

22 November 2016

Rebalancing the Budget : Options for Consultation

Ward(s) All

Portfolio: Councillor R. Burley – Children's Services and Education

Executive Summary:

Rebalancing the Budget: Options for Consultation, as reported to Cabinet on 26 October 2016, includes the latest medium term financial outlook for the four year period from 2016/17 to 2019/20. It sets out to rebalance the council's finances over a four year period, to provide ongoing financial stability for the Council, in a period of great uncertainty.

This report provides an extract of the savings proposals under the remit of the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Reason for scrutiny:

To enable consultation and scrutiny of the savings proposals in the Children's Services Directorate.

Recommendation

The committee are recommended to consider the savings proposals attached that relate to the remit of this committee, and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

Background papers

Various financial working papers.

Resource and legal considerations

Cabinet on 26 October 2016 presented a list of revenue savings for consultation, as part of a 4 year financial plan to rebalance the Council's budget.

The full Cabinet report can be accessed with this link –

https://www.walsall.gov.uk/News/Story/2016/10/31/Rebalancing_the_budget_-_Have_your_say

Savings are split into two:

1. **Policy** - with a direct impact on services and which require an Executive decision to proceed, these have now been referred for specific public consultation and equality impact assessment. Those under the remit of this committee are shown in **Appendix 1**, along with detailed supporting papers referenced at **Appendix 3**.
2. **Operational** – savings which officers have delegation to implement; examples include restructures, back office savings, operational efficiencies – the details of those under the remit of this committee are shown in **Appendix 2**.

Citizen impact

Details of potential impact are shown within the individual policy papers attached to this report.

Environmental impact

The impact on the environment is considered in all savings proposals.

Performance management

Financial performance is considered alongside service performance management. Managers are required to deliver their services within budget and there are comprehensive arrangements in place to monitor and manage this.

Equality Implications

Service managers have regard to equalities while delivering services and identifying saving options. Equality impact assessments will be undertaken as required prior to final recommendations made to Council on the budget, along with any mitigating actions. The majority of the Education and Children's savings are based upon individual assessments and reviews of needs and how they are met within statutory requirements.

Consultation

Consultation is an integral part of the corporate budget process and arrangements are in hand to consult with a wide range of stakeholders (i.e. councillors, residents, service users, business sector, voluntary and community organisations, etc.). This is outlined in the report to Cabinet on 26 October 2016 entitled 'Rebalancing the Budget: Options for Consultation'.

Any feedback from consultation, including from this committee, will be presented to Cabinet on 14 December 2016 for their consideration.

Any changes to these savings, following public consultation, will be reported to a future meeting of the committee, providing an opportunity to make further recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet may wish to consider the feedback contained within this report in formulating their draft and final budget proposals.

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APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF REVENUE POLICY SAVINGS BY PORTFOLIO FOR CONSULTATION

These are supported by policy papers (where stated in the table), shown in Appendix 3. Year 1 and 2 options are to be consulted on. For year 3 options, no policy document is required, as these options require further workup prior to formal consideration.

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Policy paper
Children's Service and Education Portfolio					
4	Review and develop children centre service as part of a 0-19 Early Help locality model	208,126			See p5
5	Review demand for transport from children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND)	100,000			See p10
6	Review demand for SEN transport. More provision of Special School Places will reduce transport and existing travel costs			200,000	N/A
7	Review demand for Out of Borough SEN short breaks	130,000			See p15
8	Review and reduce short breaks	100,000	100,000		See p18
9	Reduction of spend on Looked after Children including those in Out of Borough Placements		300,000	600,000	See p22
10	Review and reduce Looked after Children numbers and associated costs	680,044	462,044	1,223,044	See p26
11	Review and reduce Children's Social Care contact service	64,000	64,000		See p30
12	Reduce or identify alternative contribution for Children's Safeguarding Board		58,035	58,035	See p35
13	Review and reduce Youth Services and align functions to the 0-19 Early Help locality model	266,500	421,301	110,572	See p40
14	Cease or identify alternative funding to support School Improvement Service	235,599	271,198	135,599	See p45

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF REVENUE OPERATIONAL SAVINGS BY PORTFOLIO FOR CABINET APPROVAL

Saving reference	Detail of saving / efficiency	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
Children's Services and Education Portfolio				
90	Reduce administrative support	217,952	333,010	403,313
91	Review and reduce Early Help 0-19 model			100,000
92	Restructure business intelligent functions	100,000		
93	Review demand for SEN short breaks		23,000	140,000
94	Review and reduce Children's Social Care Provider Services	130,000		
95	Reduce agency social workers	494,000	227,000	227,000
96	De-layering Children's Services management	405,596	193,135	43,135
97	Review and reduce Children's Social Care Workforce Training & Practice Development	97,256		44,744
98	Redesign and reduce School Support Services	72,924		
99	Review and reduce Children's Youth Justice Services or identify alternative contributions		50,000	50,000
100	Increase income from traded activity within Information, Advice and Guidance Services	50,000		
101	Redesign and reduce School Support Services – charging of DBS checks	77,000		

SUPPORTING POLICY DOCUMENTS**PORTFOLIO: Children's Services and Education****Directorate and Service Area: Children's Services, Early Help 0-19 Model*****Option: Review and Develop Children Centre Service as part of a 0 - 19 Early Help locality model******Saving Reference: 4*****1. Financial Proposal**

	Net Saving		
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020
	£	£	£
Estimated Saving	208,216	0	0
Revenue Investment	0	0	0
Net Saving	208,216	0	0
Capital investment	0	0	0

2. Description of the Proposal

- 2.1 The proposed saving identified is linked to management efficiencies that can be made by bringing together 0 - 19 Family Support services (£98, 216) and by ceasing financial support to schools to deliver Play and Stay Groups (£110,000).
- 2.2 The proposals link to a wider aspiration to deliver a whole family targeted approach and consultation is planned with service users of Children's Centres and retained Youth Services to consider the impact of the following recommended changes:
- Redefine current reach areas of Children Centres to better align with 0 - 19 partnership locality areas and school cluster arrangements so that professionals can work better together to offer a whole family offer.
 - Reduce the number of buildings in the newly defined Central and South area from three (Palfrey, Birchills and Alumwell) to one. This will offer opportunity for Birchills to be developed to increase childcare provision in the entire building which will help meet a shortage of early learning places and childcare in the surrounding area. As private provision is supported to develop to meet the childcare needs in the Alumwell / Pleck area, it is proposed to close the Alumwell building, ceasing delivery from this site from July 2017. Also need to consider future use of 'My Place' as part of 0 -19 integrated approach.

- Consider how we deliver services in the East of the borough, focusing on services not buildings. It is proposed that Children Centre staff as part of Locality Teams could be based in existing council offices, whilst outreaching across the East of the borough, via home visits and use of community buildings to offer group support. This will save building costs and give greater flexibility and access to services across a large geographical patch; and the majority of current delivery is accessed via outreach and home visits.
- Integrate youth work staff into 0-19 Early Help Locality Family Support to maximise skills and resources to meet needs of wider age range.
- Review existing provision of Play and Stay across the borough and opportunities to further develop groups in partnership with schools and voluntary groups.

2.3 The implementation date may not be 1 April 2017 if the statutory consultation period has to be extended beyond December 2016 and/or if the proposal to move to an integrated 0 -19 Early Help family support model is not supported as an alternative approach would need to be developed.

2.4 There are still legal responsibilities for local authorities in relation to Children's Centres. However in July 2016, the childcare Minister announced he would be consulting on the future of children's centres and they are not currently being Ofsted inspected. The Apprenticeships, Skills and Learning Act 2009 sets out the existing duties summarised by the DfE in 'Sure Start CC's Statutory Guidance (2013):to ensure that there are sufficient Children's Centres to meet local need and to ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to Children's Centre provision.

3. **Implications Associated With Proposal**

3.1 **Corporate Plan**

The proposal is relevant to the corporate priority Lifelong Health, Wealth and Happiness. The delivery of 0-19 targeted whole family working set out in this proposal will ensure targeted early help is sustainable and vulnerable children, young people and families continue to receive support at a time of reducing resources and that children and young people are safe from harm.

3.2 **Customers**

The provision of sufficient Children's Centres is a statutory duty as defined in The Apprenticeships, Skills and Learning Act 2009 and related DfE in 'Sure Start CC's Statutory Guidance (2013). However in July 2016, the childcare minister announced he would be consulting on the future of Children's Centres and they are not currently being Ofsted inspected.

Services provided by Children's Centres and retained targeted youth work team, that will be integrated into 0-19 teams, are already targeted at children and young

people in greatest need and are provided on an outreach basis that includes homes visits and use of community venues, as well as activities run from council buildings. The proposed services and targeted support will continue to be provided and be more joined up. We will be consulting with services users about whether the move to a 0 -19 whole family approach and proposed changes to Children Centre areas and buildings will have an impact.

3.3 Employees / Staffing

13 staff will be impacted by this proposal and will be consulted on a proposed reduction in management capacity equating to 3 full time equivalent posts.

3.4 Partners

Walsall's refreshed Early Help Strategy (2015) identifies that it is our shared responsibility – all partners, all agencies – to work with children, young people and their families to keep them safe, build on strengths, reduce risk and prevent problems from escalating. Over the last 12 months significant progress has been made to develop Walsall's partnership response including investment from School Forum to develop locality working, including support and supervision to Schools to expand and improve the quality of early help assessments and interventions led by Schools. This resource has also supported work to develop Locality Panels which are now in place in each of the 4 areas. The panels include representation from schools, education support, health, housing, police, social care and the voluntary sector and work to plan services to address local need, share expertise to resolve complex cases and support professional to identify and access the right support for families. To inform work, locality profiles have been developed using our learning from Troubled Families to assist our understanding of needs and challenges and this is used to proactively help with the identification of vulnerable families and the monitoring of impact.

3.5 Economic Implications

There are no economic implications arising from this proposal.

3.6 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications arising from this proposal.

3.7 Health and wellbeing implications

The Council is required to provide sufficient Children's Centres and to secure early education places for every eligible 2 year old. This proposal will develop Children's Centres as an integral part of Early Help Locality working to ensure we provide the right support at the right time to the right families to reduce risks and improve outcomes. This proposal adheres to the following objectives of the Marmot Review:

- Give every child the best start in life – by providing targeted family support and parenting advice to help families to support their child to reach their potential and be safe, happy and achieving.
- Enable all children, young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives – by providing good quality childcare and learning opportunities to disadvantaged 2 year olds and access to groups to develop early speech, language, physical and emotional development.

3.8 **Other Council Services**

The consultation will consider links to Library Services, Community Associations, Public health and others as appropriate.

3.9 **Procurement / Social Value Implications**

A compliant procurement process will be undertaken if required following consultation.

4. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

- 4.1 There is some risk as national policy direction on Children Centres is unclear but the proposal reflects the principles of a recent All Party Parliamentary Group Review (July 2016), which advocates the creation of Family Hubs focusing on parenting, relationship and employment support.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Apprenticeships, Skills and Learning Act 2009 sets out the existing duties summarised by the DfE in 'Sure Start CC's Statutory Guidance (2013): to ensure that there are sufficient Children's Centres to meet local need and to ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to Children's Centre provision

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

- 6.1 Consultation relating to Children's Centres took place in 2014 as part of the 2015/16 budget setting process. Views were sought on a shift to a more targeted service, with universal services provided by health visitors; a reduction in buildings and a move from providing to enabling others to deliver early learning and childcare. The proposal was agreed by Cabinet, but in response to feedback an additional investment to sustain and develop universal Play and Stay services during 2015/16 was agreed (February 2015). The aim of the funding in 2015/16 was to encourage schools, particularly those taking over the running of former Children Centre buildings; to develop community models and offer play and stay to local families with 0 - 2's.

Feedback from consultation identified that new parents valued the play and stay services that had been previously been available boroughwide to all parents and

many parents identified that although they did not fall under a definition to qualify for targeted support due to deprivation or other risk factors, they did feel socially isolated and in need of support post natively to meet their child's needs. Therefore the development of 'play and stay' services and current availability and access will be reviewed as part of this consultation.

6.2 A consultation plan is being developed and will be delivered between 27th October 2016 and 23rd December 2016.

7. **Equality Implications**

7.1 A full equality impact assessment will be undertaken.

PORTFOLIO: Children's Services and Education

Directorate and Service Area: Children's Services, Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Option: Review demand for Transport from Children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Saving Reference: 5

1. **Financial Proposal**

	Net Saving		
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020
	£	£	£
Estimated Saving	100,000	0	0
Revenue Investment	0	0	0
Net Saving	0	0	0
Capital investment	0	0	0

2. **Description of the Proposal**

2.1 Walsall Council transports 710 children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities daily in 240 separate vehicles (taxi, minibus, coach) and funds an additional 250 children with bus passes. The council is currently consulting on a new home to school transport policy.

It is proposed to deliver savings of £100k commencing April 2017 by:

- The implementation of a revised transport policy (currently in consultation)
- Efficiencies through alternative transport arrangements (Personal Transport budgets, Independent Travel Training)
- Greater reliance on foster carers to transport children in their care to school.

2.2 From April 2017:

- Review Looked After Childrens school transport arrangements
- Introduction of Independent Travel Training (ITT)
- Personal Travel budget

From July 2017 subject to current Home to School Policy Transport consultation:

- Review and cease under-mileage transport arrangements
- Cease all short break transport
- Cease all post-18 transport

- 2.3 The requirements of the 1996 Education Act, subsections 508B and C make provision for local authorities to ensure suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. These provisions apply to home to school travel arrangements, and vice versa. They do not relate to travel between educational institutions during the school day.

Schedule 35B of the Act defines eligible children – those categories of children of compulsory school age (5-16) if their nearest school is beyond 2 miles (if below age 8) or beyond 3 miles (aged between 8-16).

“Special Educational needs a disability or mobility eligibility – to make transport arrangements for all children who cannot be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs (SEN) or disability. Eligibility for such children should be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular transport requirements. Usual transport requirements (i.e. statutory walking distances) should not be considered when assessing the transport needs of children eligible due to SEN or disability. Parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly.

In determining whether a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk for the purposes of ‘special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems eligibility’ or ‘unsafe route eligibility’, the local authority will need to consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and, if so, whether the child's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child.

When considering whether a child's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child on the journey to school a range of factors may need to be taken into account, such as the age of the child and whether one would ordinarily expect a child of that age to be accompanied.

The general expectation is that a child will be accompanied by a parent where necessary, unless there is a good reason why it is not reasonable to expect the parent to do so.

3. **Implications Associated With Proposal**

3.1 **Corporate Plan**

These proposals are intended to promote and encourage greater independence whilst keeping children safe.

3.2 **Customers**

This proposal takes into account children with exceptional circumstances, where disability / mobility needs are greater than the need to adhere to guidance. However, approximately 259 children will no longer be eligible for school transport

3.3 Employees / Staffing

There are no staffing implications for this proposal.

3.4 Partners

There is no impact or responsibilities on other partner agencies regarding any transport costs or services. There may be some traffic management issues for schools to address as there may be more parent vehicles arrive and less livery vehicles accessing schools.

3.5 Economic Implications

Encouraging children and young people and their families to travel independently may lead to a reduction in commissioned services from independent travel providers. E.g. bus and taxi companies.

3.6 Environmental Implications

There are no implications in this report.

3.7 Health and wellbeing implications

The most relevant Marmot principles for this proposal is the enabling of all children and young people to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives. The overall intention of the Home to School Transport Policy is to ensure that:

- Learners are able to access education of their choice.
- If support for access to education is required this will be assessed, provided or enabled where possible.
- Proposals to develop Independent Travel Training in Walsall will encourage the acquisition of important life skills. Child who are more able to walk to school will have greater opportunity to do so under parent supervision and thus contribute to more healthier activity for the family.

3.8 Other Council Services

These proposals will decrease some support service activity but will increase other activity (Independent Travel Training, Personal Transport Budgets) and how they have been consulted.

3.9 Procurement / Social Value Implications

A compliant procurement process will be followed if required following consultation.

4. **Associated Risks**

- 4.1 The proposal aims to meet the needs of those children and young people with additional home to school transport needs and safely promote independent travel through a structured travel training programme.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The council will continue to meet all statutory duties in relation to school transport.

The Council has to ensure that Home to School Transport arrangements are set within the context of the Education Act, 1996, Section 509(1). This obliges local authorities to make transport arrangements if they consider it necessary to facilitate a pupil's attendance at school. Section 509(2) of the Act states that if the local authorities considers transport to be necessary, it must be provided free of charge. Section 508C of the Act gives local authorities discretionary powers to make school travel arrangements for other children not covered by section 508B. Such transport does not have to be provided free of charge

The SEND Code of Practice 2015 says that the Local Offer must include information about arrangements for transport provision, including those up to age 25 with an Education Health and Care plan, and this should include local authorities' policy statements. Each local authority must have clear general policies relating to transport for children with special educational needs or disabilities that must be made available to parents and young people. Such policies will set out the transport arrangements that are over and above those required by the Education Act 1996 (Section 508B).

Local authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training (section 509AA of the Education Act 1996).

- 5.2 There are no legal consequences identified as the council will still transport eligible children.

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

- 6.1 Pre-consultation meetings on the transport review have been held with head teachers of special schools (6 July at Oakwood school) and the Parent Partnership group (15 July at Bluebells). Public consultation on this proposal is currently underway from 16th September 2016 to 1st November 2016, a period of 33 working days, 28 of which are in term time, 5 in half term.

Consultation starts
Half term
Consultation ends

Friday 16 September
24 – 28 October
Tuesday 1 November

6.2 Consultation documents and information are available on the council web site and letters have been posted to all 700 home to school transport users. 6 public meetings have been arranged at:

- Blakenhall Village Centre 10am to 12 noon, 12th October
- Oakwood School 4pm to 7pm, 12th October
- My Place, 2:30pm to 6pm, 13th October
- Castle Business and Enterprise College 4pm to 6pm, 18th October
- Education Development Centre 10am to 12 noon, 21st October
- My Place 2:30 to 7pm, 31st October

6.3 Consultation information is available online via the Local Offer pages, through The Link, support websites for families of young people with SEND, the Family Information Service and Parent Voice. Future consultation on the final policy will be undertaken in Spring 2017

7. **Equality Implications**

7.1 A full equality impact assessment will be carried out.

PORTFOLIO: Children's Services and Education

Directorate and Service Area: Children's Services, Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Option: Review demand for Out of Borough Special Education Needs (SEN) Short Breaks

Saving Reference: 7

1. Financial Proposal

Net Saving			
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020
	£	£	£
Estimated Saving	130,000	0	0
Revenue Investment	0	0	0
Net Saving	130,000	0	0
Capital investment	0	0	0

2. Description of the Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is to review and reduce costs via a focus on demand for Out of Borough (OoB) commissioned respite and short break support with private providers with an emphasis on increasing the use of existing in-house respite (Bluebells) more effectively.

There are 40 children who access overnight short breaks following an assessment of need. The destination for overnight stays is normally at Bluebells but approximately 27% of children go to private providers. The cost varies according to the number of nights and if there is a contribution from the CCG, but the average cost to the authority is £20,000 per child per annum.

The saving of £130,000 can be achieved by April 2017 in part through:

- £50,000: 3 young people coming of age prior to April 2017.
- £80,000: revising the local offer to parents of the remaining children accessing respite from private providers for April 2017, to introduce a transfer to into Bluebells and out of their current external provider.

- 2.2 All proposed savings can be made in April 2017 if parental agreement to new offer to transfer into Bluebells is secured. There is also a proposal to save a further £50,000 in April 2018. Overnight residential breaks are one of a number of services the council provides.

3. Implications Associated With Proposal

3.1 Corporate Plan

The most relevant corporate priority is that of Lifelong Health and Happiness. This refers to the promotion of health and well being; enabling people to live independent, healthy and active lives. This proposal will promote this priority by the continuation of a quality service but delivered in-house. Children will still experience continued social inclusion and peer group experiences, while families and carers continue to benefit from 24 hour or more breaks from the complexities of caring for a disabled child.

3.2 Customers

The statutory basis for short breaks – what local authorities must do and what they might do is contained in Part 3 of the 1989 Children Act. This Act sets out local authorities' powers and duties to provide support services for children in need and their families. The Act and subsequent Short Break Guidance 2010 requires Local Authorities to provide a range of short breaks services that are published in a Short Break Statement (website).

This proposal is about how we determine best value for similar services (internal / external). Implementation of the proposed expenditure reduction will depend in part on successful negotiation with parents to change to an in-house provision.

There will be no reduction to pre-existing quantity (nights per year) or quality (Bluebells - Ofsted rated GOOD).

3.3 Employees / Staffing

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

3.4 Partners

A move from using private providers to in-house provision (Bluebells) will be a benefit to Bluebell occupancy rates, children will be closer to home while 'away' and local professional partners will have greater access to these children when in the short break facility, if required.

3.5 Economic Implications

There are no economic implications arising from this report.

3.6 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

3.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

This proposal supports the local authority in the delivery of the Marmot principles specifically giving every child the best start in life and enabling all children and young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives. Short breaks services are of great value to families of children with disabilities and of benefit to children themselves. Logistics of transport and emergency access will be less complicated and closer to home.

3.8 **Other Council Services**

No other council services are affected by this proposal.

3.9 **Procurement / Social Value Implications**

There are no procurement implications associated with this proposal as all current out of Walsall placements are spot purchased and only subject to reasonable notice periods. There is no obligation of volume purchase that the Council will be obligated to. The proposal will have social value opportunities for local staff employment, easier transport access and closer contact arrangements with families.

4. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

- 4.1 Short Break overnight expenditure reduction for this proposal is partially dependent on family co-operation and agreement to move to Bluebells.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Legal requirements as noted above will not be at any risk as the responsibility to provide this service will remain uninterrupted.
- 5.2 There are no legal consequences as result of this proposal. Should any family agree to cease their out of borough placement but not join Bluebells, an alternative service may be offered (direct payments, social groups, buddy / home-based support).

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

- 6.1 Consultation is planned.

7. **Equality Implications**

- 7.1 A full equality impact assessment is being carried out for this proposal.

PORTFOLIO: Children’s Services and Education

Directorate and Service Area: Children’s Services, Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Option: Review and Reducing Short Breaks

Saving Reference: 8

1. Financial Proposal

Net Saving			
	2017 / 2018 £	2018 / 2019 £	2019 / 2020 £
Estimated Saving	100,000	100,000	0
Revenue Investment	0	0	0
Net Saving	100,000	100,00	0
Capital investment	0	0	0

2. Description of the Proposal

- 2.1 This proposal seeks to review short break support through changes with access to term-time after school clubs and school holiday clubs.

The council provides term-time after school groups for disabled children during the school year (Sept. – July). The council also provides School holiday play schemes during October, February and May ½ term weeks and in the 6 week summer holiday. These are activity-based groups and commissioned from a range of council-run and private providers.

These services provide respite from caring and offers socially inclusive opportunities. Both these services are available as universal access where children are allocated a number of places dependent on availability. They do not require a social work assessment.

Only disabled children who have been assessed by a social worker can access a more complex and targeted range of assessed short break provision (overnights, direct payments, commissioned care, buddies and short break fostering, etc). They are also able to access the universal term-time and holiday groups alongside the non-assessed children.

The proposal is that the social work-assessed children who receive assessed short break provision will no longer be eligible for the term-time and holiday universal short breaks commissioned by Children's Services (except those that may be delivered separately by leisure or youth services, etc).

- 2.2 By amending access to these groups, 41 social work-assessed children will cease participation but will continue to receive the other forms of support (direct payments, overnights, etc.).

200 disabled children will continue uninterrupted to receive their term-time / school holiday groups as they do not receive social work-assessed short breaks.

Social work-assessed children eligibility for holiday play schemes would cease from 1 April 2017.

Social work-assessed children eligibility for term time short break groups will cease the end of the academic year 2017.

In 2017, some short breaks will be commissioned under a new framework and better value will be achieved through reduced provider costs.

- 2.3 By separating eligibility to these services by assessed and non-assessed short breaks, disabled children will still have access to a reasonable range of services where need is identified either by social work assessment or self referral.

3. **Implications Associated With Proposal**

3.1 **Corporate Plan**

This proposal is relevant to the corporate priority Lifelong Health, Wealth and Happiness which focuses on the promotion of health and well being; enabling people to live independent, healthy, active lives and targeting resources more effectively where needed and supporting the vulnerable.

3.2 **Customers**

Short breaks are highly valued by the young people who receive them and their families. Walsall provides a range of high quality short break provision for children/young people with disabilities.

The proposal may potentially impact on a small group of children, young people and their families with the possible reduction in provision who access both social work assessed and non assessed short breaks.

3.3 **Employees / Staffing**

There are no staffing implications associated with this proposal.

3.4 **Partners**

There are no implications to Partners associated with this proposal.

3.5 Economic Implications

There are no economic implications associated with this proposal.

3.6 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications associated with this proposal.

3.7 Health and wellbeing implications

Short breaks services are a great value to families of children with disabilities as they provide a break from caring roles/responsibilities and contribute to improved health and benefit for children with disabilities.

The most relevant Marmot objective related to this proposal is to enable all children, young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives through socially inclusive experiences.

3.8 Other Council Services

The proposal may potentially slightly reduce some of the commissioned short breaks provided by leisure and youth services.

3.9 Procurement / Social Value Implications

Any future procurement will be carried out under the council strict procurement policies and procedures. Continuing with short break provision will support local jobs and local economy.

4. Associated Risks / Opportunities

4.1 By refining the eligibility of accessing term time/holiday time support, some children will receive a less range of support with regards to this however the Councils legal requirement for short breaks will continue to be met.

4.2 Some children could have an increase in other services to compensate for this loss should welfare concerns be identified.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The legal duty to provide short breaks for children with disabilities to improve quality of life is a statutory function under the Children Act 1989, the Children and Young Person's Act 2008 and associated Short Break Statutory Guidance 2010.

5.2 There are no legal implications as children with disabilities will continue to have access to a range of short breaks.

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

6.1 Consultation will be carried out by the children with disabilities team where the affected children are allocated.

7. **Equality Implications**

7.1 A full equality impact assessment is being carried out.

PORTFOLIO: Children's Services and Education

Directorate and Service Area: Children's Services, Looked After Children

Option: Reduction of spend on Looked After Children, including those in Out of Borough Placements.

Saving Reference: 9

1. Financial Proposal

	Net Saving		
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020
	£	£	£
Estimated Saving	0	300,000	600,000
Revenue Investment	(400,000)	(250,000)	0
Net Saving	(400,000)	50,000	600,000
Capital investment	To be identified		

2. Description of the Proposal

- 2.1 Children's Social Care spends circa £16m on 639 Looked After Children placements, made up of a combination of internal foster and residential care, independent fostering and external residential placements. A small cohort of these children (circa 36) are placed in high cost out of borough (OoB) placements due to their complex needs and cost circa £4.3m of the total LAC costs.

This proposal aims to reduce the number of LAC placed OoB from 36 children to a maximum of 24 over the Medium Term Financial Outlook at a rate of 4 from 2018/19 and 8 thereafter. This will allow time to develop sufficient internal provision and ensure the right level of wrap around social care support is in place (such as therapeutic services) as Children are brought back in borough. Net investment of £150k has been identified to support additional social care support.

- 2.2 A safe reduction in the numbers and the achievement of the savings profiled could be achieved if a system wide corporate response to LAC was pursued together with sustained, systemic and targeted working with teenagers based on new evidence based models that
- prevent children and young people coming into care where it is safe to do so
 - stabilise placements when young people come into care and minimise breakdown of placements and the need for OoB placements
 - extend / broaden the range of internal placement options
 - support children and young people effectively when they leave care to prevent re-entry to care at a later date

- 2.3 The proposed reduction in social workers case loads and the adoption of a bespoke methodology of working with families and carers (restorative practice and reunification methodology) will enable more intensive work to take place with children who are looked after to support return home where it is safe to do so and promote placement stability when they are looked after.
- 2.4 Capital investment to increase 'in borough' capacity and revenue investment to strengthen wrap around support, including therapeutic support, to children and young people will be required to achieve these savings. The investment requirement is currently being assessed.
- 2.5 The proposed implementation of new model is from 1st April 2017 to enable predicted savings from April 2018 to be achieved.
- 2.6 There is clear legal and regulatory framework for Looked After Children and the aim would be to work clearly within this legal and regulatory framework with more emphasis on section 17 of the Children Act which focuses on prevention of the need for care and family reunification where this is safe. The service redesign proposal will be informed by the LAC sufficiency strategy.

3. **Implications Associated With Proposal**

3.1 ***Corporate Plan***

This proposal is fully in line with the corporate priorities and supports children and their families to remain safe from harm by ensuring the right help is provided, they are more resilient, and to enable children and young people to achieve their full potential.

3.2 ***Customers***

The Council has responsibilities as a corporate parent and statutory duties. The potential impact will be to ensure that children and families receive the most effective support to enable sustained change so that they can care for their children safely. There will be less drift for children who are Looked After and Children and Young People with very complex needs will be cared for closer to home with local services providing therapeutic support. This will promote maintaining effective relationships with their families, and social workers.

3.3 ***Employees/Staffing***

This proposal will require a potential increase in and some reconfiguration of current staffing and more flexible working arrangement to ensure that families have support when they need it.

3.4 **Partners**

The proposed systemic approach will require much closer working between key partners to ensure the effective provision of services to support children and young people remaining at home and to support effective provisions to them in foster or residential care.

3.5 **Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications arising from this proposal

3.6 **Health and wellbeing implications**

The proposal contributes to the Marmot objectives in that it supports children and young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives by providing the service and support outlined above.

3.7 **Other Council Services**

This proposal may have future implications for other parts of the council specifically Money Home Job and Public Health as we move to a more systemic approach to service delivery.

3.8 **Procurement / Social Value Implications**

At this time there are no implications. This will be considered in the future.

4. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

4.1 This proposal will need:

- 1 Full commitment of corporate colleagues and partners
- 2 Sufficient skilled social workers/managers
- 3 Sustained funding for Edge of Care services to mitigate the fall out of Troubled Families grant which currently funds existing services.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 The Children Act 1989 and subsequent statutes provides the main statutory requirements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

There is a presumption that, wherever safe and possible, the best interests of children are served by them remaining within their family unit.

Section 17 of the Act requires the Local Authority to provide a range and level of services appropriate to a child's needs to ,inter alia, promote the upbringing of a child by his or her family. It is appropriate therefore to target section 17 support where possible.

In circumstances where children are assessed as being at risk of significant harm the Local Authority has a duty to protect a child by issuing care proceedings (if there is no other safe option). The family court will always consider least interventionist outcomes to include care orders, supervision orders and on occasion no order.

Care plans for Looked After Children are scrutinised under the looked after review process. Care plans should be scrutinised so as to review the need for children to be subject to court orders and to investigate any possibility of them returning home safely.

Applications should be made to the court as expeditiously as possible to revoke court orders if they are found to be disproportionate or no longer necessary to ensure the safety and well being of children in care.

Robust oversight of interventions and of care plans is necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements within the Children Act. The proposals within this report should result in the objectives being addressed and achieved.

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

6.1 It is proposed to consult on this proposal through the budget setting process.

7. **Equality Implications**

7.1 A full equality impact assessment will be carried out.

PORTFOLIO: Children's Services and Education

Directorate and Service Area: Children's Services, Looked After Children/Fostering & Adoption

Option: Review & Reduce Looked After Children Numbers & Associated Costs

Saving Reference: 10

1. Financial Proposal

Net Saving			
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020
	£	£	£
Estimated Saving	680,044	462,044	1,223,044
Revenue Investment	(4,130,000)	(200,000)	300,000
Net Saving	(3,449,956)	262,044	923,044
Capital investment	0	0	0

2. Description of the Proposal

2.1 Children's social care spends circa £16m on 639 Looked After Children's placements which is made up of a combination of internal foster and residential care, Independent Fostering and external residential placements. It is an aspiration over the medium term financial outlook period to reduce this number by 100 in line with the benchmarked authorities and the national picture. This option will require a corporate response in order to bring down this number safely and may require investment in order to build in borough capacity and wrap around support costs to improve preventive services and transition leaving care arrangements.

A further £405k over the period is anticipated through successfully recruiting an additional 7 Foster Carers per annum to reduce the higher cost LAC packages such as IFA's. One off investment of £30k has been identified to support material recruitment/advertising campaign for Foster Care recruitment. *Further one-off investment of £250,000, to be funded from an earmarked reserve is planned to support delivering of the year 1 saving.

2.2 Additionally, further significant investment is planned of £4m over the three years to support delivery of the savings identified:

- Implement a revised Children Social Care structure to ensure robust supervision and management oversight
- Implementation a caseload threshold guarantee (of 15 cases per social worker and 12 cases per newly qualified social worker).

- 2.3 A corporate response will be required in order to bring down this number safely. In addition there needs to be a strategic development of a more systemic approach to working with teenagers based on new models to mitigate negative impact.
- To prevent children and young people coming into care
 - When they are in care to stabilise placements and minimise the need for OoB placements
 - Provide a broader range of internal placement options
 - To support children and young people effectively when they leave care to stop them re-entering care
 - To deliver this proposal will require a new approach to agency working.

Alongside this there is a proposed reduction in social workers case loads that would enable them to work more intensively with children who are looked after to support maintaining them safely at home and promoting placement stability when they are looked after. This will also include adopting a bespoke methodology of working with families and carers e.g Restorative practice and Reunification methodology.

Increased investment to enhance marketing and recruitment for additional foster carers along with officers to support new foster cares. This assumes an additional 7 foster carers per annum can be successfully recruited as a result.

These proposals will be delivered by robust project management and oversight and will ensure that children are supported to remain at home or returned home from care only when it is safe to do so and in house placements are maximised.

- 2.4. Investment to build 'in borough' capacity and wrap around support, reduction in social work caseloads.
- 2.5 The proposed implementation of the new model is from 1st April 2017 to enable predicted savings for April 2018 onwards to be achieved.
- 2.6 There is a clear legal and regulatory framework for Looked After Children and the aim would be to work clearly within this legal and regulatory framework with more emphasis on section 17 of the Children Act which focuses on prevention of the need for care and family reunification where is its safe. The service redesign proposal will be informed by the LAC sufficiency strategy.

3. **Implications Associated With Proposal**

3.1 **Corporate Plan**

This proposal is fully in line with the corporate priorities and supports children and their families to remain safe from harm by ensuring the right help is provided, they are more resilient and to enable children and young people to achieve their full.

3.2 Customers

The council has responsibilities as a corporate parent and statutory duties. The potential impact will be to ensure that children and families receive the most effective support to enable sustained change so that they can care for their children safely. There will be less drift for children who are Looked After and Children and young people with very complex needs will be cared for closer to home with local services providing therapeutic support. This will promote maintaining effective relationships with their families, and social workers.

3.3 Employees/Staffing

This proposal would require a potential increase in employee numbers, a reduction in social workers caseloads, some reconfiguration of current staffing and more flexible working arrangements to ensure that families have support when they need it.

3.4 Partners

The proposed systemic approach will require much closer working between key partners to ensure the effective provision of services to support children and young people remaining at home and to support effective provisions to them in foster or residential care

3.5 Economic Implications

None.

3.6 Environmental Implications

None.

3.7 Health and wellbeing implications

The proposal contributes to the Marmot objectives in that it supports children and young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives by providing the service and support outlined above.

3.8 Other Council Services

This proposal may have future implications for other parts of the council specifically Money Home Job and Public Health as we move to a more systemic approach to service delivery.

3.9 Procurement / Social Value Implications

At this time there are no implications. This will be considered in the future.

4. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

4.1 This proposal will need:

- 1 Full commitment of corporate colleagues and partners
- 2 Sufficient skilled social workers/managers
- 3 Sustained funding for Edge of care services to mitigate fall out of Troubled families grant which currently fund existing services.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 The Children Act 1989 and subsequent statutes provides the main statutory requirements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. There is a presumption that, wherever safe and possible, the best interests of children are served by them remaining within their family unit.

5.2 Section 17 of the Act requires the local authority to provide a range and level of services appropriate to a child's needs to ,inter alia, promote the upbringing of a child by his or her family. It is appropriate therefore to target section 17 support where possible.

5.3 In circumstances where children are assessed as being at risk of significant harm the local authority has a duty to protect a child by issuing care proceedings (if there is no other safe option). The family court will always consider least interventionist outcomes to include care orders, supervision orders and on occasion no order.

5.4 Care plans for Looked After Children are scrutinised under the Looked After review process. Care plans should be scrutinised so as to review the need for children to be subject to court orders and to investigate any possibility of them returning home safely.

5.5 Applications should be made to the court as expeditiously as possible to revoke court orders if they are found to be disproportionate or no longer necessary to ensure the safety and well being of children in care.

5.6 Robust oversight of interventions and of care plans is necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements within the Children Act. The proposals within this report should result in the objectives being addressed and achieved.

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

6.1 Consultation will be carried out as appropriate.

7. **Equality Implications**

7.1 A full equality impact assessment will be undertaken.

PORTFOLIO: Children’s Services and Education

Directorate and Service Area: Children’s Services, Contact Services

Option: Review & Reduce Children’s Social Care Contact Services

Saving Reference: 11

1. Financial Proposal

Net Saving			
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020
	£	£	£
Estimated Saving	64,000	64,000	0
Revenue Investment	0	0	0
Net Saving	64,000	64,000	0
Capital investment	0	0	0

2. Description of the Proposal

2.1 Review and redesign the Looked after Children contact service through a combination of demand management, contract management and restructuring where appropriate.

2.2 Currently there are 34,000 hours of supervised contact at a cost of £412,270 per annum. Supervised contact for the safeguarding and family support service accounts for 72% of the delivered hours whilst the remaining 28% is undertaken on behalf of the Looked after Children’s service. This proposal seeks to embed a contact procedure and toolkit for social workers to use when assessing and making arrangements for the delivery of contact for Looked after Children going through the court process, to give clear parameters around the frequency and level of context. This will be a key driver to safely reducing the demand for supervised contact. It also clarifies the expectations of social workers, foster carers and residential workers in relation to delivering supervised contact. The assumption is that in year one supervised contact hours will safely reduce which, when combined with a review of existing contact arrangements for children who have been through the court process and in stable and long term placements, will realise a saving of £64,000. In year two the savings will be achieved through focused work on reducing the number of children being admitted into care.

In addition, the delivery of contact will be reshaped through the implementation of a new commissioning framework. This will be a mixed economy of delivery including a small % of supervised contact delivered by council employed contact workers and a larger % by external providers contracted by the local authority.

- 2.3 The council's dedicated contact venue, Stroud Avenue, remains the main venue for 70% of all current and future contact arrangements. The centre management and contact bookings are undertaken by the placements and resources team based in the centre. A capital investment proposal to improve the environment in which contact is delivered has been submitted for consideration as part of the 2017/18 capital programme.
- 2.4 Authorisation to tender is being sought from Cabinet on the 26th October 2016 and the commissioning timeline has been developed to enable the new contract arrangements to commence on the 1st April 2017.
- 2.5 The local authority is required to allow for reasonable contact between a child in its care and the child's parents or guardians (s34 (1) Children Act 1989). Even though there is a duty to allow reasonable contact, children have a right to be protected from harmful contact and the local authority has the power to decide what amounts to 'reasonable contact'. The review seeks to ensure that our legal obligations are met through the implementation of clear guidance which sets out the way in which contact for looked after children should be assessed, delivered and reviewed. The implementation of clear guidance does not seek to disadvantage children and young people but to ensure consistent evidence based social work practice which ensures that the child's welfare is paramount, whilst ensuring compliance with the care planning regulations as set out in The Children Act 1989: Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review. The purpose of the contact procedure and toolkit is to provide a more consistent basis for the assessment and supervision of contact that will enable the Local Authority to discharge its duties towards Looked after Children in a more effective and structured way.

3. **Implications Associated With Proposal**

3.1 **Corporate Plan**

Lifelong Health, Wealth and Happiness is a vision within the corporate plan 2016-2020. The proposal to review the delivery of contact services for Looked After Children supports this view. Clear guidance regarding the assessment, delivery and review of contact for looked after children ensures that children and young people are safe from harm and that we are an efficient and effective council. *Safe, resilient and prospering communities* are also supported through these developments though ensuring that family contact is delivered in a way which ensures that supports the development of resilience with looked after children having reassurance about their birth families.

3.2 **Customers**

The local authority is required to provide for reasonable contact between a child in its care and the child's parents or guardians (Section 34 Children Act 1989) and as such it is a statutory function. Even though there is a duty to allow contact, children have a right to be protected from harmful contact and the Local

Authority has the power to decide what amounts to 'reasonable contact'. The purpose of the contact procedure and toolkit is to provide a more consistent basis for the assessment and supervision of contact that will enable the local authority to discharge its duties towards Looked after Children in a more effective and structured way that ensures the individual needs of the child are met.

3.3 Employees / Staffing

More structured arrangements for the assessment, delivery and review of contact combined with a reduction in the hours of contact been delivered will reduce demand into the contact team. The impact of this on staffing is under consideration as part of the implementation programme. A recruitment exercise is in progress to employ four dedicated contact workers. There have been four full-time posts that have been offered and it is envisaged they will be in place by October 2016.

3.4 Partners

The delivery of the new way of working requires foster carers and children's homes staff to be responsible for the transport and facilitation of contact unless the circumstances are exceptional. Whilst many carers already facilitate contact arrangements discussions are to be undertaken with local authority and commissioned providers regarding the implementation of the procedure and toolkit.

3.5 Economic Implications

No economic implications have been identified.

3.6 Environmental Implications

No environmental implications have been identified

3.7 Health and wellbeing implications

This proposal supports the local authority in the delivery of the Marmot principles including helping to create and develop healthy and sustainable communities though ensuring that family contact is delivered in a way that supports the development of resilient future generations through looked after children maintaining appropriate and positive relationships and having reassurance about their birth families.

The introduction of the policy and new framework arrangements will also support the objectives of the Marmot Review:

- Give every child the best start in life – by providing care and support

- Enable all children, young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives – by providing stable care and support and transition to adulthood
- Create fair employment and good work for all – by providing local work opportunities, where appropriate, in those regions where fostered

3.8 Other Council Services

No implications have been identified for other services.

3.9 Procurement / Social Value Implications

The procurement process will take account of improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the borough in meeting the needs of looked after children (and others) for supervised contact. The evaluation of the bids will be undertaken in line with a robust criterion taking account of the Public Services (Social Value) Act (2012.)

4. Associated Risks / Opportunities

- 4.1 There is the risk that demand could increase following court decisions. Action to mitigate this risk includes discussions about the policy and toolkit having been had HM Family Court Officer and Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) to advise them of changes to our practice and specific training for Social Workers on contact and giving evidence to ensure they are confident both in their assessment and when giving evidence in the court arena.
- 4.2 There is the risk that the cost of commissioned contact will increase as part of the tendering process. This risk is being mitigated through the creation of a robust specification and consideration of contractual mechanisms such as price capping.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The local authority has a duty to promote contact under the Children Act 1989. Section 34 places a duty on local authorities to allow the child in its care, reasonable contact with parents and 'other persons' prescribed within s34 (1) of the act. This duty exists in the absence of any orders for contact. If no agreement is reached on what level of contact should be afforded to the child and its parents (or others), the Act provides for the court to make orders by its own motion when making a care order for the child. This proposal seeks to ensure compliance with legal obligations to provide reasonable contact for Looked after Children.

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

- 6.1 A contact event for contact providers took place on 15th September 2016 involving 12 organisations, including 3 of our current providers. This event allowed commissioning and operational officers from Children's Services to discuss and propose a range of different arrangements and gave providers an opportunity to inform the creation of a new framework process.
- 6.2 Consultation took place with the New Belongings Group as part of the development of the supervised contact procedure as well as sessions with social workers to inform the development of our procedure, guidance and toolkit. There have been discussions with the HM Family Court Officer and CAFCASS to advise them of changes to our practice that will follow the implementation of the new procedure. Foster Carer consultation is scheduled for October 2016.

7. **Equality Implications**

- 7.1 A full equality impact assessment will be carried out.

PORTFOLIO: Children's Services and Education

Directorate and Service Area: Children's Services, Children's Safeguarding

Option: Reduce or identify alternative contribution towards Children's Safeguarding Board

Saving Reference: 12

1. Financial Proposal

	Net Saving		
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020
	£	£	£
Estimated Saving	0	58,035	58,035
Revenue Investment	0	0	0
Net Saving	0	58,035	58,035
Capital investment	0	0	0

2. Description of the Proposal

- 2.1 To seek to reduce the Council contribution towards the running of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) in line with the contributions of other local partners. The local authority has historically contributed the largest proportion of funding to the LSCB.

Statutory partners include the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), health care providers, West Midlands Police, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCAS) and both parts of the Probation Service.

The financial contributions for CAFCAS, the police and the probation service to LSCB are established via a national formula. The contributions made by the CCG and local health providers are determined by those agencies locally.

Attempts over the previous 12 months to increase partner contributions or seek additional partners have not been successful.

- 2.2 It is proposed to reduce the Council's contribution from £141k to £25k by 2019/20 to allow the opportunity to manage down the reduction in contribution and allow for further regional discussions to take place.
- 2.3 The proposed reduction in the local authority contribution to the LSCB could be achieved by ceasing or reducing some or all of the following:
- The service level agreement with Children's workforce development
 - Regional CSE work
 - The contract to provide and update the LSCB manual

- The contract with the Virtual College for the provision of e-learning and Section 11 audit tool
 - The training co-ordinator's post
 - The data analyst post
 - Hours worked by the Business Manager and other supporting officers
 - Humber of days worked by the independent chairperson
- 2.4 It is proposed to implement the reduction from April 2018, however there may be opportunities to implement changes earlier where deemed appropriate
- 2.5 The Children Act 2004 requires the local authority to establish a LSCB which is independently chaired. The statutory guidance subsequently issued states that:
- Each local authority is required to establish a LSCB with a range of specified organisations addition to the local authority who must be represented (sec13 Children Act 2004) and
 - Outlines the objectives of the LSCB to co-ordinate activity in order to promote safeguarding and the welfare of children in the area and ensure effectiveness (Section14 Children Act 2004).
- 2.6 LSCB's have a range of roles and statutory functions including developing local safeguarding policy and procedures and scrutinising local arrangements. The statutory objectives and functions of the LSCB are as follows:

Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 sets out that the functions of the LSCB, in relation to the above objectives under section 14 of the Children Act 2004, as follows:

- (a) Developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:
- The action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention
 - Training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children
 - Recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children
 - Investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children
 - Safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered
 - Co-operation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners.
- (b) Communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so.
- (c) Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve.

- (d) Participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority.
- (e) Undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.

2.7 Neither the legislation nor the guidance is prescriptive as to how the functions listed above are carried out; however, the effectiveness of the LSCB is subject to external regulatory inspection by Ofsted; the outcome of which is published nationally.

3. **Implications Associated With Proposal**

3.1 **Corporate Plan**

The roles and statutory functions of the LSCB are reflected in the corporate plan to deliver lifelong wealth and happiness and support the priority that children and adults are safe from harm. Any reduction in the ability of the Board to deliver its statutory duties and strategic priorities relating to deliver improved arrangements that safeguard children and young people and to identify and prevent maltreatment, violence, neglect and sexual exploitation will potentially be negative.

3.2 **Customers**

The provision of a LSCB is a statutory function to co-ordinate activity to promote safeguarding and welfare of children in Walsall. This includes developing and delivering policies and procedures to ensure the wellbeing and safeguarding of children in the local authority area; the training of persons working with children affecting the safety and welfare of children; monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of work undertaken by the local authority and partner agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; undertaking serious case reviews and promoting the lessons learnt (Regulation 5 LSCB Regulations 2006)

As such, cessation is not an option and currently there is no option to sub contract or buy in the functions of the safeguarding board from elsewhere.

Reducing the existing capacity of the safeguarding board could have a direct effect on children and young people who need to be kept safe from harm, thus impacting on the local authority's ability to deliver its corporate priority relating to lifelong health and happiness.

3.3 **Employees / Staffing**

The LSCB Business Unit staff currently consists of:

- 1 full time Board Manager
- 1 full time administrator and child death overview co-ordinator
- 1 0.4 fte Training and Development Co-ordinator

➤ 1 0.4 fte Data Analyst

The independent chairperson is employed 3 days a month. A reduction in budget will result in reduction in staff.

3.4 **Partners**

Implementing the savings outlined above would mean that the Board would deliver no training and that the development and updating of any policies and procedures would have to be individually negotiated with Board members each time this was required. Ensuring that the business of the Board was delivered would require 'in kind' support from partners and the local authority. Mitigating the impact of any reduction will require a different response from across the partnership to supporting the activity of the Board, delivery of training and provision and analysis of data required to demonstrate effectiveness. It should be noted that attempts to secure additional in kind support from the wider partnership during the previous 12 months has been unsuccessful.

3.5 **Economic Implications**

There are no economic implications arising from this proposal.

3.6 **Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications arising from this proposal.

3.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

The roles and statutory functions of the safeguarding children board are reflected in the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy to provide every child with the best start in life which itself reflects the principle established in 'Fair Society Healthy Lives'. Any reduction in the ability of the Board to deliver its statutory duties and strategic priorities relating to deliver improved arrangements that safeguard children and young people and to identify and prevent maltreatment, violence, neglect and sexual exploitation will potentially be negative.

3.8 **Other Council Services**

There has been no consultation with other Council services thus far. The impact of implementing all the proposed changes would primarily affect those council services that access the safeguarding board's training programme.

3.9 **Procurement / Social Value Implications**

There are no procurement activities within these proposals and therefore no direct implications for the Social Value Policy.

4. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

- 4.1 There is a potential impact on the Councils reputation with partners and a risk that partners also seek a corresponding reduction in their contributions and the impact on the ability to therefore meet statutory requirements of the service. Regional and national reputation risk of a poor inspection resulting in a judgement of Inadequate for Walsall Safeguarding Children Board.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Local Safeguarding Children Boards were established by the Children Act 2004. The legal implications are set out in section 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 above.

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

- 6.1 There is no previous consultation to draw on. Consultation will be undertaken with relevant partners and stakeholders.

7. **Equality Implications**

- 7.1 A full equality impact assessment will be carried out. Children and young people impacted by any changes to the functioning of the Board will come from all parts of our community. This will therefore include those with protected characteristics by virtue of their gender, faith, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religious belief and unborn children (pregnancy and maternity).

PORTFOLIO: Children's Services and Education

Directorate and Service Area: Children's Services, Youth Services

Option: Review & Reduce Youth Services and align functions to the 0-19 Early Hep locality model

Saving Reference: 13

1. Financial Proposal

	Net Saving		
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020
	£	£	£
Estimated Saving	266,500	421,301	110,572
Revenue Investment	0	0	0
Net Saving	266,500	421,301	110,572
Capital investment	0	0	0

2. Description of the Proposal

2.1 Children's Services youth services comprises 2 elements:

- Children Services direct delivery of targeted youth work (TYW), including delivered via centre based detached work, targeted programmes and holiday activities.
- Commission provision of targeted youth work through 11 different Voluntary and Community based organisations.

2.2 It is proposed to achieve this proposal by:

- Integrating youth work activities and provision currently delivered by Children's services TYW team within the 0-19 Family Support locality teams. The work which is focussed on vulnerable young people and the programmes of activity, which are targeted at reducing anti social behaviour aligns closely with the work undertaken by the recently developed 0-19 Family Support.
- Purposefully bring together and integrate these work strands (although with a reduced resource) to strengthen effective and timely whole family/whole community working and to ensure evidence informed help continues to be available to those young people and families who need it most.
- Cease all commissioned TYW activity over two years. This is a proposed reduction of 50% by April 2017 and end of provision by 1st April 2018 (already agreed as part of 16/17 budget consultation).

2.3 Under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, the Council has a duty to secure for young people aged 13-19 and those aged 20-24 with a learning difficulty or disability, so far as is reasonably practicable, a local offer of access to sufficient educational or recreational leisure-time activities and facilities that is sufficient to

meet local needs and improve young people's well-being and personal and social development. There are also responsibilities to effectively publicise the overall local offer of all services and activities available to young people and their families and to involve young people in the decision making about, and monitoring of, the relevance and effectiveness of services.

3. Implications Associated With Proposal

3.1 Corporate Plan

The proposals will impact on following Cooperate Priorities:

- Children and adults are safe from Harm and
- Targeted Early Support Where needed, supporting the vulnerable

A reduction in Children's Services early help resource and ceasing the commissioned TYW programmes will mean a reduction in community resource to proactively engage young people and may ultimately result in less opportunity to identify vulnerable young people and take action to prevent issues from escalation.

This may result in:

- Increase in anti-social behaviour, youth crime and an adverse impact on community cohesion and Prevent agenda
- Reduction in support to vulnerable and disengaged young people
- Poorer long term health and social outcomes

3.2 Customers

3.2.1 There is a Statutory duty on the Council to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, a local offer for young people aged 13-19 and those aged 20-24 with a learning difficulty or disability, of access to sufficient educational or recreational leisure-time activities and facilities that is sufficient to meet local needs and improve young people's well-being and personal and social development.

3.2.2 There are also responsibilities to effectively publicise the overall local offer of all services and activities available to young people and their families and to involve young people in the decision making about, and monitoring of, the relevance and effectiveness of services. This responsibility is under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996.

3.2.3 The proposal will see the loss of activities and services to young people however it is anticipated to continue to provide targeted programmes to our most vulnerable young people as part of the 0-19 Early Help Locality Model.

3.2.4 The four 0-19 early help partnership model have developed their locality profile outlining the key needs and challenges related to children, young people and their communities this includes needs in specific related to young people. A partnership plan is in place to address these needs and will need to be reviewed in light of reduced local authority directly delivered and commissioned resources to

mitigate against any adverse effect on vulnerable young people and their communities

- 3.2.5 As part of the early help partnership model we are planning to developing young people 'Champion group', working closely with the Youth of Walsall group – enabling young people to play a vital part in the effective development of Early Help Services.
- 3.2.6 The Early Help 0-19 Family Support teams will remain to deliver targeted programmes to our most vulnerable young people including Young Carers, SEND, Looked After Children, Children at risk of CSE and young people at risk of TP and Anti Social Behaviour.
- 3.2.7 There remains a wide range of young people activity provided by the voluntary, community and private sector (independent from council funding). Walsall Voluntary Action is a key partner within our locality model to ensure that the key services are linked in to the locality profile and the plan.
- 3.2.8 In addition there is a wide range of sports, clubs and organisations offering activities. This provision is not necessarily targeted at the 13-19 age range or the most vulnerable. However, it does contribute a substantial volume of local and accessible activities for the wider youth population.
- 3.2.9 The duty to publicise the local activity off to young people and their families will continue to be met through the Early Help Hub and the Walsall Service Guide.

3.3 **Employees / Staffing**

The proposal will affect around 14 full time equivalent (FTE) Community Associated staff and 7 FTE council employed staff.

3.4 **Partners**

Through the Early Help locality partnership we will continue to work closely with partners including schools, Police, Health, Housing Providers, Community (including Faith) and Voluntary sector to ensure that the needs of young people in the localities is understood and a partnership response is agreed and impact is monitored.

3.5 **Economic Implications**

No direct economic implications are anticipated.

3.6 **Environmental Implications**

No direct environmental implications are anticipated aside from a potential risk of increase in youth related ASB.

3.7 Health and wellbeing implications

Although there will be a reduced resource to support young people the Early Help locality partnership will remain responsible for identifying young people's needs early and respond appropriately and effectively to prevent deterioration and empower young people and their community to secure sustainable outcomes (This is in line with the Early Help Strategy agreed by the partnership in September 2015).

Aligning the TYW functions to the Early Help locality model will ensure that the partnership continues to have a shared responsibility to target resources to ensure we reduce inequalities related to young people and their communities.

We will continue to fully engage young people (through Community Champions) in the development and monitoring of services and programmes to ensure we meet the Marmot objectives.

3.8 Other Council Services

We will work closely with the Area Partnerships, Community Safety Services (ASB and Prevent team), Change and Governance (Equalities Lead) and to ensure we mitigate against adverse effects on anti social behaviour and community cohesion.

3.9 Procurement / Social Value Implications

This proposal includes the de-commissioning of TYW from a range of community and voluntary sector providers.

4. Associated Risks / Opportunities

- 1 There is a risk of a potential increase in youth related crime and youth related Anti-Social Behaviour over and a reduction in the ability to support both the community cohesion and Prevent agendas.
- 2 There may also be a reputational risk with partners and providers (particularly related to phased reduction and termination of contracts) as youth provision is reduced.
- 3 There are opportunities through closer alignment of the Targeted Youth Work functions and agenda to locality to mitigate against the above risks by:
 - Working with young people – through the development of locality Community Champions.
 - Review locality partnership profiles and profiles to ensure the needs of young people are fully understood and the partnership responds effectively.
 - Provide support to our Voluntary and community Sector to reduce the gap in provision and support capacity building in the third sector as set out in the Early Help Strategy.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 No direct legal implications. Minimum statutory requirements will be met.

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

6.1 Proposals to cease commissioned TYW formed part of the budget consultation in 2016/17. Further consultation on integration of the Children's Services TYW functions and agenda as part of the 0-19 Family Support Teams will align to the planned consultation on the proposal to review and develop the Children Centre Service as part of a 0-19 Early Help locality model, which is scheduled between 27th October and 23rd December 2016.

7. **Equality Implications**

7.1 A full equality impact assessment will be carried out.

PORTFOLIO: Children’s Services and Education

Directorate and Service Area: Children’s Services, School Improvement

Option: Cease or identify alternative funding to support School Improvement Services

Saving Reference: 14

1. Financial Proposal

	Net Saving		
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020
	£	£	£
Estimated Saving	235,599	271,198	135,599
Revenue Investment	0	0	0
Net Saving	235,599	271,198	135,599
Capital investment	0	0	0

2. Description of the Proposal

2.1 Cease or identify alternative funding to support School Improvement Services

Implement a revised model of delivery in future years based on a locality School Improvement model, with Teaching Schools taking the lead on sector-led developments to secure high quality teaching, learning and leadership.

2.2 To move to a self-sustaining and high quality model of School Improvement by 2020, when funding for non-statutory School Improvement services is likely to cease, it is necessary to reduce centrally delivered services and develop a mechanism for sector-led delivery.

Initially there will be a reduction in centrally delivered support to schools, whilst working with Teaching Schools and other quality assured providers to ensure school to school support. Consultation will start on the setting up of a School Improvement Commissioning Group (or similar) to plan and evaluate the impact of sector-led support to schools in most need.

The year 1 saving will be made through a combination of voluntary reduction in staffing and an increase in traded income.

The local authority will work with Headteacher representatives on the Commissioning Group to produce the first annual commissioning plan drawn from a needs analysis to identify priorities across the borough and in localities.

The commissioning plan will be presented to the School Improvement Commissioning Group and members of Schools Forum for ratification, whereupon Schools Forum will be asked to agree to the use of DSG to support School Improvement activities contained within the plan.

Ultimately by 2020, the proposed total fund could be divided into three strands; namely, the School Improvement Commissioning Fund, a Schools Causing Concern fund and an element to fund the centrally retained School Improvement services.

- 2.3 There are no anticipated property, capital or revenue investment requirements associated with this proposal.
- 2.4 It is recognised that the implementation date may not be 1 April 2017, due to statutory consultation arrangements and agreed redundancy dates, etc.
- 2.5 Current DfE legislation requires local authorities to perform a number of statutory functions related to School Improvement, as outlined below. Pending any changes to DfE guidance, it is envisaged that these statutory functions would be performed by a centrally retained School Improvement team, whilst the non-statutory function would be carried out as agreed by the School Improvement Commissioning Group.

Aspect	Duty
Appointment of Staff, Including Heads	To monitor the appointment, management and dismissal of staff. To support and advise the governors and represent the DCS at the appointment of Head teachers of maintained schools.
Assessment KS1	To moderate KS1 assessments in at least 25% of schools. To monitor at least 10% of schools before, during and after the phonics screening check and submit to the DfE. To offer training and advice on all aspects of assessments at KS1 and have electronic systems for submission. To ensure security of assessment documents by making schools aware of their obligations.
Assessment KS2	To moderate at least 25% of end of KS2 writing Teacher Assessments. To monitor at least 15% of schools before, during and after SAT's administration, in accordance with STA requirements. To visit at least 10% schools administering KS2 tests for monitoring purposes. To offer training and advice on all aspects of assessments at KS2, including extra time applications. To ensure security of assessment documents by making schools aware of their obligations.

Curriculum	To ensure that maintained primary and secondary schools follow the National Curriculum and provision for SRE, along with any assessment regulations.
Early Years	To work with other agencies, such as the NHS, to achieve early years outcome duties. To ensure that EYFS assessments are accurate. Annual collection of EYFS data.
Governance	To appoint parent representatives to LA committees dealing with education. To manage the process of appointing LA governors to governing bodies. To produce and provide the Instrument of Government for maintained schools and federations. To provide sufficient free information and guidance to governors so as to allow them to do their job.
Children who are Looked After	Promote educational achievement of looked after children.
NQT Induction	To be the appropriate body and quality assure induction and take decisions about satisfactory completion of the NQT year.
Religious Education	To establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and prepare an agreed syllabus for RE.
Safeguarding	Ensure that all types of schools, including academies fulfil their duties to safeguard pupils and promote their welfare. The duty rests with governors.
Schools Causing Concern	To provide early intervention in schools causing concern. To take firm action where improvements are not rapid enough. This could include applying to the Secretary of State to appoint an IEB.
School Inspection	To provide information for LA inspections. To prepare a LA statement of action where a school is judged inadequate.

3. **Implications Associated With Proposal**

3.1 **Corporate Plan**

There will be no change to current priorities as outlined in the plan.

3.2 **Customers**

Statutory functions are outlined in section 2 above.

If the proposal is not approved, an alternative would be to continue with the current model of support and challenge from a centrally retained team, but with

the requirement for the team to become self financing. This is not deemed to be a realistic proposition, as traded income is unlikely to be sufficient to cover costs.

3.3 Employees / Staffing

It is anticipated that there will be a reduction of 2 or 3 FTE in the school improvement team in year 1, but that this can be achieved through voluntary agreement.

3.4 Partners

In year 1, in a move towards a sector-led model of school improvement, there will be a reduction in the LA school improvement team, with serving Head teachers providing additional capacity as School Improvement Partners. Consultation on the setting up of a School Improvement Commissioning Group will start, involving Head teachers and other stakeholders. This consultation will involve schools forum in a proposal to use de-delegated funds to support future school improvement across the borough.

In year 2, the School Improvement Commissioning Group will identify borough-wide and locality priorities to inform an overall plan, working with Teaching Schools and alliances to agree their contributions.

In year 3, the School Improvement Commissioning Group will take responsibility for producing an annual, costed plan, which will be presented to Schools Forum for ratification.

By 2020, it is anticipated that the sector-led model will be fully operational.

3.5 Economic Implications

This proposal depends upon the development of a School Improvement Commissioning Group, with the suggestion of de-delegated funds to deliver a co-ordinated School Improvement model to address the borough's priorities. It is anticipated that the group would also seek to secure additional funds, e.g. through targeted grants from the National College, as and when they become available.

3.6 Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

3.7 Health and wellbeing implications

The Council has a statutory duty to promote health and wellbeing. This proposal supports that duty by reflecting a number of the key objectives in the Marmot Review, particularly around giving every child the best start in life, and by enabling all children and young people to maximise their capabilities.

3.8 **Other Council Services**

Not directly applicable.

3.9 **Procurement / Social Value Implications**

Not directly applicable

4. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

- 1 This is a significant change and there may be some slippage in schools picking up their new obligations, and thus an ongoing need in the short term for the Council to continue to support schools with this work stream.
- 2 Additionally the timetable for the school funding consultation has now been pushed back by a year, however there has been no confirmation regarding any associated change in the changes to school improvement. Therefore there is a risk that the timetable for this change in responsibility may be moved back and savings set out for 2017/2018 will therefore be at risk.
- 3 If schools do not approve the proposal to establish a school-led model, there is an opportunity to further develop the traded service, where the core School Improvement team work with Teaching Schools and other quality assured providers to continue to support and challenge schools. This would necessitate the creation of income targets to sustain the service.
- 4 There is an associated risk with the above, that the schools will not seek to buy back these services at a level required to fund ongoing work, leading to an inevitable cessation of the service.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Council has a duty to provide a number of statutory services relating especially to assessment, SEN and governance. The Council would be failing in its duty if it did not provide these services.

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

- 6.1 Initial engagement took place at a Director of Children's Services Head teacher Briefing last academic year, during which it was clear that Head teachers wished to retain a core service for School Improvement, as part of the development of a school to school support model.

The School Improvement team was restructured to reflect the move towards sector-led improvement, with School Improvement Partner job descriptions amended accordingly and a manager post created to co-ordinate this work. Full consultation took place with Head teachers and professional associations regarding these changes.

7. **Equality Implications**

- 7.1 A full equality impact assessment will be carried out.