

Scrutiny Management Board

Children and Young People directorate - Budget Task and Finish Group

Terms of reference

Background

At the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board on 7 November 2023, the chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee raised concerns about the high levels of agency staff used by the council to operate services for children and young people which is a major contributing factor to the directorate's current forecast overspend the 23/24 financial year of nearly £12 million. Other committee members stated that they shared similar concerns, as well as concerns regarding the likelihood of the service making a planned £4.5million of savings in the current financial year.

The committee agreed to draft a terms of reference for a task and finish group to scrutinise the delivery of the current year's budget, the factors contributing to the large overspend in the financial outturn, and the detailed planning sitting behind the developing budget for services for children and young people for the 24/25 financial year.

Objectives

The group aims to

- analyse and identify the underlying drivers shaping the current outturn of the 2023/2024 budget for the Children and Young People directorate,
- develop a picture of the main factors influencing the directorate's ability to deliver services within its agreed 2023-24 budget
- examine how those factors have influenced the plans and strategies being employed to improve service outcomes and to reduce costs, and the activities both planned and in place to deliver the stated outcomes, to include but not be limited to:
 - staff agency rates
 - home to school transport
 - residential care for looked after children
 - transitions from children's to adult services and
- report and make recommendations to Scrutiny Management Board for consideration alongside the 2024-25 budget in January 2024.

Information required

- 2023/2024 monthly forecast outturn and performance dashboards
- CIPFA comparison of local authority spend
- Home to school transport volumes and costs for the last 4 years

Witnesses

- Director of Finance
- Finance Manager, Children and Young People
- Portfolio Holder, Children and Young People
Corporate Director of Children and Young People

Schedule

Agree terms of reference	21 November 2023
To understand the current outturn of the 2023/2024 budget for the Children and Young People directorate To explore the main factors influencing the budget outturn	Session 1 – mid December 2023
To scrutinise the local authority's long-term strategy to reduce costs, and the policies planned and in place to deliver the strategy, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff agency rates• Home to school transport• Residential care for looked after children• Transitions from children's to adult services To draft recommendations	Session 2 - late December 2023
Agree recommendations	Committee meeting 16 January 2024