<p>Healthy Eating for Children and Young People Programme</p> <p>To seek approval to procure a new healthy eating and weight management</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	<p>Esther Higdon</p> <p>Esther.Higdon@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal Services Walsall Healthcare Trust	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023

	programme for children and young people in Walsall.					
14/23 (6.2.23)	Growth Funding for Schools: To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to secure sufficient primary and secondary school places, through the adoption of a policy for the application of revenue funding for school growth.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services, Schools Forum	Cllr M. Statham	13 December 2023
50/23 (2.10.23)	Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24: To report the financial position based on 9 months to December 2023.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Corporate Management Team and Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024
51/23 (2.10.23)	Corporate Budget Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28, incorporating the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and investment Strategy 2024/25: To recommend the final budget and council tax for approval by Council.	Cabinet Council Key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations, Corporate Management Team and Internal Services	Cllr Bird	Cabinet 7 February 2024 Council 22 February 2024
52/23 (2.10.23)	Council Plan 2022/25 – Q2 23/24: To note the Quarter 2 2023/24 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Elizabeth Connolly elizabeth.connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024

<p>54/23 (2.10.23)</p>	<p>Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2023 - 2026</p> <p>To approve an interim commissioning strategy.</p>	<p>Cabinet Key Decision</p>	<p>Nigel Imber – Nigel.Imber@Walsall.Gov.uk</p> <p>Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund 2023 to 2024 - Capacity Plan</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>Walsall Wellbeing outcomes framework</p>	<p>Internal consultees</p> <p>Local and regional partners</p>	<p>Cllr Pedley</p>	<p>7 February 2024</p>
<p>53/23 (2.10.23)</p>	<p>Determination of the Scheme for coordinated admissions, and the Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for the 2025/26 academic year:</p> <p>To determine the scheme of admissions and admission arrangements for community and voluntary-controlled primary schools for 2025-26.</p>	<p>Cabinet Key Decision</p>	<p>Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk</p>	<p>Internal consultees</p> <p>Public</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Faith Groups</p>	<p>Cllr M. Statham</p>	<p>7 February 2024</p>

Black Country Executive Joint Committee
Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Published up to February 2024

Date Created	Key Decision	Contact Officer	Main consultee	Date of meeting
	Black Country Executive Joint Committee Governance			
04/09/2023	<p>Change Control and Delegated Authority</p> <p>Approval of BCJC Delegated Authority to the Single Accountable Body Section 151 Officer (SAB s151 officer) and approval of the revised Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP) Assurance Framework Change Control and Delegated Authority delegations, as detailed in the attachment of the report (BCLEP Assurance Framework Appendix 23).</p>	<p>David Moore david.moore@walsall.gov.uk</p> <p>Mark Lavender mark.lavender@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Walsall Council	01/11/2023



West Midlands Combined Authority

Forward Plan

Forthcoming key decisions

Title of key decision:	Decision to be taken by and date:	Open or Exempt:	Portfolio Lead	Employee to contact:
Regional Activity & Delivery Update To provide an update on recent activity of the WMCA.	WMCA Board 13 October 2023	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Laura Shoaf Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority
Deeper Devolution Deal To formally ratify the 'trailblazer' deeper devolution deal between the WMCA and HM Government.	WMCA Board 13 October 2023	Open	Councillor Sharon Thompson Levelling Up Portfolio Lead	Ed Cox Executive Director of Strategy, Integration & Net Zero
New Stations Package 1 Project Update To provide an update on the impact on the West Midlands Rail Programme (New Stations Package 1 Project), following Buckingham Group Contracting Ltd being placed into administration.	WMCA Board 13 October 2023	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Liz Baker Strategic Sponsor
Regional Activity & Delivery Update To provide an update on recent activity of the WMCA.	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Laura Shoaf Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority
Financial Monitoring Report To provide a summary of the WMCA's financial position as at 30 September 2023.	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Bob Sleight Finance Portfolio Lead	Beverly Sullivan Financial Planning and Coordination Manager

<p>Single Assurance Framework Update To agree the updated Single Assurance Framework.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Deputy Mayor	Joti Sharma Corporate Assurance Manager
<p>Single Settlement To provide an update on the latest developments regarding the single settlement arrangements.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Finance Portfolio Lead	Jonathan Gibson Head of Policy & Public Affairs
<p>Investment Zone Governance To consider governance arrangements supporting the region's Investment Zones proposals.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Stephen Simkins Economy & Innovation Portfolio Lead	Jonathan Gibson Head of Policy & Public Affairs
<p>Investment Zones Funding and Finance Plan To consider the funding and finance plan relating to the region's Investment Zones proposals.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Stephen Simkins Economy & Innovation Portfolio Lead	Jonathan Gibson Head of Policy & Public Affairs
<p>Air Quality Framework To approve the draft framework that reviews all of the measures possible to accelerate improvements to regional air quality, following public consultation and consideration by the Environment & Energy Board.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor John Cotton Environment, Energy & HS2 Portfolio Lead	Jacqueline Homan Head of Environment
<p>Homelessness Taskforce Update on the work of the Homelessness Taskforce</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Kerrie Carmichael Inclusive Communities Portfolio Lead	Claire Dhami Head of Systems Change and Inclusion
<p>WMCA's Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Progress Update To provide a quarterly summary of the activity of work of the WMCA's overview and scrutiny function, as required by the Deeper Devolution Deal.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open		Lyndsey Roberts Scrutiny Officer

<p>Bus Franchising Update To provide a further update on work to support the consideration of any future bus franchising decision.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 12 January 2024</p>	<p>Part exempt</p>	<p>Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Pete Bond Director of Integrated Transport Services</p>
<p>WMCA's Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Progress Update To provide a quarterly summary of the activity of work of the WMCA's overview and scrutiny function, as required by the Deeper Devolution Deal.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 15 March 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>		<p>Lyndsey Roberts Scrutiny Officer</p>

The Forward Plan

This document sets out known 'key decisions' that will be taken by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) over the coming months.

Forthcoming key decisions are published online to meet the statutory 28 day notification rule for each meeting where a key decision will be taken. Where it has not been possible to meet the 28 day rule for publication of notice of a key decision or an intention to meet in private, the relevant notices will be published as required by legislation as soon as possible.

What is a key decision?

A 'key decision' means a decision of the Mayor, WMCA or officer which is likely:

- (a) to result in the WMCA incurring expenditure, making savings or generating income amounting to £1m or more; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the WMCA

The report relating to a decision, together with any other documents being considered, will be available five clear working days before the decision is to be taken (unless the documentation contains exempt information).

The forward plan also provides notice of when the WMCA may decide to exclude the press and public during consideration of a particular matter due to the potential for disclosure of confidential or exempt

information. The grounds upon which local authorities can exclude the press and public are specified by law and details of the exempt categories are available on request from the Governance Services team (governance.services@wmca.org.uk).

Councillors or members of the public wishing to:

- make a representation about why a matter should be heard in public, or
- submit information to the decision-making body about an item in the forward plan, or
- request details of relevant documents, or
- seek advice about the WMCA's decision-making arrangements,

should contact the Governance Services team: governance.services@wmca.org.uk