

# Budget Task Group

**Children's Services**

**Sarah Newman, Executive Director**

# Executive Summary

## Children's Services

- In 2023/24 Children's Services had a gross controllable expenditure budget of £159.892m and a gross income budget of £119.496m (net controllable budget £40.396m)
- The net controllable budget for these services was £44.206m in 2019/20.
- The projected outturn variance for 2023/24 as at P6 is an overspend of £2.420m, with a risk that this could increase by a further £1.050m.
- The directorate has the following changes to its budget for 2024/25:

### Reductions

- £1.050m new savings (slide 6)
- £0.725m previously approved savings (prior to reprofiling adjustments)

### Additions

- £1.343m new pressures and investments (slide 9)

# Future Outlook

## Children's Services

- Increasing demand for services to support children with SEND
- Supporting schools to remain sustainable and provide quality learning
- Working with partners to ensure safeguarding arrangements are robust
- Increasing emotional wellbeing and mental health issues due to the pandemic
- Funding pressures associated with supporting families with no recourse to public funds
- Increasing cost of looked after children and care leavers and the fragility of the placements market
- Priority to reduce youth crime, serious youth violence, and addressing contextual safeguarding

# 2023/24 Budget

## Children's Services

Service Area	Expenditure £m	Income £m	Net £m
Education	54.438	-48.238	6.200
Family Services	34.170	-10.850	23.320
Registrars	1.679	-2.501	-0.822
Operations & Programmes	7.354	-1.223	6.131
Libraries & Archives	6.197	-0.630	5.567
School Funding	56.054	-56.054	0.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>159.892</b>	<b>-119.496</b>	<b>40.396</b>

# Savings Proposals (1)

**2024/25 to 2026/27**

## **Children's Revenue Saving 1: Repurposing accommodation to best support care leavers (£0.600m)**

There are currently 153 care leavers in externally commissioned semi-independent living. The proposal here is to develop more in-house provision (or in partnership with a third sector provider). This would require us to identify properties to be converted. This model has been pursued successfully in other boroughs to significantly reduce the cost of accommodation. Achieving the level of saving outlined here would require us to identify c. 40 units of accommodation.

## **Children's Revenue Saving 2: Reconfiguring Fostering (£0.300m)**

Review of our fostering service which is currently hosted by LBHF to identify more cost-effective delivery models - either through regionalisation or more strategic work with independent fostering agencies.

## **Children's Revenue Saving 3: SEN Transport – personal transport budgets (£0.150m)**

Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) are funding to help CYP get to school or college. It allows families to make flexible travel arrangements rather than travelling on a vehicle contracted by the council. There has been a steady increase in the uptake of PTBs which has avoided costs of c.£490K compared to the cost of the council SEN transport. The proposal here is to increase capacity to promote PTBs and offer more independent travel training.

# Savings Proposals (2)

## 2024/25 to 2026/27 Summary

Ref	Savings Title	2024/25 Over 2023/24 £m	2025/26 Over 2024/25 £m	2026/27 Over 2025/26 £m	Total £m
	Repurposing accommodation to best support care leavers	-	0.300	0.300	<b>0.600</b>
	Reconfiguring Fostering	-	-	0.300	<b>0.300</b>
	SEN Transport – personal transport budgets	0.050	0.050	0.050	<b>0.150</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.050</b>	<b>0.350</b>	<b>0.650</b>	<b>1.050</b>

# Pressures and Investments (1)

**2024/25 to 2026/27**

## **Children's Revenue Investment: School Inclusion Team (£0.656m)**

Short-term increase in funding of the School Inclusion Team at an additional investment of £328k per year for two years to address the growth in occupancy of Alternative Provision places at primary stage, where there is now a waiting list in place due to levels of demand. This will increase the annual funding from £346k to £674k and will enable the service to more than double the number of children worked with annually from an average of 35 to an expected reach of 85.

# Pressures and Investments (2)

## 2024/25 to 2026/27

### **Children's Revenue Pressure 1: Growth in Looked After Children placement costs (£0.400m)**

Increase in placement unit costs due to inflationary pressures driven by the limitations of the market supply of appropriate placements.

### **Children's Revenue Pressure 2: Dedicated Social Care Officer (DSCO) (£0.027m)**

Unfunded DfE recommendation in the government's Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan for a specific dedicated social care officer for SEND (bi borough).

### **Children's Revenue Pressure 3: Virtual School (£0.110m)**

The new bi-borough structure delivers on the fairer communities' commitment of the Fairer Westminster strategy by strengthening the education, employment and training support to looked after children and previously looked after children to facilitate the transition to adulthood. The change is also aligned with the Bi-borough Children and Families Plan in ensuring that children and young people have good attendance at school and access to high-quality education and training opportunities

### **Children's Revenue Pressure 4: Increase in demand for SEN Transport (£0.150m)**

Increases in demand for transport services



# Pressures and Investments

## 2024/25 Summary

Pressures	Expenditure £m	Income £m	Net £m
Growth in Looked After Children placement costs	0.400	-	0.400
Dedicated Social Care Officer (DSCO)	0.027	-	0.027
Virtual School (£0.110m)	0.110	-	0.110
Increase in demand for SEN Transport	0.150	-	0.150
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.687</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.687</b>

Investments	Expenditure £m	Income £m	Net £m
School Inclusion Team (2 year investment)	0.656	-	0.656

# 2024/25 Budget

## Children's Services

Service Area	Expenditure £m	Income £m	Net £m
Education	54.976	-48.238	6.738
Family Services	34.597	-10.850	23.747
Registrars	1.679	-2.501	-0.822
Operations & Programmes	7.354	-1.223	6.131
Libraries & Archives	6.197	-0.630	5.567
School Funding	56.054	-56.054	0.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>160.857</b>	<b>-119.496</b>	<b>41.361</b>

# 2024/25 New Capital Schemes

Scheme	Description	Expenditure £m	Income £m	Net £m
Registration Services Booking System	The project will provide a new digital booking and e commerce system for the Registration Service, offering an exceptional customer experience, increasing revenue and generating service efficiencies.	0.200	0	0.200
Looked After Children Placements Provider Portal	To implement a Provider Portal within the existing case management system, allowing providers of placements and support for Looked After Children and Care Leavers to request, view and query payments.	0.256	(0.128)	0.128
Special School Provision	Securing local specialist provision for autistic children and young people subject to an Education Health and Care Plan through adequate resource planning, avoiding costly transport out of borough.	5.000	(5.000)	0