

**Children & young people
scrutiny committee**

12 Jan 2021

Savings Proposals

Children and Families

Savings Proposal

- Supported accommodation for care leavers

£320k

Consequences

More care experienced young people will be able to have their accommodation needs met in Hereford rather than relying on independent providers, often resulting in young people being placed outside of Herefordshire.

What will change

Changes already in place. Building was purchased and refurbished during the pandemic. Support services in place via contract

Challenges

- The figure is a stretch target and depends on care experienced children not requiring higher cost independent provision. The accommodation provided at Bath Street in 2021/22 may also support this savings target.
- The council will review whether a further house should be purchased based on an evaluation of Widemarsh.

Children and Families

Savings Proposal

- Step down residential to in house foster carers

£1,000k

Consequences

Some children in care will be supported in foster care placements rather than in residential placements, considering their situation, views and needs.

What will change

A number of children in residential placements have been identified as potentially able to step down. Work has already begun to take this forward. The result should be that some children are supported in foster care rather than in residential care.

Challenges

- Dependent on significant work to ensure that this is right for the child, that the match with carers is right and there is availability of foster carers
- Average annual saving per placement estimated as £200k. The actual figure will be dependent on the individual circumstances of each child.
- There may be additional pressures as a result of more children to be looked after by the council.

Children and Families

Savings Proposal

- Prevention of children becoming looked after; reunification of looked after children with families

£400k

Consequences

- Some children who are looked after will return to their families and will no longer be looked after by the council.
- Some children who might otherwise have become looked after by the council remain with their families with intensive support.

What will change

- The Edge of Care (ECHO) service is now up and running during 2020/21 and has started to report on its effectiveness.
- Early indications show that there has been success in preventing children becoming looked after and also in reunifying children with their families.

Challenges

- The target is a stretch target and depends on the service diverting children from otherwise high cost placements and support.
- Some children will necessarily still require being looked after by the council

Children and Families

Savings Proposal

- Recruit 30 new foster carers per annum for 5 years

£200k

Consequences

- More children will be cared for by Herefordshire council foster carers

What will change

Assumes employment of external agency to provide expertise in marketing and campaigns.

Challenges

- Recruitment in first year will be reliant on recruitment activity in 2020/21. External agency work due to commence 2021.
- Assumes current trends continue ie. no greater loss of existing foster carers. NB recent cabinet decision on allowances and rates should assist.

Children and Families

Savings Proposal

- Full cost recovery of traded services (£20k)
- Manage inflation and secure contract efficiencies (£450k)

£470k

Consequences

- Schools and settings will be charged an increased amount for some education traded services
- Costs of placements and contracts will be secured in line with medium term financial strategy target.

What will change

- Continued use of regional frameworks and directorate's placement team to achieve value for money through negotiation. Will introduce cost calculator for 2021/22 which has evidenced achievement of savings in placement fees in other local authorities. Progress will be reported quarterly.

Challenges

- Schools and settings may decide not to buy back services due to increased cost
- Contract inflation and increased costs being demonstrated in the residential and fostering market on an individual basis due to national lack of supply.