

**24 November 2015**

**Resource Allocation 2016/17 to 2019/20: Draft Revenue Budget for Consultation**

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolio:** Councillor E Hughes – Care and Safeguarding  
Councillor C Towe – Learning Skills and Apprenticeships

**Summary of report**

This report outlines the portfolio plans for future service delivery for the Children's Social Care element of the Care and Safeguarding Portfolio and the Access and Achievement services elements of Learning Skills and Apprenticeships Portfolio. This includes Cabinet's draft revenue budget proposals for 2016/17 to 2019/20 for consultation, for the panel to consider and make recommendations to Cabinet if they so choose. The Budget Consultation proposals for care and safeguarding (Children's Services only) are outlined in **Appendix 1** and for Access and Achievement Service in **Appendix 2**.

**Recommendation**

The panel are recommended to:-

1. Consider the portfolio plans for future service delivery and draft revenue proposals in this report and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

**Background papers**

Various financial working papers.

**Reason for scrutiny**

To enable consultation and scrutiny of the draft portfolio plans and draft revenue budget proposals for 2016/17 to 2019/20.

**Resource and legal considerations**

Cabinet on 28 October 2015 presented their draft portfolio plans on future service delivery, including the draft revenue budget for 2016/17 to 2019/20 for consultation.

The full budget papers can be accessed with this link:

[Resource Allocation 2016/17 to 2019/20: Draft Revenue Budget for Consultation](#)

The report includes the context in which the draft budget has been set, including the reference to council priorities and consultation arrangements.

Attached to this report are the portfolio plans applicable to the remit of this panel.

### **Citizen impact**

The budget is aligned with Council priorities. Further details are shown within the policy papers attached to this report.

### **Environmental impact**

The impact on the environment is considered in all budget 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.

### **Equality Implications**

Service managers have regard to equalities in setting budgets and delivering services. Equality impact assessments have been undertaken as required prior to final recommendations being made to Council on the budget. The majority of the Children's Social Care reductions proposed are based upon individual assessments and reviews of needs and how they are met within statutory requirements.

### **Consultation**

This is a specific meeting for scrutiny to consider the draft revenue budget for 2016/17 to 2019/20.

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 budget report to Cabinet on 28 October 2015.

An update on feedback from consultation will include scrutiny members' comments and will be presented to Cabinet on 16 December 2015 for their consideration.

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

### **Contact Officers:**

David Haley – Executive Director: Children's Services ☎ 652081

✉ [David.Haley@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:David.Haley@walsall.gov.uk)

Ross Hutchinson, Lead Accountant Children's Services ☎ 658411

✉ [Ross.Hutchinson@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Ross.Hutchinson@walsall.gov.uk)

**PORTFOLIO: CARE AND SAFEGUARDING – CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE ONLY**

The portfolio covers services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.

Children’s Services

Early Help, Commissioning & Workforce Development

Early Help

- Early Years
- Children’s Centres
- Intensive Family Support

Workforce Development

- Planning, Training & Development
- Recruitment & Retention

Children’s Social Care

Provider Services

- Adoption
- Fostering
- Residential Care

Looked After Children and Care Leavers

- Contact and Assessment Service
- CAMHS (located in health - matrix managed)
- Sufficiency and Placement Commissioning
- Looked After Children Social Work teams
- Care Leavers Service

Safeguarding

- Independent Reviewing Officers
- Safeguarding Board
- Child Death Overview Panel

Initial Response Service

- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Initial Response Team
- Safeguarding and Family Support Social Work teams

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- Disability Social Workers
- Educational Psychology
- SEN Assessment
- SEN Advisory

## Portfolio Objectives / Outcomes / Purpose

### Children's Services

We believe that all children and young people in Walsall have the right to be healthy, happy and safe, to be valued and respected and to have high aspirations for a successful present and to achieve their potential in the future. Our ambition is to be '*Better Together For Children*' by working in partnership to offer the very best standard of help, support, education, care and protection for children and young people throughout their journey through our services. We have four strategic outcomes to ensure all children are:

1. Safe and Supported
2. Healthy and Well
3. Aspiring and Attaining
4. Able to make a successful transition to adulthood *and as a result are socially included*

Our Key Priorities agreed with the Children & Young People's Partnership:-

- Supporting the most vulnerable families to provide the best start in life for children (0-5)
- Commission effective emotional and mental wellbeing services for vulnerable children especially looked after children (LAC)
- Mitigate impact of child poverty and reduce hunger
- Improve educational attainment at all key stages
- Reduce teenage pregnancy
- Prevent and protect children and young people from any form of exploitation, particularly CSE and radicalisation

### Financial summary

Table 1 details the revenue cash limits for the Care and Safeguarding Portfolio (Children's Social Care) for the next four years. Full details of savings and efficiencies for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are shown in table 2.

<b>Table 1: Care and Safeguarding Portfolio Cash limit 2016/17 – 2019/20 (Children's Social Care Only)</b>				
	<b>2016/17 £m</b>	<b>2017/18 £m</b>	<b>2018/19 £m</b>	<b>2019/20 £m</b>
Opening cash limit	38.39	34.15	31.3	28.26
Investment required to deliver savings	0.63	(0.19)	0	0
Contractual inflation	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.08
Less: Savings / efficiencies - <i>see table 2</i>	(4.98)	(2.74)	(3.13)	(1.81)
<b>Revised cash limit</b>	<b>34.12</b>	<b>31.27</b>	<b>28.23</b>	<b>26.5</b>

Estimates for pay, pensions and contractual inflation costs are held centrally and will be allocated to services once confirmed.

## Proposed revenue savings and efficiencies

The Children's Services Directorate has currently identified ongoing financial pressures in the region of £6m (as detailed in the Corporate Financial Performance 2015/16 report to Cabinet on 28 October 2015) due to the impact of the levels of demand for services that it is now seeing, which cannot currently be met from within existing resources.

The table below details £7.345m of proposed budget savings over the next 2 financial years. As set out above, there are some significant demand pressures, which are expected to require investment within the 2016/17 – 2019/20 draft budget. Prior to Cabinet recommending the final budget to Council in February 2016, an allocation of additional resources will be made which will therefore have the impact of decreasing the overall reduction in the Directorates cash limit over the period set out in this report. This allocation is under review.

Table 2 details the revenue saving proposals for Care and Safeguarding Portfolio for both 2016/17 and 2017/18.

<b>Table 2 : Proposed savings and efficiencies (Children's Only)</b>			
<b>Saving reference</b>	<b>Detail of saving / efficiency</b>	<b>2016/17 £</b>	<b>2017/18 £</b>
1	Reduce administrative support services within children's services	399,060	33,687
5	Review 0-19 year old support to families across children's and housing	401,784	98,216
6	Review and redesign looked after children contact service delivery through a combination of demand management, contract management and restructuring where appropriate.	220,000	
13	Review Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport packages (Policy)	250,000	225,000
14	Review and reduce short breaks services (Policy)	150,000	130,000
15	Review and reduce SEND core staffing costs	142,000	
16	Review and seek to reduce the number of looked after children (LAC)	342,429	228,286
17	Seek to increase the number of care orders that are converted to special guardianship orders (SGO)		43,000
18	Establish a pool of foster care plus carers (Policy)	52,572	105,144
19	Increase foster care places through targeted and intense recruitment.	91,794	135,044
20	Reduce the number of looked after children (LAC) supported in external residential placements through the creation of 2 new two bedded in house residential units.	110,062	
21	Review of current children's internal residential and respite provision (5 homes) to deliver efficiencies and new ways of working.	300,000	300,000

<b>Saving reference</b>	<b>Detail of saving / efficiency</b>	<b>2016/17 £</b>	<b>2017/18 £</b>
22	Review all children's external residential placement packages and seek to develop and provide alternative cheaper provision where appropriate.		53,144
23	Reduce the number of agency social workers within children's services.	227,000	227,000
24	Invest to save: Reduce the demand for statutory intervention and the numbers and cost associated with looked after children caused by the impact of the 'toxic trio' (domestic abuse, parental substance misuse & parental mental ill health). (Policy)		114,143
26	Invest to save: Reduce the number of social work posts within children's services as a result of the investment in toxic trio prevention (linked to proposal 24)		187,967
27	Build in payment by results funding - troubled families	448,000	
30	Generate additional income through marketing under occupied internal short break placements and charging other local authorities for use of them.	29,376	
31	Children's centres - redesign service – Full Year Effect of 2015/16	500,000	
32	Reduce LAC cost pressures through investment in voluntary organisations. (Policy)	41,419	82,838
35	De-layering of children's senior management structure	301,735	380,089
37	Early help – efficiencies within the area family support teams via reduction in supplies and services budgets - FYE of 2015/16	65,000	
39	Reduce practice development support within children's social care		47,256
40	Reduce support to family centres	26,000	
41	Seek to reduce the level of qualified social work professionals and utilise social care facilitators to carry out management of some caseloads (overseen by professionals) within children's services	109,446	109,446
42	Review and redesign safeguarding board support	27,000	27,792
49	Review and reduce budgets in areas of non essential spend within Children's Services	100,000	100,000
144	Redesign early help 0-5 service	186,000	
147	Parent partnership service - review service, ensuring appropriate alignments to other SEND activity	10,000	
148	Continue to review play and stay service (Policy)		110,000
149	Consider ceasing to provide the Toy Library service and distribute existing stock across Children's Centres and organisations working with and on behalf of the council (Policy)	45,548	
155	Deliver further efficiencies within new children's centre model of delivery	250,000	
156	Redesign early help 0-5 service	125,000	

<b>Saving reference</b>	<b>Detail of saving / efficiency</b>	<b>2016/17 £</b>	<b>2017/18 £</b>
162	Generate additional income via traded activity within children's workforce development	27,915	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,979,140</b>	<b>2,738,052</b>

Where draft saving proposals are identified as 'policy' changes in the above table, these are supported by further details provided in the following pages.

**Draft Proposal – reference 13: Review Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport Packages**

Estimated Net Saving		
2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	Implementation / Investment cost
£175,000 plus a part year effect of £75,000	£225,000	-

**1. Description of the Proposal**

- 1.1 The SEN home to school transport service is a statutory service that provides 660+ eligible SEN children with local authority funded daily school transport and administers 300+ bus passes. This is delivered through a 3 year transport framework where 45 taxi companies and coach firms have met specific standards and are approved to transport SEN children. All costs are agreed by distance / vehicle type at the start of the Framework and remain in place for the life of the contract (expires September 2017).
- 1.2 This service also arranges direct transport or commissions other local authorities to transport looked after children (LAC) living outside the borough. It is proposed that £175,000 could be saved in 2016/17 as follows.

a - £51k	Reduction in out of borough LAC school transport costs
b - £46k	Reduction of SEN transport budget through local route optimization
c - £78k	Reduction in council-funded care cost
£175k	Total

The areas for a potential £175k are:

- a. £51k - reduction in out of borough (OOB) LAC school transport costs by greater adherence of the Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) contractual obligation. This transport is a statutory obligation that the council places upon the IFA. The council contracts with various IFAs which have a 200 mile weekly mileage allotment included in the placement fee. This 200 mile requirement is now being used for school transport and reducing council costs.
- b. £46k - reduction in overall SEN transport budget through local route optimization. This transport is a statutory obligation. This could be managed by reducing route distances and placing suitable children from a single taxi into a minibus or larger coach. This optimization is primarily carried out at the start of the school year each September.
- c. £78k – reduction in council-funded care cost. These savings, acquired through effective joint commissioning, is the expected result of a £104k child costs being reduced by 50% through re-assessment. Negotiation with a Birmingham clinical commissioning group (CCG) now confirms their responsibility for 50% of the £52k, thus reducing the council cost to £26k. It is confirmed that this



CCG financial obligation will be recurring. These savings can all be realised immediately.

This is further to a full year effect of £75,000 arising from the 2015/16 budget approved by Council February 2015.

1.3 The proposed £225k saving in 2017/18 could be delivered by;

- a) A systemic audit coupled with further operational practices that assure efficiencies and can be found prior to 2017/18 detailed below in 3 below.
- b) A change in Transport Policies: Home to School and especially SEN and Vulnerable young people.

Re – Commissioning of all transport contracts, escort contracts that apply to SEN and vulnerable people travel or transport.	<b>£70,000</b>
An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children, and young people within the authority’s area and reduction.	<b>£30,000</b>
Consideration of a mileage allowance paid to a parent driving their eligible child to school in lieu of the local authority making arrangements for a taxi to transport the child. Therefore, reducing spend.	<b>£55,000</b>
Consideration of a cycling allowance paid by Walsall where the parent/carer agrees for their child to cycle to and from school instead of catching a bus or taxi.	<b>£30,000</b>
Consideration of Walsall providing , (e.g. possibly extending direct payments through local offer or pupil premium to improve attendance and save costs), a suitable escort to enable an eligible child with a disability to walk a short distance to school in safety, instead of making arrangements for a taxi to take them to and from school. Independent Travel Plans extended.	<b>£40,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£225,000</b>

The savings above could be achieved as detailed plus the associated activity **(listed below in 3)** which will mitigate and secure the realisation of savings above and:

1. Take into account existing Walsall Policy.
2.
  - a) Ensuring statutory guidance from the Department for Education is followed. This means Walsall is under a duty to have regard to statutory guidance when carrying out duties in relation to home to school travel and transport, and sustainable travel.
  - b) This guidance is issued under duties placed on the Secretary of State by sections 508A and 508D of the Education Act 1996. It deals with sections 508A, 508B, 508C, 509AD, and Schedule 35B of the Act which were inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the EIA 2006), Sections 444, 508A, 508B, 508C, 508D, 509AD and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 (the Act), as inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the EIA 2006) plus other Acts that pertinent at time of implication.

3. This could be delivered through a combination of policy and operational measures and e.g. a possible policy thresholds change for allocation whilst other service improvements will include or could include:
- The creation of a Local authority (LA) single contract manager and re design of the relationship between the LA and Contractors through agreed Council transport commissioning intentions and crisper service level agreements (SLA's) that focus on stronger service targets.
  - An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority's area that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/institutions.
  - A Borough travel strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within Walsall so that the travel and transport needs of all children and young people are efficient, effective and provide value for money (VFM).
  - The promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions.
  - The publication of a Walsall Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.
  - Walking buses and school timings reviews linked to improved service and shortened travel times including bus and other public transport routes including transport provided by Walsall.
  - Footpaths, cycle ways, roads and associated features including crossing points and patrols, traffic calming measures, speed limits, 20mph zones
  - Any other arrangements made to support sustainable school transport that may be in operation including the provision of cycle training, road safety training, and independent travel training; the provision of walking promotion and barrier removal schemes, car sharing schemes, park and stride/ride schemes, cycle parking.

## 2. **Implications Associated With Proposal**

### 2.1 **Corporate Plan**

There will be no impact on the delivery of the council's priorities set out in the Corporate Plan as a result of these proposals. These proposals are not a reduction in any service delivery but evidence greater commissioning efficiencies leading to savings.

### 2.2 **Customers**

These proposals do not reduce or alter any statutory or current service delivery. All children affected by this proposal continue to receive their service unchanged in any way. These proposals reflect a more creative use of funding sources and evidences positive joint funding practices.

### 2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

There is no impact on any existing staff.

### 2.4 **Partners**

The proposal includes joint-funding with our Birmingham CCG partner. Parents / carers will not be impacted by these proposals as services will not alter at point of delivery.

## 2.5 **Economic Implications**

There are no economic implications identified.

## 2.6 **Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications identified.

## 2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

As there is no disruption to the services delivered resulting from these proposed savings, the council continues to promote the health and wellbeing of the children concerned.

## 2.8 **Other Council Services**

None.

## 3. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

- 3.1 There are no risks or other opportunities identified as these proposals do not lessen or reduce current delivery but are the result of savings through efficiency analysis.

## 4. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

- 4.1 Consultation will be used to inform the final recommendation on this proposal.

## 5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The council would continue to meet its statutory obligations as this proposal does not reduce or alter any statutory or current service delivery.

## 6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment will be completed and used to inform final decision making.

**Draft Proposal – reference 14: Review and Reduce Short Breaks Services**

Estimated Net Saving				
2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	Implementation / Investment cost
£150,000	£130,000	£130,000	-	-

**1. Description of the Proposal**

- 1.1 There are currently over 200 children/young people in Walsall receiving short break support. The provision meets a range of needs from Universal Services available for all children who have a diagnosed disability to Specialist Services for children with very complex needs.
- 1.2 In terms of criteria, a potential saving of circa £240,000 could be achieved if a 100 hour cap on short breaks hours was implemented. This approach has been taken in other local authorities.
- 1.3 Further savings could be made to a robust stance regarding assessments for short breaks so that disability living allowances (DLA) are taken into consideration. For example if 50% of DLA for additional costs of care was deducted, case by case, from the spend on domiciliary care, an estimated saving of circa £90,000 would be achieved.
- 1.4 528 term time and play scheme groups are currently offered to children with disabilities as part of the local authority requirement to comply with short breaks legislation. The majority of the children are open to social care with the remainder receiving early help intervention. It is recognised that most of the children open to the social work team also receive other forms of short breaks support. There is therefore potential to reduce spend on groups. By reducing overall group spend by 10% over 2016/2017, then a further 5% in each of the following two years, all children open to the social work team would continue to receive support. Children who only receive support through the groups would be considered for realignment to alternative support. The saving through this would be circa £80,000.
- 1.5 The total amount of savings which could be made over the three year period is £410,000. The year by year breakdown is represented in the tables below:

Year 1 2016/2017	
Saving	How it could be achieved – phased over 3 years
£80,000	100 hour cap on short breaks hours
£30,000	Reduce short break in line with Disability Living Allowance
£40,000	Reduce term time and short breaks groups by 10%
<b>£150,000</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

**Year 2 2017/2018**

<b>Saving</b>	<b>How it could be achieved – phased over 3 years</b>
£80,000	100 hour cap on short breaks hours
£30,000	Reduce short break in line with Disability Living Allowance
£20,000	Reduce term time and short breaks groups by 5%
<b>£130,000</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

**Year 3 2018/2019**

<b>Saving</b>	<b>How it could be achieved – phased over 3 years</b>
£80,000	100 hour cap on short breaks hours
£30,000	Reduce short break in line with Disability Living Allowance
£20,000	Reduce term time and short breaks groups by 5%
<b>£130,000</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

- 1.6 Further savings will be sought through effective social work with a focus on the needs of the child/young person rooted in regular visits, robust planning and clear assessment which is appropriate and necessary, hence central to the proposal in terms of criteria is the need for good practice.
- 1.7 Historically, assessments for short breaks have tended to offer a high level of support without clear identification of how this will achieve positive outcomes. An improved assessment tool has been developed and implemented to help social workers and families focus on needs and outcomes. The social work team has made a concerted effort over the last 12 months to address a backlog in terms of assessments. As a result most of the 155 cases open to the team have now been assessed or re-assessed.
- 1.8 A key issue now is the extent to which the matrix assessment tool is being robustly applied by social workers. All assessments of need are presented to the multi-agency short breaks panel. This panel is seeing consistently high levels of short breaks support recommended by social workers, but without the required rigour evident in terms of application of the matrix assessment tool.
- 1.9 To address this issue the social work team, and partners in health and education who contribute to assessments and panel decisions, require training and clear expectations regarding use of the matrix tool. There is work in progress to develop a joint approach with adult services to smooth the transition to adulthood for young people with complex needs: this is an opportunity to develop a consistent use of criteria for accessing short break support. Whilst savings through this work cannot be quantified a robust approach would inevitably lead to a reduction in spend.

## 2 **Corporate Plan**

2.1 The proposal aligns with the corporate priority Promoting Health and Well Being with the focus on effective assessment of need. It also chimes with the core value of fairness and equality, targeting resources more effectively where need is greatest.

### 2.2 **Customers**

Short breaks are highly valued by the young people who receive them and their families. Walsall provides a range of high quality short breaks provision for children/young people with disabilities. Engagement work with families has confirmed the importance of short break support, and we are committed to ensuring that high quality services continue to be offered and used effectively to meet needs and improve outcomes for children and their families. A high level of engagement work with children, young people and adults will continue. Annual surveys are carried out to consider service user views in relation to the short break groups that are offered during term time and school holidays. Social workers within the Children with Disabilities team (CDT) seek the views of children/young people through home visits.

### 2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

None.

### 2.4 **Partners**

None.

### 2.5 **Economic Implications**

None.

### 2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None.

### 2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

The proposal supports effective targeting of support: This will contribute to improved health and well being for children with disabilities and their families.

### 2.8 **Other Council Services**

There is a potential impact on a number of Council services. Leisure Services may see their income impacted from the reduction in short breaks spend and Children's Social Care may see an increase in demand for social work support and provision at the internal respite provision.

Consultation with these services will be required to seek to mitigate the impact as much as possible or plan for the potential increase in demand.

3. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

3.1 Children/young people with disabilities and their families can experience very high levels of stress and fatigue. Short breaks provide respite for all involved and opportunities for social development for the child/young person. Removal of support could escalate tensions and lead to children coming in to local authority care, at great emotional cost to child and family and financial cost to the local authority. To mitigate against this effective, person-centred social work rooted in robust but fair assessment will ensure support is targeted according to need and desired outcomes.

3.2 A small number of parents are vociferously opposed to any suggestion of reduced services. These parents have raised petitions and challenged through the local press earlier this year. Our engagement strategy will ensure views are captured and used to inform decision making.

4. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

4.1 Consultation will be undertaken and responses will be used to inform final recommendations on the budget.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 Provision of 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 statutory guidance.

6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 A full equality impact assessment is being carried out.

## **Draft Proposal – reference 18: Establish a Pool of Foster Care Plus Carers**

<b>Estimated Net Saving</b>				
<b>2016 / 2017</b>	<b>2017 / 2018</b>	<b>2018 / 2019</b>	<b>2019 / 2020</b>	<b>Implementation / Investment cost</b>
£52,572	£105,144	£105,144	£105,144	-

### **1. Description of the Proposal**

- 1.1 The proposal is to establish a pool of carers who will be known as Foster Care Plus carers. These carers will be able to care for complex young people who would otherwise be placed in expensive external residential placements or specialist independent fostering placements.
- 1.2 Initially our existing pool of foster carers will be canvassed to see if there are any suitable carers who would be willing to pilot this new scheme. The pre-requisite skills and experience would be that they would have significant fostering experience, one carer would need to be available full time; they would need a professional qualification, such as a diploma in child care or have a professional background such as a youth worker or a family centre worker. The reason for needing these skills and experience is because these carers would need to care for our most challenging and vulnerable young people, they need to have exceptional resilience, an ability to set clear and appropriate boundaries and an ability to manage the impact of these boundaries not being adhered to, be able to manage aggression and/or complex emotional difficulties and also be able to support a young person to have a successful transition to adulthood. The group of young people we would envisage them caring for would be those who have had previous placement disruptions, those involved in the criminal justice system, those presenting challenging and complex behaviours including those as a result of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and those children who have previously struggled to manage within a mainstream fostering placement.

Following this initial trawl, we will advertise locally for Foster Care Plus carers with an anticipated appointment by October 2016.

### **2. Implications Associated With Proposal**

#### **2.1 Corporate Plan**

- *Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work*

The advert for Walsall Foster Care Plus carers would be placed locally and local people who have the pre-requisite skills and experience can apply, this would support the corporate priority of supporting local people into work.

- *Improving Health and well being, including independence for older people and the protection of vulnerable people*

If we are able to sustain our children and young people in local foster care provision this is likely to have a positive impact on their emotional health and well-



being as they can retain family connections and stay in their educational provision. It will also offer protection to some of our most vulnerable young people.

- *Improving Safeguarding, Learning and the Life Chances for Children and Young People, raising aspirations*

In addition to this, our challenge is to raise the aspirations of our young people, to do this we need to recruit experienced, tenacious and resilient carers who can have a real impact on the individual outcomes for a young person by providing high level support and consistent care. The carers will be required to do this in partnership with all those individuals working with a young person such as youth justice and children's social care.

- *Create a modern, dynamic and efficient workforce designed around what residents need*

It is clear that we have been unable to place our young people with challenging and complex needs with our existing internal foster carer's provision. Hence the significant number of young people placed in high cost external provision. We need to respond to this by targeting our recruitment activity to cater for these young people and by doing so we hope to create a flexible and dynamic foster carer provision that can meet the needs of the vast majority of our children and young people.

## 2.2 **Customers**

The potential impact on customers is a positive one in that if successful it will enable us to place more Looked after Children in Walsall fostering households as opposed to placing them in high cost external placements. The other elements of the fostering service will continue and will be unaffected.

## 2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

None.

## 2.4 **Partners**

There is no impact on partners; there may be opportunities to work more collaboratively with other neighbouring Local Authorities as they are also considering a similar scheme.

## 2.5 **Economic Implications**

None anticipated.

## 2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None anticipated.

## 2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

The council's statutory duty to promote health and wellbeing will be supported in this proposal as children and young people requiring care and protection could potentially be placed in local placements which will support their ability to retain links with birth family members, schools and recreational activities.

## 2.8 **Other Council Services**

There are no implications for other service areas.

## 3. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

3.1 The opportunities this proposal will provide are that we can support Walsall children and young people to remain in local placements and that we grow a robust and dynamic foster carer workforce.

3.2 The risks are that we don't identify any existing carers willing to pilot this and that our recruitment campaign does not produce carers of the right calibre or carers who have the pre-requisite skills and experience. The other risk is that we do identify an existing carer and we do recruit but that the placements become unsustainable.

3.3 To mitigate against the risks, careful selection of potential carers must be undertaken and we need to have a very thorough understanding of a young person's assessed needs prior to placement so that a robust package of support can be implemented alongside the provision of the placement. Further mitigation is that we continue to source external placements for our complex and challenging children until this new resource is established and operational.

## 4. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

4.1 Walsall Foster Carer Association have been advised of the proposals. All carers will be advised consulted on the scheme. In January, a foster carer consultation event will ask carers their view on the introduction of Foster Carer Plus placements.

## 5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 The provision of a fostering service is a statutory function and is governed by Fostering Regulations and Statutory Guidance.

## 6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 A full equality impact assessment is not required because the impact on individual children and young people can only be assessed either upon the placement of a new looked after child in a foster care plus situation or at the point of a placement change if we were to move a child from an external provision to a foster Care plus placement.

6.2 There is no evidence to date of any impact on people with protected characteristics.

***Draft Proposal – reference 24 & 26: Reduce the Demand and Costs of Statutory Intervention into the lives of Children and Families affected by the ‘Toxic Trio’ - Domestic Abuse, Parental Mental ill Health and Parental Substance Misuse***

<b>Estimated Net Saving</b>				
<b>2016 / 2017</b>	<b>2017 / 2018</b>	<b>2018 / 2019</b>	<b>2019 / 2020</b>	<b>Implementation / Investment cost</b>
-	£302,110	£636,207	£730,451	£860,000

**1. Description of the Proposal**

1.1 The proposal is to ‘invest to save’ to reduce the demand for statutory intervention and the numbers and cost associated with children looked after caused by the ‘toxic trio’ (domestic abuse, parental substance misuse & parental mental ill health). Whilst there is a good evidence base that the toxic trio is a major demand driver for social care and that providing support improves children’s outcomes, there is no evidence base for specific interventions that will reduce demand for looked after children.

1.2 The proposed investment will be used to:

- Build voluntary sector and peer support capacity to deliver practical hands on volunteering capacity
- Develop the capability of the workforce - front line staff who receive, handle, assess, do and review demand associated with the Toxic Trio to better identify, risk assess, and directly deliver more timely and cost effective evidence based interventions
- Strengthen existing arrangements and develop more joined up and integrated approaches across the partnership to better respond to demand associated with the Toxic Trio
- Develop evidence based perpetrator and prevention programmes
- Commission specialist services to meet identified gaps
- Secure specialist domestic abuse / mental health / substance misuse expertise to deliver targeted support to families with children who are in need on a child protection plan or on the edge of care

1.3 The proposed investment is expected to achieve two types of savings associated with:

- A reduction in the number of looked after children by 5 in 2017/18, 10 in 2018/19 and 15 in 2019/20 to produce savings of £684,858 by March 2020.
- A reduced need for social worker posts, primarily agency social workers – 15 in total phased over a 3 year period, commencing 2017/18, saving £983,910 by March 2020.

**2. Implications Associated With Proposal**

**2.1 Corporate Plan**

This invest to save proposal aligns with all 5 corporate priorities:

- *Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work* - recruiting volunteers to provide parenting support will increase skills and opportunities for paid work in the social care sector. A significant proportion of the proposed investment will be spent with third sector organisations employing local people.
- *Improving health and well being, including independence for older people and the protection of vulnerable people* - the work will protect vulnerable adults (parents) from domestic violence, substance misuse and mental ill health.
- *Creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities* - reducing domestic violence and adult substance misuse and mental ill health will help create safer communities.
- *Improving safeguarding, learning and the life chances for children and young people, raising aspirations* - the proposed investment will help safeguard children from abuse that is highly correlated with domestic violence.
- *Create a modern, dynamic and efficient workforce designed around what residents need* - new ways of working will focus on practical support that parents and children need and reduce the need for more costly statutory intervention especially through a new partnership with voluntary workers.

## **2.2 Customers**

The proposed investment priorities will make a significant contribution to the council's statutory duty to protect vulnerable children and adults. Children, young people, and their parents and carers will receive more timely and effective help to meet their needs.

## **2.3 Employees / Staffing**

This proposal has a direct impact on staff due to reduced demand for statutory services by addressing the toxic trio needs of parents with a staffing reduction of 15 full time equivalent social work posts (primarily agency staff) to be delivered by March 2020. This proposal will see direct investment in up skilling front line officers.

## **2.4 Partners**

The proposal will invest significantly in the third sector in Walsall and a process will be undertaken to select the best provider(s). This may mean that existing providers may be replaced if better value for money is offered by new providers.

## **2.5 Economic Implications**

The proposal will help parents address issues, domestic violence, substance misuse and mental ill health that can act as barriers to employment and productivity. It will also provide opportunity for the third sector in Walsall.

## **2.6 Environmental Implications**

None identified.

## 2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

The proposal has a major and direct positive impact on multiple health and wellbeing priorities from safeguarding children to supporting vulnerable adults who are also parents.

## 2.8 **Other Council Services**

The proposal has been developed with a wide range of council services, including, Money Home Job, Public Health, Community Safety and Children's Services – both Early Help and Specialist.

## 3. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

3.1 The intended impact of this invest to save proposal is to reduce the demand for social care intervention and the costs of looked after children. Delivery of impact and the associated savings is not certain or without risk. The proposal represents new and as yet, untested ways of working. It is based on evidence on what causes demand for social care (toxic trio) and interventions that improve outcomes. The proposal should reduce the number of looked after children logically as it will provide new support that will reduce domestic abuse, and substance misuse and mental ill health in parents. Mitigation will be by robust review of impact and listening to customers to adjust the services as needed.

3.2 The impact of any proposed Public Health savings relating to domestic abuse (£30,000) will be mitigated through the integrated approach and enhanced service offer available to children, young people, their parents and carers

## 4. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

4.1 Previous consultation and information gathering has been primarily around domestic abuse due to 'toxic trio' being a previously untested model. Consultation and feedback from the 2014/15 draft budget, the recent Domestic Abuse Needs Assessments 2015, including related consultations, September 2015 IDVA partner mapping event, and summer 2015 customer dialogues will be drawn on.

4.2 A 'toxic trio' market engagement event has been organised for the end of October which includes national and local providers, third sector organisations, seldom heard and hard to reach groups.

4.3 Events aimed at listening and learning from service users are planned and consultation on the proposed service specification will be required if investment is secured and services are procured.

## 5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 The council has a legal duty to protect and safeguard vulnerable children (Children Act 2004, Section 11). The continued increase in the number of looked after children indicates a more effective response to the demand caused by a

combination of domestic abuse, parental mental ill health and parental substance misuse, otherwise referred to as the 'toxic trio ' is required.

6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 A full equality impact assessment is being carried out.

**Draft Proposal – reference 32: Reduce Looked After Children Cost pressures through Investment in Voluntary Organisations**

Estimated Net Saving		
2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	Implementation / Investment cost
£41,419	£82,838	£120,000

**1. Description of the Proposal**

- 1.1 Investment in voluntary organisations through a Public Social Partnership between the council, Safe Families for Children, the DfE and Dartington Social Research to create volunteering capacity to support families with the aim of preventing children becoming looked after (LAC).
- 1.2 Paid for the results they achieve and the impact they have, Safe Families for Children will be monitored on performance indicators, which include a 10% reduction in looked after children inflow – from a targeted cohort of children ‘on the edge of care’ or those who could be returned home (estimated at 6 LAC over 2 years). While there is a good evidence base that the volunteers supporting parents can divert LAC in America and the DfE have invested in £2 million to roll the programme out across England, there is currently no direct evidence base that it will reduce demand for LAC in England.

**2. Implications Associated With Proposal**

**2.1 Corporate Plan**

This proposal aligns to 3 corporate priorities:

- *Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work* - recruiting volunteers to provide parenting support will increase skills and opportunities for paid work in the social care sector. The investment will be spent almost entirely with third sector organisations employing local people.
- *Improving Safeguarding, Learning and the Life Chances for Children and Young People, raising aspirations* - the work will safeguard children from abuse and help children remain with their parents safely.
- *Create a modern, dynamic and efficient workforce designed around what residents need* - new ways of working will focus on practical support that parents and children need and reduce the need for more costly statutory intervention especially through a new partnership with voluntary workers

**2.2 Customers**

This service will make a major contribution to the council’s statutory duty to protect vulnerable children and adults. Families will receive practical ‘hands on’ help and support that meets immediate needs but is also at helping them be more self sufficient in the future rather than just advice and information.

### 2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

None identified.

### 2.4 **Partners**

The proposal will invest in national third sector provider who will recruit approximately 100 volunteers in Walsall.

### 2.5 **Economic Implications**

None identified.

### 2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None identified.

### 2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

The proposal will have a major and direct positive impact on multiple health and well being priorities from safeguarding children to supporting vulnerable adults who are also parents.

### 2.8 **Other Council Services**

The proposal has been developed across Children's Services – both Early Help and Specialist.

## 3. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

- 3.1 The key risk to this proposal is that while it is based on evidence on what causes demand for social care (parenting failure) and interventions that improve outcomes, there is no evidence that the intervention will reduce LAC. The proposal should reduce LAC logically as it will provide new targeted practical support to parents that will enhance their parenting to reduce demand for LAC. Mitigation of risk is twofold. Year 1 costs are met by DfE. Years 2 and 3 costs are payable by the Authority but only where agreed results are met so financial exposure is reduced. In addition there will be a robust review of impact and listening and learning from families to adjust the services as needed.

## 4. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

- 4.1 The proposal is based on a DfE Innovation funded project that is based on research and consultation with parents.

## 5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The council has a legal duty to protect and safeguard vulnerable children (Children Act 2004, Section 11). The continued increase in LAC shows that the councils needs to provide more effective preventive and support services that address better the needs of parents for practical support.



6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 A full equality impact assessment is being carried out and will be completed by the end of October to inform final recommendations on this proposal.

**Proposal Reference Number: 148 – Continue to Review Play and Stay Service**

<b>Estimated Net Saving</b>		
<b>2016 / 2017</b>	<b>2017 / 2018</b>	<b>Implementation / Investment cost</b>
-	£110,000	-

**1. Description of the Proposal**

- 1.1 Following the redesign of Children’s Centres in 2015 the Local Authority has established service level agreements with schools to deliver ‘play and stay’ sessions for 0-3’s to ensure that universal local access to support for families is available in local areas. This element of Children Centre activity was retained in response to consultation feedback from the 2015/16 draft budget which identified that new parents valued services that address social isolation and enable children to socialise and develop family skills to develop, physical emotional and speech and language development of young children. The proposal is for the services provided by schools to be monitored and evaluated during 2015/16, and work to take place to develop capacity within the community to take over delivery of services in the future and/or for schools to continue investment in services.
- 1.2 If capacity to deliver play and stay sessions is secured from schools and or created using volunteers, at no cost to the Authority, this service for parents of children under the age of 3 will remain and the impact will be limited.
- 1.3 The proposal would be delivered by evaluating delivery in 2015/16 and using learning to develop capacity in the voluntary sector, school and health visiting to continue delivery independently from 2017. Consultation will take place with parents in relation to the proposal and feedback will be taken into account in the development of community solutions.
- 1.4 It is anticipated that full implementation could take place in line with the school academic year in September 2017.

**2. Implications Associated With Proposal**

**2.1 Corporate Plan**

The proposal is a ‘community led service redesign’ which aligns to 2 corporate priorities:

- *Improving Safeguarding , Learning and the Life Chances for Children and Young people , raising aspirations* - by developing parents, community and partners awareness about the importance of early years and developing capacity to deliver structured and effective ‘play and stay’ provision that supports School Ready and Early Years Foundation Stage results

- *Improving Health & well being including independence for older people and protection of vulnerable people* - by supporting children to get the best start in life by embedding brief interventions in health and parenting.

## 2.2 Customers

It is planned to mitigate the impact of this proposal on families by sustaining delivery through continued delivery of groups by schools, health and community partners.

The service is not a statutory function but links to Children's Centre sufficiency and performance as 'play and stays' offer opportunities to identify children with development delays and/or social concerns. This proposal seeks to retain services through community and partner delivery.

## 2.3 Employees / Staffing

No direct impact on Local Authority staffing however schools who do not wish to continue 'play and stay' services, from 2017, may need to adjust staffing arrangements locally.

## 2.4 Partners

The proposal offers an opportunity for partners to incorporate 'play and stays' as part of delivery models to provide services and support to children under 3.

## 2.5 Economic Implications

None identified.

## 2.6 Environmental Implications

None identified.

## 2.7 Health and wellbeing implications

The proposal promotes health and well being by supporting children to get the best start in life by embedding brief interventions in health and parenting.

## 2.8 Other Council Services

None identified.

## 3. Associated Risks / Opportunities

- 3.1 If schools do not see the benefit of continued delivery of 'Play and stays' they may not be willing to resource continued delivery. In this scenario, options would be explored across the community to identify volunteers or parents who could deliver sessions to maintain services.

- 3.2 Community groups may not be able to resource delivery of sessions. In this scenario, the voluntary sector will be supported to access external funding to support sustained delivery

#### 4. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

- 4.1 Previous consultation undertaken in the Autumn of 2014, as part of the 2015/16 budget consultation identified that families value local access to structured, high quality 'Play and stay' delivery and support from Early Years Professionals at sessions.

Further consultation and engagement is planned to support the community to develop skills and confidence to be active partners in the delivery of sessions.

#### 5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 None identified.

#### 6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment initial screening has been carried out which will be monitored.

**PORTFOLIO: LEARNING SKILLS AND APPRENTICESHIPS**

**Summary of services within the portfolio**

Access & Achievement

Education Services

- School Improvement
- Access & Attendance and Education Welfare
- Virtual School for Looked After Children
- Integrated Behaviour Support

Youth Support Services

- Information Advice and Guidance
- Targeted Youth Support
- Youth Justice Service
- Positive Activities for young people
- Active Involvement
- Education Business Partnership
- Teenage Pregnancy, Prevention & Support
- Parent Partnership Service

Commissioning

- Children's Commissioning Activity
- Contract Management
- Commissioning Intelligence & Monitoring
- School Transport Co –ordination

Adult and Community Learning - Apprenticeship Training and Training to support local Companies: through Walsall Adult and Community College (WACC).

**Portfolio Objectives / Outcomes / Purpose**

*Our Key Priorities linked to the Education Improvement Plan:-*

- Work to ensure all Walsall schools are good or outstanding.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Narrow the gap for those children who are vulnerable to underachievement and potential exclusion.
- Ensure that all children make as much progress as they can and to achieve standards that are in line with national expectations.
- Support the achievement of children within and at points of transition.
- Work better together to improve children's behaviour, care, safeguarding and attendance to maximise their learning.
- Improve schools' and pupil achievement through high quality school to school improvement support.
- Strengthen school leadership, management and Governance.

In line with the Council's commitment to improve residents' prospects to secure and retain work, manage their own health and wellbeing and be active citizens, Walsall Adult and Community College offers a range of courses that address skills for life, skills for employment, and skills for active citizenship as well as Apprenticeship training designed and delivered in collaboration with local employers.

## Financial summary

Table 1 details the revenue cash limits for the Learning Skills and Apprenticeships Portfolio within Children's Services, for the next four years. Full details of savings and efficiencies for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are shown in table 2.

<b>Table 1: Learning Skills &amp; Apprenticeships Portfolio Cash limit 2016/17 – 2019/20</b>				
	<b>2016/17 £m</b>	<b>2017/18 £m</b>	<b>2018/19 £m</b>	<b>2019/20 £m</b>
Opening cash limit	6.86	4.03	2.52	2.16
Less: Savings / efficiencies - see table 2	(2.83)	(1.51)	(0.36)	(0.2)
<b>Revised cash limit</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>2.52</b>	<b>2.16</b>	<b>1.96</b>

Estimates for pay, pensions and contractual inflation costs are held centrally and will be allocated to services once confirmed.

## Proposed revenue savings and efficiencies

Table 2 details the revenue saving and efficiencies for Learning Skills and Apprenticeships Portfolio for both 2016/17 and 2017/18.

<b>Table 2 : Proposed savings and efficiencies</b>			
<b>Saving reference</b>	<b>Detail of saving / efficiency</b>	<b>2016/17 £</b>	<b>2017/18 £</b>
34	Re-design of access & attendance services within children's services	46,424	46,424
36	Restructure of children's services commissioning and brokerage teams	190,000	
38	Review and re-design the performance and information service within children's services to support staffing reductions	100,000	
143	Reduce business support functions within children centres		61,232
145	Redesign Youth Support Services (YSS): Targeted Youth Work – full year effect (FYE) of 2015/16	580,000	
146	Reduce budgets targeted youth support (TYS) model - FYE of 2015/16	54,000	
150	Consider Ceasing Youth Opinion Unite Service (Policy)	77,000	
151	Continue to review targeted youth work (TYW) (Policy)		266,500
152	Continue to review information, advice and guidance (IAG) service (Policy)	338,000	
153	Review and renegotiate contracts commissioned via children's services	55,000	

<b>Saving reference</b>	<b>Detail of saving / efficiency</b>	<b>2016/17 £</b>	<b>2017/18 £</b>
154	Reduction in premature retirements budget (teachers pension)	150,000	
157	Reduce non traded service by potentially 50%,	26,700	
158	Consider utilisation of dedicated school grant under spend subject to School Forum and Secretary of State approval		807,214
159	Generate additional income within information services via increased trading with schools	150,000	
160	Targeted youth work – delivering commissioning differently	50,000	
161	Redesign Governance Support to become cost neutral	26,500	26,500
163	Increase traded activity regarding information, advice and guidance (IAG)- FYE of 2015/16.	80,000	
164	Seek to fund remaining youth services via dedicated schools grant	45,000	
165	Reduce costs and work with public health to consider use of related transformation monies	18,000	
166	Redesign education welfare support service to become cost neutral	259,973	
167	Reduce school improvement service (SIP)		100,000
168	Review and reduce education psychologists service	300,000	200,000
169	Reduce virtual school service	244,607	
170	Re-design YSS administration function - FYE of 2015/16	40,000	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,831,204</b>	<b>1,507,870</b>

Where draft saving proposals are identified as ‘policy’ changes in the above table, these are supported by further details provided in the following pages.

**Proposals Reference number: 149 - Consider Ceasing to provide the Toy Library service and distribute existing stock across Children's Centres and Organisations working with and on behalf of the council**

Estimated Net Saving		
2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	Implementation / Investment cost
£45,548	-	-

**1. Description of the Proposal**

- 1.1 This proposal considers the council ceasing to provide a toy library service in Walsall. The toy library, which includes a mobile service, purchases, stores and loans toys to parents, carers and families who have children under 11 and to organisations such as childminders, crèches, day care providers, play groups, schools who support children.
- 1.2 Efforts to secure interest from the private sector to take over the running of this service and operate it on a commercial basis, at no cost to the Authority, avoiding closure, have been explored in response to feedback from 2014/15 budget consultation. The subsequent tendering exercise failed to generate any interest.
- 1.3 It is therefore proposed to cease to provide this service and to distribute existing stock across Children's Centres and organisations working with and on behalf of the council to improve the learning and life chances of children, particularly disadvantaged children, under the age of 11. This will ensure the toys and equipment that have been purchased continue to benefit and be enjoyed by Walsall children.

**2. Implications Associated With Proposal**

**2.1 Corporate Plan**

The corporate priority aligned to this savings proposal is 'Improving Safeguarding, Learning and the Life Chances for Children and Young People, raising aspirations'. The proposed distribution of toys and equipment across Children's Centres and organisations working with and on behalf of the council to improve the learning and life chances of children under 11 years will ensure the impact of the proposed closure on children's learning and life chances is minimised. The toy library is not a statutory service.

**2.2 Customers**

Current toy library customers include childcare providers, children with disabilities, home schooled children, parents and carers, parent & toddler groups and short term break providers.

The proposed closure of the toy library inclusive of toy loans and mobile element and the proposed distribution of assets to Children's Centres will ensure parents, carers and children accessing children centre services will still benefit. All other



customers such as childcare providers and parent and toddler groups will no longer be able to access a service.

### 2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

2 part time employees (1 FTE) are employed.

### 2.4 **Partners**

It is proposed to distribute the toy library assets for use in Children's Centres.

### 2.5 **Economic Implications**

None identified.

### 2.6 **Environmental Implications**

None identified.

### 2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

None identified.

### 2.8 **Other Council Services**

Toys and equipment from the toy library are loaned by other council services such as Schools, Fostering and Adoption and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities team but not essential to the delivery of their statutory duties. Whilst the ability to loan toys and equipment will cease with the proposed closure, the proposed distribution of stock across Children's Centres and organisations working with and on behalf of the council to improve the learning and life chances of children under the age of 11 will mitigate any impact on other council services.

## 3. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

- 3.1 Opportunities to avoid closure and deliver this service on a commercial basis at no cost to the Authority have been explored in response to feedback from 2014/15 budget consultation. The subsequent tendering exercise failed to generate any interest. The distribution of toys and equipment to Children's Centres and local providers retains access for disadvantaged children.

## 4. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

- 4.1 In December 2014, a focus group of service users took place. This included representatives from services working with families involved in domestic violence and children with disabilities. A petition was also received from Toy Library users expressing the value the service provided. Two further meetings were held and a local provider expressed an interest in running the service, but no formal interest was received. This was followed up and further options were explored with this provider but they were unable to proceed as the service would not be sustainable.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 None identified.

6. **Equality Implications**

6.1 A full equality impact assessment, completed as part of 2015/16 budget proposals, identified children with disabilities, home schooled children, parents, parent & toddler groups and short term break providers were likely to be affected by the closure. The impact on those who access services that receive distributed toys and equipment, that is Children's Centre and organisations working with and on behalf of the council to improve the learning and life chances of children under the age of 11, will be reduced as they will continue to access toys and equipment.

**Proposal Reference: 150 - Consider Ceasing Youth Opinion Unite Service**

<b>Estimated Net Saving</b>		
<b>2016 / 2017</b>	<b>2017 / 2018</b>	<b>Implementation cost</b>
£77, 000	-	-

**1. Description of the Savings Proposal**

This proposal considers ceasing Youth Opinions Unite (YOU)/Active Involvement/voice of Child and Young People.

**2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

Youth Opinions Unite/Active Involvement Team works with a range of partners to seek to ensure the voice of children and young people is articulated and impacts on decisions made about them as individuals and how the services offered to them are shaped and developed.

Ceasing the work of the team would impact on work with Health services, schools (both primary and secondary), United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP), Youth of Walsall (Youth Cabinet), Looked After Children and Transition Leaving Care, Special Educational Needs, and Community Cohesion. It supports young people to contribute to both the Corporate Parenting Board and Walsall Safeguarding Children Board, by working with groups such as Council for Kids and the Safeguarding Involvement Team.

**2.1 Corporate Plan**

The proposal would impact on the Corporate Plan priority '*Improving safeguarding, learning and the life chances for children and young people, raising aspirations*'. The YOU/Active Involvement team's work is to facilitate the encouragement to all children and young people to aspire to be good citizens, focusing especially on those whose life chances are at risk due to vulnerability. By working directly with looked after children and those with experience of safeguarding issues the team brings their experiences to decision makers.

**2.2 Customers**

The team promote the voice and active involvement of children and young people in the design of services and a range of decision making.

In addition to running Youth of Walsall (YOW) the borough's youth cabinet, and overseeing elections to, and support for, the UK Youth Parliament, the active involvement team work with specialist services to support:

- Looked after Children
- those experiencing safeguarding issues,
- young people impacted by special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)/ learning disability / difficulty (LDD)

and contribute to work led by Healthwatch and the NHS, schools both primary and secondary, and to the Children and Young People's Group priorities.

### **2.3 Employees / Staffing**

The team consists of 2 fulltime equivalent (FTE) workers and one part-time worker amounting to 2.6 fte. Funding for 1 FTE comes from Children's Social Care budgets and is the subject of further negotiations.

### **2.4 Partners**

The team works with a wide range of partners, both organisations and individuals; including Health, Children's Social Care, elected members, and schools. There is an expectation that schools will ensure pupils voices are heard, but the team provides additional work on a topic basis such as support for a major initiative on anti-bullying.

There is a perceived advantage in separating out the voice of the Children and Young people work from 'delivery' elements of the Directorate to create a degree of independence for the voice of the customer. For this independence to be maintained there should be a separation from the delivery elements of the council.

Consideration will be given to the work being carried out by other elements of the Youth Support Service such as Targeted Youth Work which is experienced in this area of work. Consideration could also be given for the work for children's social care in relation to the Safeguarding Board and Corporate Parenting Board to be undertaken by staff in that part of the Directorate, and for the work with the UKYP and Youth Cabinet being carried out by democratic services staff.

### **2.5 Economic Implications**

There are no economic implications for this proposal.

### **2.6 Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications for this proposal.

### **2.7 Health and wellbeing implications**

The council has statutory duty to provide children and young people with the opportunity to engage. Young people who feel they are being heard are more likely to develop healthy behaviours.

### **2.8 Other Council Services**

The team supports the work of Children's Social Care, and Community Safety, contributing to work on anti-extremism, and community cohesion, and to ensuring the voices of vulnerable children and young people are heard by services providing services for them.

### 3. **Associated Risks**

3.1 This activity has a statutory basis with the 2006 Education Act and related statutory guidance specifically to:

- ‘Connect young people with their communities, enabling them to belong and contribute to society, including through volunteering, and supporting them to have a voice in decisions which affect their lives’.
- ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ March 2013, identifies 2 key principles which include; ‘A child-centred approach and for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children’.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 includes a duty to ensure that children and young people are engaged, empowered and supported to participate in planning for their future – the local offer for instance must be co-produced with disabled children and young people.

There is a risk that this proposal would weaken the council’s ability to demonstrate that it is meeting this statutory requirement, which would be subject to inspection by Ofsted. Our post 2013 Ofsted Improvement plan included the following:

- Drive forward full implementation of the Active Involvement Strategy, championed at political and senior leadership levels.
- Strengthen participation for children and young people (Council for Kids; Safeguarding Inspectors Team). *Current arrangements and levels of engagement are weak.*
- Continue to develop our practice to ensure that the voice of the child can be clearly evidenced through case file audits and observations of practice, and that recommendations for practice improvement are acted on swiftly.

There is a risk to the council’s reputation from weakening its ability to demonstrate that it engages effectively with children and young people in the decision making process.

### 4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

4.1 Young people and partner organisations will be consulted on this proposal as part of the corporate arrangements. Special versions of consultation materials will be produced, and made widely available.

### 5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 The council is committed to ensure that the voice of children and young people are listened to and acted on. It will develop a model to deliver the statutory requirements differently. People in related service areas will take greater responsibility and schools education establishments and the voluntary and community sector will have an enhanced role.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 Consultation, equality impact assessment and the outcomes of these will be reviewed to ensure that the council is listening to and responding to the views of children and young people with disabilities. Any mitigation required will be set out in the equality impact assessment which is being carried out.

## **Draft Proposal – reference 151: Continue to Review - Targeted Youth Work (TYW)**

<b>Estimated Net Saving</b>				
<b>2016 / 2017</b>	<b>2017 / 2018</b>	<b>2018 / 2019</b>	<b>2019 / 2020</b>	<b>Implementation cost</b>
-	£266,500	£266,500	-	-

### **1. Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 Targeted Youth Work delivers a range of social education programmes for young people including youth centres, detached and outreach work and residential activities.
- 1.2 The work is delivered by both the council and independent commissioned providers principally Community Associations in Walsall. The revised budget, should the above proposal be implemented would be £838,000 as a whole as at 1 April 2016 and the work described above will continue to be provided within this budget.
- 1.3 The proposal is to reduce the commissioned budget from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 by £266,500 and remove the remaining £266,500 for the commissioned budget from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.
- 1.4 Targeted Youth Work programmes will continue across Walsall, focussed on the use of the Myplace building and outreach and detached work using the youth mobile vehicles.
- 1.5 This will ensure the council continues to meet its statutory requirements to as far as is “reasonably practical” to provide sufficient educational and leisure time activities for young people.

### **2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**

#### **2.1 Corporate Plan**

The proposal to reduce the commissioned budget in years 2 and 3 and therefore reduce the provision of youth work impacts on 2 corporate plan priorities ‘Improving safeguarding, learning and the life chances for children and young people, raising aspirations’, and ‘Improving health and well being, including independence for older people and the protection of vulnerable people’. The retained investment in direct council targeted youth work will focus on area of need to minimise impact on both corporate plan priorities.

#### **2.2 Customers**

- 2.2.1 Youth Work in Walsall is focused on personal and social development and reducing youth related Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), and is delivered via young people’s centres, detached and mobile work, holiday programmes via projects and residential activity.

- 2.2.2 This proposal would mean youth work being delivered through a small team of full-time and part-time staff operating across the borough, and increasingly focussed on agreed areas of need within those areas. The 2006 Education and Inspection Act (Section 507B) gave local education authorities in England a duty to “so far as reasonably practicable, secure for qualifying young persons in the authority’s area access to:
- a. sufficient educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities; and
  - b. sufficient recreational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities.”
- 2.2.3 This duty is underpinned by the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education under Section 507B of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which relates to local authorities’ duty to secure services and activities for young people aged 13 to 19, and those with learning difficulties to age 24, to improve their well-being, as defined in Subsection 13.
- 2.2.4 This includes youth work and other services and activities that: offer young people opportunities in safe environments to take part in a wide range of sports, arts, music and other activities, through which they can develop a strong sense of belonging, socialise safely with their peers, enjoy social mixing, experience spending time with older people, and develop relationships with adults they trust: support the personal and social development of young people through which they build the capabilities they need for learning, work, and the transition to adulthood – communication, confidence, creativity, managing feelings, planning and problem solving, relationships and leadership, and resilience and determination; improve young people’s physical and mental health and emotional well-being.
- 2.2.5 Within the time period of this proposal the voluntary and community sector will be supported to develop a sustained model of youth service delivery within local areas. This will meet the needs of young people and contribute to the delivery of statutory functions. The retained council budget will be deployed and responsible for building capacity in the voluntary and community sector. It will also provide targeted and specialist services to the most vulnerable young people.

## 2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

This proposal does not relate to Targeted Youth Work delivered directly by the council. It is estimated that 14 FTE Community association staff would be affected.

## 2.4 **Partners**

Partnership arrangements, including those with schools and the police on reducing anti social behaviour (ASB) will be reviewed to ensure that the impact of proposed reductions is minimised and that effective and mature partnership relationships continue.

The proposed savings in years 2 and 3 could impact on Community Association’s ability to maintain buildings for a range of uses/service provision, employ staff and



provide services for young people. The new model of delivery will not require as many council retained buildings.

## 2.5 **Economic Implications**

No direct economic implications are anticipated.

## 2.6 **Environmental Implications**

No direct environmental implications are anticipated aside from a potential increase in youth related ASB involving graffiti and vandalism.

## 2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

Negative impact on health and well being of young people particularly on mental health and adverse pressure on teenage pregnancy rates and potential alcohol and substance misuse. This will be mitigated by targeted intervention and focused work at community level.

## 2.8 **Other Council Services**

Community safety services and agenda adversely effected particularly the ASB team and activity. This will be mitigated by targeted intervention and focused work at community level.

## 3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 There is a risk of an increase in youth related crime and youth related ASB over both years and a reduction in the ability to support both the community cohesion and Prevent agendas. There will also be reputational risks with partners and providers (particularly related to phased reduction and termination of contracts) as youth provision is closed.

To mitigate the above;

- We will continue to ensure we fully engage our customers (young people) as full decision makers to help shape and deliver the remaining services,
- We will ensure the direct council targeted youth work is focused on area of need, and continues to work in effective partnership with localities
- We will review our partnership arrangements to ensure that effective and mature partnership relationships continue
- The youth offer will be reviewed and rigorously differentiated based on need.
- Support and develop the voluntary sector and volunteers to reduce the gap in provision and support capacity building in third sector as set out in the responsibilities for the council's direct youth work provision, and wider council strategies.

## 4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

- 4.1 Residents and communities have repeatedly prioritised things to do and places to go for young people and the involvement of youth related anti-social behaviour as a priority. Over 3,000 young people contributed to the pre-October 2014 corporate budget consultation process regarding future arrangements for youth work.

This further proposed change will be consulted upon with young people, commissioned providers and partner/stakeholder organisations.

## 5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The council has statutory duties in relation to the provision of youth work. The 2006 Education and Inspection Act (Section 507B) gave local education authorities in England a duty to “so far as reasonably practicable, secure for qualifying young persons in the authority’s area access to:
- c. sufficient educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities; and
  - d. sufficient recreational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities.”
- 5.2 The above requirements of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 are further detailed in statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education (Guidance for services and activities to improve young people’s well being). Minimum statutory requirements will be met.

## 6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment is underway that will consider all policy, procedures and service changes.

**Draft Proposal – reference 152: Continue to Review Information, Advice and Guidance Service (IAG)**

<b>Estimated net saving</b>		
<b>2016 / 2017</b>	<b>2017 / 2018</b>	<b>Implementation/ Investment cost</b>
£338,000	-	-

**1. Description of the Savings Proposal**

- 1.1 This proposal would involve ceasing the budget for targeted Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) that focuses on work with vulnerable groups and young people most at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). The council continues to have a statutory duty (under Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008) for tracking and assisting the most vulnerable young people, to monitor and report on destination outcomes and provide support to looked after children/care leavers, young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and to provide support to other vulnerable groups (teenage mums and young offenders) and some support to NEET young people and those at risk of becoming NEET. The council will continue to meet its related statutory requirements as outlined below.
- 1.2 This savings proposal would mean that there would be no personal advisers directly funded by the council supporting this area of work. There may be a limited number of personal advisers employed through the traded services element, supporting some aspects such as teenage pregnancy, supported housing, vulnerable students at Walsall Adult and Community College (WACC) and in a limited number of schools, and through the European Social Fund (ESF) funded Black Country-wide Impact project aimed at 15-29 year old unemployed young people, if the bid is successful.
- 1.3 To mitigate the potential impact of this proposal, we will communicate early with schools on the proposed changes and, if agreed, support schools in fully understanding their universal careers IAG responsibilities. We will also support schools to ensure related and current ‘traded services’ continue to be offered for the universal element and targeted services. We will work to ensure continuity of arrangements for the monitoring and reporting of young people’s destinations and continue to work to secure funding for the Impact Youth Unemployment Project, which is currently progressing well.
- 1.4 We will explore opportunities to develop a joint approach as regards to careers, information, advice, and guidance with other Black Country and West Midland Local Authority’s including consideration of the provision of related online facility. Other providers and opportunities for example through education business partnerships, mentoring, peer support and business links will be fully explored and built into the overall programme.

## 2. **Implications Associated with Proposal**

### 2.1 **Corporate Plan**

If the mitigation activities are not delivered effectively this budget reduction could have a direct impact on corporate priorities particularly:

- *Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work* - withdrawing specialist independent help to young people preparing effectively for the world of work
- *Improving health and well-being, including independence for older people and protection of vulnerable people* – Withdrawing specialist independent help to young people preparing effectively for the world of work. Young people, particularly those who are vulnerable, who are not able to make effective and sound choices risk being less healthy, making additional demands on health services, in particular mental health provision.
- *Improving safeguarding, learning and life chances for children and young people, raising aspirations* - withdrawing specialist independent help to vulnerable young people considering subject choices, learning opportunities and locations, and preparing effectively for the world of work. It could impact on young people making choices in pursuance of the requirements of Raising the Participation Age arrangements.

Ceasing the IAG provision and directly employing no personal advisers could have an impact on the number of young people who are NEET and those whose destination are not known and could impact on the levels of Youth Unemployment. The intention is that this is mitigated in part by elements of the traded service, the potential Impact project and other approaches to delivering IAG.

### 2.2 **Customers**

2.2.1 Ceasing the provision could have an impact on the levels of 'not known' and NEET young people, and potentially on the levels of youth unemployment. There could be a risk of not meeting our minimum statutory requirements, monitoring and reporting on destination outcomes and providing support to vulnerable groups (for example teenage mums, young offenders, LAC and young people with SEND) and some support to NEET young people, because there would be no staff to carry out the necessary intensive follow-up work, liaising with schools and colleges and other organisations to gather data, and work with young people and their parents/carers to enable them to avoid being or remaining NEET.

2.2.2 A new way of working with, and by schools/academies and other providers (as noted previously), will be developed in order to ensure IAG continues and the risks identified above are mitigated. Schools/academies will be encouraged to work more collaboratively as a 14-19/25 partnership which will strategically co-ordinate a pathway approach to ensure all statutory requirements are met. There are some real opportunities to work differently with business training providers and partners in a new approach. It is recognised that the needs of young people, post 16, out of the school environment need to be met.

- 2.2.3 The statutory provision for IAG changed in 2012 where universal provision was transferred to schools. The Council continues to have a statutory duty (under the Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008), for tracking and assisting the most vulnerable young people.
- 2.2.4 Local authorities retain their statutory duty (under section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008), to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-19 and for those aged 20-24 with a learning difficulty. A local authority should make available to young people aged 13-19 and to those aged 20-24 with a learning disability assessment/ Education, Health and Care Plan, support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training. In addition, the Education and Skills Act 2008 places two new duties on local authorities from June 2013 with regard to 16-17 year olds in relation to the raising of the participation age:
- to promote the effective participation in education or training of young people covered by the duty to participate; and
  - to have arrangements in place to identify those who are not participating and re-engage them back into learning.
- 2.2.5 To fulfil these duties local authorities are required to track all young people participation successfully through the local Client Customer Information System (CCIS). Local authorities are expected to meet any costs incurred in the delivery of these duties from their overall budgets.
- 2.2.6 These proposals retain the CCIS system and different approaches, systems and processes will be identified to track young people. It is recognised that this is labour intensive, involving as it does letters, phone calls and sometimes home visits, so the new proposals must ensure that the statutory requirements are not put at risk.

## 2.3 **Employees / Staffing**

The proposed level of related budget reduction would lead to 11 staff being put 'at risk' of redundancy.

## 2.4 **Partners**

Secondary schools would be involved in reshaping a new service where schools and academies will take more ownership of the delivery model, in particular in relation to looked after children and those with special educational needs and disabilities.

The school IAG universal offer is purchased from a number of providers, or provided by staff employed in schools, with the exception of 3 schools who purchase elements from the Council's Youth Support Connexions service, as a traded service.

## 2.5 **Economic Implications**

There could be adverse impact on the numbers of unemployed young people and those not in education, employment or training.

## 2.6 **Environmental Implications**

No direct environmental implications.

## 2.7 **Health and wellbeing implications**

There is the potential of an increase in poor health and well being outcomes related to any increase in the levels of NEET and unemployed young people.

## 2.8 **Other Council Services**

There would be an impact on the support currently offered by personal advisers to the Walsall Works programme, Supported Housing, Transition Leaving Care/Looked After Children and Young People, Youth Justice Service, Early Help, Walsall Adult and Community College. This impact will be mitigated if traded services arrangements are put in place and if the Impact Project Bid is successful.

## 3. **Associated Risks**

3.1 Reputational risk with schools that will see a reduction in provision. To mitigate we will seek to involve and communicate early with schools on the proposed changes and to support schools in fully understanding their universal careers IAG responsibilities and the need to offer both qualitative and impartial IAG. We will also support schools to ensure related and current 'traded services' continue to be offered for the universal element and targeted services.

3.2 Risk of increase in the numbers of NEET young people and unemployed young people and a significant increase in the numbers of young people whose destinations are unknown. To mitigate we will work to ensure continuity of arrangements for the monitoring and reporting of young people's destinations and continue to work to secure funding for the Impact Youth Unemployment Project.

We will also work with other Black Country and West Midlands Local Authorities to explore joint working including the development of an information, advice and guidance website.

## 4. **Consultation and customer feedback**

4.1 This will be developed from 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015. A full staff meeting has been scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015. Arrangements will be made to consult stakeholders, partner organisations including schools, and young people.

## 5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 The council will continue to meet its related statutory requirements as outlined above.

6. **Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment is underway that will consider all policy, procedures and service changes.