

8 NOVEMBER 2018

Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2018/19 – 2021/22

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr T Wilson – Children's and Health and Wellbeing

Executive Summary:

The draft revenue budget and capital programme, as reported to Cabinet on 24 October 2018, includes the latest medium term financial outlook for the four year period from 2018/19 to 2021/22.

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

Feedback from this Committee on the draft proposals will be reported back to Cabinet on 12 December 2018. This will inform the final draft budget to be considered by Cabinet on 13 February 2019 to be recommended to Council on 28 February 2019. Any changes to Cabinet's December draft revenue budget proposals as a result of equality impact assessments and consultation will be fed into the final budget report.

Reason for scrutiny:

To enable consultation of the draft budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, and for any feedback to be reported back to Cabinet on 12 December 2018.

Recommendations:

That:

1. The Committee is recommended to consider the draft revenue budget and capital programme attached that relate to the remit of this committee.
2. The Committee are asked to note that consultation will be undertaken on all new 2019/20 policy savings shown in **appendix 3a**, and that feedback will be presented to Cabinet on 12 December 2018.

Background papers:

Various financial working papers.

Resource and legal considerations:

Cabinet on 24 October 2018 were presented with a list of proposed revenue savings and investments for consultation, and indicative revenue cash limits.

The full Cabinet report can be accessed at the following link: [Draft Budget](#)

Savings proposals

A number of the 2019/20 savings were part of the budget plan approved by Council in February 2018, the majority of which were operational (implemented through officer delegations). These are approved and are included within the cash limits at **appendix 1** - these savings total £0.67m for services within the remit of this committee.

There is a further £0.28m of policy savings requiring consultation (**appendix 3a** – those with a direct impact on services and which require an Executive decision to proceed) and £1.47m of new operational savings (**appendix 3b** – savings which officers have delegations to implement). Additionally, a further £1.33m of existing action plans to manage the 2018/19 pressures have been reviewed and can continue into 2019/20 – shown as base budget realignments on the cash limit at **appendix 1**.

As a council, we anticipate a further £13.94m of savings required in 2020/21 and £7.56m in 2021/22. It is expected that the refreshed transformation programme (Walsall Proud Programme as reported to Cabinet on 24 October 2018) will incorporate an organisational wide programme of change activity, with the breadth and pace of this being such that this will contribute significantly to delivering the required savings in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Investment / cost pressures

A number of investment / cost pressures have been identified and included in the draft budget proposals. Those relating to the remit of this Committee are shown as **Appendix 2**.

Capital Programme

Capital programme resources are limited. The financing for capital investment is heavily reliant on grants and other funding received from the Government, with the remaining flexibility through capital receipts and borrowing.

Despite the above difficulties, significant investment is planned and funded over the four years 2018/19 to 2021/22. The council is able to fund existing commitments and has, through prioritisation of bids and resources and sound treasury management, been able to support new investment into key services, and areas of capital investment need.

The capital programme is presented in two parts:

- Council funded programme - funded by the council's own resources, through borrowing, revenue contributions and receipts. **Appendix 5** summarises those schemes relating to the remit of this committee.
- Externally funded programme - funded from capital grants and third party contributions. There are no schemes relating to the remit of this committee.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

In order to meet the council's purpose and vision, the council will be focussing its' energy over the next four years on the following key priorities, recognising that it must do so with decreased and decreasing resources and concentrating efforts on those most in need:

- **Economic growth** for all people, communities and businesses.
- **People** have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.
- **Internal Focus** – all council services are efficient and effective.
- **Children** have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
- **Communities** are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion.

Citizen impact:

Details of potential impact are identified within the policy paper attached at **Appendix 4**.

Environmental impact:

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

Performance management:

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

Reducing inequalities:

Service managers have regard to equalities delivering services and identifying saving options. Equality impact assessments are being undertaken as required prior to final recommendations being made to Council on the budget, along with any mitigating actions. The majority of the Children's Services savings are based upon the review of needs and how that need is met within statutory requirements.

Consultation:

Consultation is an integral part of the corporate budget process and ongoing arrangements are in hand to consult with a wide range of stakeholders as appropriate (i.e. councillors, residents, service users, business sector, voluntary and community organisations, etc.). This is outlined in the budget report to Cabinet on 24 October 2018.

Feedback from consultation, including those from this committee, will be presented to Cabinet for their consideration. Any changes to the draft budget proposals, including arising from consultation, will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

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Indicative revenue cash limit for 2018/19 to 2021/22

The following table summarises the indicative cash limit for services within the remit of the Children's Services Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £
Opening cash limit		51,776,596	50,428,665	50,895,185
Base budget adjustments including funding changes *		(1,328,234)	235,055	235,256
Investment / Pressures – see <i>Appendix 2</i>		2,401,857	2,887,141	2,012,500
Approved Savings				
Review and reduce Youth Services and align functions to the 0-19 Early Help locality model		(110,572)		
Review and reduce Early Help 0-19 model		(100,000)		
Review and reduce Children's Social Care Workforce Training & Practice Development		(44,744)		
Review demand for SEN short breaks		(140,000)		
Reduce agency social workers		(227,000)		
Review and reduce Children's Youth Justice Services or identify alternative contributions		(50,000)		
Less Policy Savings proposals for consultation – see <i>Appendix 3a</i>		(281,000)		
Less New Operational savings proposals – see <i>Appendix 3b</i>		(1,468,238)		
Less Provisional Savings requirement			(2,655,676)	(1,441,087)
Children's Services draft cash limit – scrutiny remit only	51,776,596	50,428,665	50,895,185	51,701,854

APPENDIX 2

Summary of Revenue Investments / Cost Pressures 2019/20 – 2020/21

Detail of investment / cost pressure	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £
Demand / cost pressures	1,709,884	2,000,000	2,000,000
Ongoing staffing resource for Children's Commissioning and Placements function to support Looked After Children controls/savings/placement function	0	112,500	112,500
Less Children's Social Care recruitment and retention programme - associated with caseload guarantees and agreed as part of 2017/18 budget setting	(254,000)	(255,000)	(100,000)
Fall out of troubled families grant	0	1,029,641	0
Children's Social Care demand pressures	655,000	0	0
Temporary childcare income shortfalls	23,500	0	0
Support to Children's transformation programme	151,040	0	0
Administrative services (2018/19 shortfall)	116,433	0	0
Total Revenue Investments – scrutiny remit only	2,401,857	2,887,141	2,012,500

APPENDIX 3a

Policy Proposals 2019/20 for Consultation

Detail of Policy Saving / Efficiency	2019/20 £
Review of residential short break provision for children and young people with a disability (see Appendix 4 for policy paper)	(172,000)
Review of contracts within Toxic Trio for perpetrator and counselling services – this will be subject to a future Cabinet decision, and therefore a policy paper is not required at this stage	(109,000)
Total Policy Proposals – scrutiny remit only	(281,000)

APPENDIX 3b

New Operational Proposals 2019/20

Detail of Operational Saving / Efficiency	2019/20 £
Review of Supported Accommodation Framework	(300,000)
General efficiencies across directorate	(138,238)
Additional traded income within Information Services	(30,000)
Review administrative services across Children's directorate and efficiencies expected through the implementation of new ICT functionality	(200,000)
Continuation of managed Looked after children placements along with the introduction of a Resource Allocation Panel approach to care packages	(300,000)
Review of preventative services and cessation of casual pool	(500,000)
Total New Operational Savings – scrutiny remit only	(1,468,238)

PORTFOLIO: CHILDREN'S AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING

SERVICE AREA AND DIRECTORATE: Children's Services

Proposal: Review of residential short break provision for children and young people with a disability1. **Financial Proposal**

	2019 / 2020
	£
Estimated Saving	(172,000)
Revenue Investment	0
Net Saving	(172,000)
Capital investment	0

2. **Description of the Proposal**

- 2.1 The local authority has a responsibility to provide short break services and make it clear how families can access these. Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 and the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 require local authorities to provide services which are designed to give respite breaks for carers of children with disabilities in order to assist carers to continue to provide care or to do so more effectively.
- 2.2 Walsall Children's services has, since October 2013, delivered residential short breaks for children and young people with a disability in Bluebells which is a purpose built home providing 6 beds. While this has met the majority of needs, there is a small cohort of young people whose needs are met in provision purchased from external providers in neighbouring authorities.
- 2.3 The eligibility for Residential Short Breaks is determined through an assessment of need undertaken by their allocated social worker from the Children with Disabilities Team. Referrals are made to Bluebells with approval and review of these packages undertaken by the Complex Care Panel. In addition to planned short breaks, young people known to the service can be accommodated at times of crisis; there have also been occasions when this has happened for children and young people with disabilities not receiving planned short breaks to try and prevent family breakdown. This aims to provide support, while the family is in crisis to prevent them coming into care or has on a number of occasions supported looked after children within their foster placement to prevent placement breakdown.
- 2.4 There are currently 26 children and young people who receive regular short breaks at Bluebells, of these 3 young people are Wolverhampton residents and access the service through an inter-authority Agreement. Children and young people receive different packages of care, ranging from 12 to 84 nights a year.

- 2.5 In the next 12 months, 5 young people, including 1 from Wolverhampton will turn 18 and move on from the service. This equates to a further reduction of 228 nights a year. However, there will be a corresponding demand from younger children newly referred to the service and changes in some of the lower care packages, which tend to increase as children become teenagers with potentially more challenging behaviours.
- 2.6 The demand for Bluebells has reduced since it opened in 2013, with families receiving short breaks in the home or community. In July 2015 there were 32 children and young people receiving support at Bluebells.
- 2.7 The proposal is to respond to the reduction in demand for residential short breaks at Bluebells by reviewing the availability of the service and reducing the opening times to 4 days out of 7 (including weekends) during term time with the flexibility to open during the week during school holidays. This will ensure children and young people with disabilities and their families are supported with overnight short breaks which offer positive opportunities to families; while ensuring these are delivered in a more efficient manner, responding to changes in demand in the settings in which short breaks are delivered.
- 2.8 However, in relation to children and young people accessing this service, a further review of overnight residential short breaks will be undertaken to look at current and future need for this support; and this will be discussed as part of the consultation process.

3. **Implications Associated With Proposal**

3.1 **Council Corporate Plan Priorities**

Children have the best start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.

The provision of short breaks supports the Corporate Plan priority by ensuring that children and young people and their families receive positive residential short break opportunities, which support them living within their families. Thereby supporting Children's Services aim that; 'The right child, in the right place, at the right time for the right amount of time.'

3.2 **Customers**

The council has a responsibility to provide a range of short breaks and make it clear to families how they can access these.

In summary, the Short Breaks Regulations require local authorities to do three things:

- to ensure that, when making short break provision, they have regard to the needs of different types of carers, not just those who would be unable to continue to provide care without a break;
- to provide a range of breaks, as appropriate, during the day, night, at weekends and during the school holidays; and
- to provide parents with a short breaks services statement detailing the range of available breaks and any eligibility criteria attached to them.

Residential short breaks have traditionally been provided at Bluebells, with a small number of children and young people accessing a similar service in the external market if their needs cannot be met in house, there are currently 4 young people whose need is met in this way.

An options paper was considered by Children's Services Divisional Management Team, which identified a range of options, including out-sourcing the service. Service mapping indicates that there is not a local provider who could meet the range of needs currently met by Bluebells. It is also difficult to confidently cost the impact of this as nightly residential short break rates are often then inflated by additional staff costs. These are often required to undertake particular areas of support around personal care or when supporting children and young people in activities outside of the short break home.

3.3 Employees / Staffing

There is a staff team employed at Bluebells comprising 19 posts, including 8 FTE's and 11 posts working different part time hours.

3.4 Partners

Work is required with Adult Services to plan implications for transition of young people as they move on from Bluebells and in to independence. Discussions will need to take place with Walsall CCG to identify impact on the health needs of children and young people with disabilities in any changes to residential short break services. Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG contributes 50% towards a specific placement at Bluebells.

Formal discussions will take place to review the service delivered to children and young people from Wolverhampton to look at how these needs can be met within the reconfigured service.

3.5 Economic Implications

None specifically identified as part of this proposal.

3.6 Environmental Implications

None specifically identified as part of this proposal.

3.7 Health and wellbeing implications

This proposal supports the retention of this crucial support service for children and young people with disabilities and their families. The intention is to re-shape the service in response to the reduced demand by establishing a set pattern of weekly short breaks operating over a 4 day period each week offering weekend breaks. It is proposed to extend this service during the school holiday period to 7 days a week to ensure that families receive support at times which can be pressured for them.

This proposal supports the council's duty to promote health and wellbeing by strengthening and maintaining families; giving every child the best start in life and enabling them to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives.

3.8 **Other Council Services**

The Short Breaks budget provides a range of community based after school and holiday club provision, including buddies to support inclusion of children and young people with a disability in mainstream activities and the purchase of a limited number of residential short breaks provided by independent sector providers. There is a potential impact on these short break services along with a possible increase in the frequency of which external residential short break provision will need to be purchased. Work is needed to scope this impact in further detail as savings are also planned from this budget.

3.9 **Procurement / Social Value Implications**

This will be addressed as part of any required procurement.

4. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

4.1 Further work is required to establish any impact on individual children, young people and their families. It is envisaged that the proposed reduction in opening times for Bluebells will not result in a reduction in the number of nights outlined in current care packages; although there will be some changes to the nights that children and young people will be receiving the service. Therefore there is no planned change in the quantity of the service rather a change in how this is delivered. This risk will be mitigated by review of current care plans to ensure these do not result in a reduction in service unless indicated by an assessment of need.

4.2 The reduction in the opening times will also limit the ability to respond to crisis or emergency situations for families currently accessing Bluebells. There have been several occasions where families are at crisis point and require additional support at short notice. This can help to prevent admissions to care by supporting families and enabling the young person to return home in a planned way with a package of support in place.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 The Short Breaks Regulations provide further detail on how local authorities must perform their duty in the Children Act 1989 (“the 1989 Act”) to provide, as part of the range of services they provide for families, breaks from caring for carers of disabled children to support them to continue to care for their children at home and to allow them to do so more effectively.

5.2 Residential short breaks can be provided under s20 or s17 of the Children Act 1989. Children and young people receiving in excess of 75 nights a year will be looked after under s20, an IRO appointed and a short break plan drawn up.

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

6.1 Comprehensive consultation was undertaken in 2016 with families around short breaks proposals, which aimed to review the short breaks, provided outside of Bluebells. A consultation plan for the current savings proposal is being developed.

7. **Reducing Inequalities Implications**

7.1 A full equalities impact assessment will be carried out.

Draft Capital Programme 2019/20 to 2021/22
– Council Funded Schemes

Detail of investment / cost pressure	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £
<i>Prior Year Approvals</i>			
Supporting transformation - Looked after children – out of borough placements. To fund increased in- borough bed capacity	150,000	150,000	0
Supporting transformation - Looked after children – 2/3 bedroomed small residential home targeted to accommodate children per year	60,000	60,000	0
Total Council Funded Programme for scrutiny remit	210,000	210,000	0