

Children, Young People and Families

Proposed Budget Savings 2012/13 - Consultation

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is intended to respond to requests from the public, service users, staff and others for greater detail about the proposals for budget savings in 2012/13. It builds on the City Council 2012+ budget consultation arrangements. Detailed consultations are under way with parents, children, staff and other stakeholders on each of the proposals and these are looking particularly at any impact on existing or potential service users.

We would welcome your views and you can share those by:

- Filling out our online survey at www.birmingham.gov.uk/budgetviews
- Emailing to budget_views@birmingham.gov.uk
- Text message to 07786 200 403

Simply start a new message with the word 'Budget' followed by a space (if you miss this word your message will be lost), add your comment. Please note you will not get a receipt for this message. Messages sent via this service will cost your usual network rate per message and are anonymous unless you put your name in the message.

- Writing to Budget Views, Room B119, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham, B1 1BB.

Budget savings 2011/12

We have already achieved considerable savings this financial year, much of this through implementation of the new operating model (see Appendix 1). In addition to cuts in our base budget we have had to cope with significant reduction in grants. This has had a larger impact on some areas than others and we have had to make large reductions in spending on school improvement support.

In respect of head count, the position in September 2010 was 8561 permanent staff, 364 temporary/fixed term, total 8925. In September 2011 this was 7590 permanent, 226 temporary/fixed term, total 7816. This is a reduction of 1109 staff. We have tried to ensure that as many redundancies as possible have been on a voluntary basis and in the main this has been the case.

The hard work and commitment of staff through this period has meant that we have maintained services to children and young people and made a number of key improvements in line with the Improvement Notice and as a result we are beginning to see some progress particularly in respect of safeguarding.

To achieve this we have focused our attention on the needs of our most vulnerable children and we must continue to do so. By improving the quality of everything that we do and the services that are available to children and young people we can ensure that Birmingham continues to improve in respect of safeguarding and the positive outcomes we want for children, young people and families.

The level of projected overspend has reduced each month. Where we can we are already working on the proposals for next year, for example in relation to the placements strategy to seek to further reduce this year's overspend and to ensure that we are in a better position next year to deliver agreed savings.

Budget savings 2011/12 that have not been achieved

Proposal to create a Social Enterprise company - Services for Education

This was included as a potential budget saving for 2011/12 but has not been possible to achieve. The issues proved more complex to progress than had been anticipated. The current position in relation to the 5 service areas is:

- **Music Service, Health Education Service, and Learning & Assessment Service**

These are ready to transfer into a social enterprise from April 2012. The enterprise is likely to be a company limited by guarantee with charitable status and will be known as S4E (Services for Education). There is still much detail to be finalised and the project will need to be fast-tracked through the City Council's decision-making process if this deadline is to be achieved and will require agreement and support in relation to initial cash-flow, start-up and transition costs.

- **Outdoor Learning Service (OLS)**

We now consider that because of complex property issues the best future for this service is as part of a charitable trust. There is already a dormant charity into which OLS might transfer. Or they could come under the auspices of S4E which we anticipate will have charitable status. Given the consultation and TUPE issues which will need to be addressed, the earliest any transfer could take place is likely to be September 2012.

- **Direct Services (School Meals, Cleaning, and Mobile Caretaking)**

The service needs fundamentally to review its method of calculating its charges to schools, and then to restructure in the light of it. If it were to remain within the City Council then this might just be achieved by September 2012. If they were to move into S4E a realistic transfer date would be April 2013. Similarly contracting them out might be achieved by April 2013 but this would largely depend on what basis the contracting out took place. In other authorities where this has happened the funding has been centrally retained and a single, attractive, high-value contract with the Council exists. In Birmingham the funding has been delegated so rather than a single contract there are over 300 service level agreements with individual schools. Previous discussions with private sector providers has indicated that the absence of such a contract makes the proposition unattractive, so it should not be taken for granted that contracting out is a possibility at all unless the funding is de-delegated from schools. The options need to be thoroughly explored with schools.

Home to School Transport

Savings are planned for this area in 2012/13 and are covered in the next section.

2. OUR PROPOSALS FOR 2012/13

The rest of this paper sets out in more detail the main proposals that are referred to in the overall City Council budget consultation paper.

a) Placements strategy

Our biggest cost in children's social care, as with most local authorities, is placements for children in care. The budget was reduced this year compared with last year by over £5m because of time limited funding coming to an end. This reduction is one of the key reasons for the ongoing budget overspend in social care this year as we have not been able to make savings from the beginning of the year. Savings on children in care placements can be achieved through action on:

1. Decision-making so only those children who really need to come into care do, and those in care have up-to-date plans that are being progressed. Under the new area based model, increased responsibility will be placed on local management teams to manage down the spend on children in care and to develop partnerships with local providers designed to offer family support packages to families. We are in negotiation with one or two providers to offer some services on a payment by results (PBR) basis and are also looking at whether we can support this intention through Social Impact Bond developments
2. Timely decisions in respect of either children going home when they can or achieving permanency either through adoption or special guardianship with relatives.
3. Placing children wherever possible with in-house foster carers – actively recruiting and increasing the number of those. The Audit Commission have helped us with a review of our recruitment processes to identify how we can be more efficient, and we successfully bid to the Local Government Association (LGA) to be one of the host sites for 'Local Government Challenge' where 10 local government workers will be selected from across the country to work on issues chosen by the host authorities. In January they will be coming into the City to work on our recruiting and marketing activities. We have had a contractual relationship with an outside provider to recruit carers on a PBR basis with some limited success and we will be repeating and expanding this activity. We have placed an Expression of Interest and met with a group of providers interested in developing the large scale recruitment required in order to progress our ideas. (We currently have around 550 carers and are looking for an increase of 200-300.)

4. Making best use of our in-house residential provision – increasing to at least 85% occupancy. This will require us to radically review the fit between the needs of children in care and likely to be needing care in the future with the range of provision on offer. All homes will be asked to change their focus to be more targeted on the needs expressed by young people thereby increasing occupancy. We will also review all current and future capital costs on each site to help the decision-making about which of the buildings are least cost effective.
5. Cost effective contracts for external fostering and residential placements, and only using those where in-house provision is not available or is inappropriate. Further to the Expression of Interest referenced in 3, we have also put out two further consultations – one on providers who can offer a step down fostering service aimed at those currently in residential care (whether external or internal) but who could be managed with suitably skilled and experienced carers and secondly consulting on provision for young women facing sexual exploitation. This is a major demand currently and we are exploring the provision of some dedicated resources within the internal, external and voluntary sectors.
6. Greater contribution of the NHS in relation to joint funding of placements which also meet an identified health need. Some of the children and young people placed have significant emotional and behavioural needs and it is right to seek contributions to their care costs from the health service. We also need to explore much more joint planning and provision – some of the needs highlighted above should be responded to by both the City and NHS working together.

The placements strategy which is targeted to achieve £6.03m savings next year is ambitious and innovative. It will focus on all of the above and use local intelligence and third party expertise. We have started work on this, particularly in relation to points 1, 2 and 5.

The strategy currently being drafted will build upon the work already done in relation to home closures (3 homes closed in the last eighteen months), framework and block contracting and improved placement processes that have resulted in unit costs significantly below the CIPFA benchmark average. It will examine the current use of our in-house residential provision and is likely to recommend the closure of one or more homes, and change in use of others.

b) Adoption and fostering

The proposed savings amount to £1m. Options to achieve this are currently being consulted on with staff and the unions. However, it is a significant reduction in both services at a time when we need to improve their output to support the placement strategy above and this is obviously a risk.

c) Short breaks for disabled children

We have included savings of £415k in relation to short breaks for disabled children. These savings have been possible as a result of a 'windfall' in that the funding included in the budget plan for the Children's Equipment Store (£300K) will be met from a capital grant received for short breaks. The balance of this will be achieved by slowing the pace of service developments. There will be no impact on the level of investment in service and service development will be maintained but at a slower rate. Access to service is crucial at a time of increasing need/demand and unstable funding and so we are tightening eligibility criteria and looking at making better use of contracts and in-house provision. Consultation with parents is telling us that they have experienced considerable difficulty in accessing short breaks provision. We will look to maximise the resources that we have. One option is to no longer resource and invest in residential homes used for respite which are currently under-used and secure short breaks and family support that better meets the needs of families. This would result in some residential homes closing. We are looking at the impact of changes to eligibility criteria as this may result in some people experiencing a reduction in service. It is a priority to improve our social work service for disabled children. We anticipate that this will result in more need being identified, so our plans need to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of children identified through delivering an improved social work service for disabled children.

We are currently reviewing our understanding of need at the locality level and our processes.

d) Early intervention grant

We have proposed a 10% reduction across the board in relation to those services funded by this grant. Not including early years, which are covered separately, the total comes to £180k (in addition to the £448k for short breaks, which is also EIG funded). These savings will be realised through service efficiencies – we are part way through a process of negotiation with suppliers that involves the reconciliation of contracts and better co-operation between services to make reductions with minimal impact on service delivery. In this way we are able to maintain the current levels of investment, much of this within the third sector. We want to ensure that these are the right services to address the priorities of the Directorate within the context of the revised operating model and our ambitions for children and young people, so we shall be reviewing these services, taking account of local need and re-commissioning as necessary.

e) Home to school transport

The criteria for receipt of this service have been and continue to be the subject of consultation. In the interim we are working to reduce spend through transport efficiencies and reviewing the contracts for pupil guides. The target of £1m savings is challenging, and it may not be possible to achieve this through efficiencies. Cabinet agreed to undertake a wide-ranging consultation

with parents and stakeholders. This will improve the quality of the consultation and allow us to explore with key stakeholders the options for achieving this level of reduction. Within this revised time frame we can achieve only a part year affect and our aim is to have completed changes by the next academic year.

f) Youth service

There is an additional £500k saving to the 2011/12 budget reduction in the proposals and plans have been drawn up to achieve this which include further reductions in staffing numbers and reducing the number of satellites and youth centres, with consideration being given to transfer to an alternative provider or, as a last resort, closure.

Phase One of the remodelling has been completed and this has included a new management restructure to move into line with the 4 areas, re-defining management responsibilities and removal of a number of manager posts.

Phase Two of remodelling of the service is about to commence and this includes the internal recruitment process for the senior youth worker posts. This will have to be done regardless of budget, as the two new myplace buildings will be opening in the new year and staffing and resources will be needed to plan and manage the preparation for their opening.

The next phase of filling the remaining posts will not commence until the new year, as the number of posts will be dependent on whether any further budget savings are required. The number of redundancies amongst the full-time workforce will be minimised and these will be non-specialist youth worker posts. In addition there will need to be a reduction in part-time posts, in the region of 3 FTEs, which could be around 15 to 20 part-time staff.

An additional reduction of £500k is likely to mean the loss of 4 to 6 buildings, 6 full-time youth worker posts (12% of workforce), and around another 7 FTE from the part-time workforce. We would not reduce the number of Hubs, but may have to close some of the larger youth centres and a number of satellites.

Any decisions will be informed by:

- Customer satisfaction Survey. We undertake a survey of around 1,000 service users every two years or so. We undertook one in October/November, and the response is currently being analysed.
- Feedback from a large number of young people as part of a very recent exercise to gather information and opinions for the current Overview & Scrutiny review. 9 locally-based workshops were held in youth centres and projects, and 5 young people met Elected Members in the Council House in November to give their feedback.

- Assessment of need and the issues and barriers facing young people, together with an assessment of where reductions would have least impact.

g) Connexions

The Education Act has now received Royal Assent and means the ceasing of the need for the Local Authority to provide a universal careers service. The responsibility for impartial and independent careers guidance for pupils in years 9-11 passes to schools and they have a duty to secure access to some form of service on behalf of their students.

Local authorities will remain responsible for young people aged 16-19 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), young people who are identified as being part of a vulnerable group, and any young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The gross budget for Connexions Birmingham for the 2011/12 financial year is £7.96m. Following the announcement of a proposed budget for 2012/13 there is a requirement to identify £4.1m worth of savings leaving an operating budget of £3.8m. The proposed budget savings would lead to a headcount reduction of approximately 100 FTE posts and closure of three out of four offices open to the public.

The proposed savings of £4.1m will be achieved by delivering a reduced service, which will particularly focus more on those young people who are more vulnerable and need greater support. In addition, we are currently discussing with schools the option of moving to a traded service to deliver the broader range of careers advice and to support schools with their responsibility to provide appropriate advice and support on post school options for their pupils.

h) Commissioning of childcare and early years provision

The City is dependent on the voluntary and private sectors for the provision of all childcare and for the provision of up to half of early years free places (there is a statutory requirement to provide 15 hours to 3 and 4 year olds and the Autumn Statement heralded the expansion of such places for vulnerable 2 year olds). Our Early Years and Childcare Team supports and has oversight in terms of quality of 1516 settings, of which 608 have been reviewed this year.

A proposed saving of £535k would mean:

- Reduction in Graduate Leadership Funding through a remodelled service.
- Reduced training for settings.
- Reduced small grants to childminders.
- Less detailed sufficiency work.

If the saving was increased to £1m this would impact on employees, settings and safeguarding in terms of support and advice offered to childcare and early years providers.

i) Children's centres

The scale of the overall reductions facing children's services is such that we consider that we need to save £5.3m in order that we can protect other service areas which are more targeted to support our more vulnerable children. We do understand that this provision is greatly valued – however in the light of the significant reduction in government funding we must make considerable savings from this provision as well as the other areas mentioned here. The options all seek as far as we can to protect front-line services, particularly those which are targeted on vulnerable children. The proposals below outline the way in which we believe we can save this sum, with the least impact on families with higher levels of need.

Currently Birmingham has 75 children's centres developed in three phases which provide the core offer of children's centre activities across the whole city (health such as ante/post-natal services and health visiting, early education linked with day care, family/parenting support, training and employment support).

Early intervention is key to improving outcomes for children, in particular the most vulnerable children, and that intervention in the ante-natal period and the first three years of life along with parenting support is the most effective method of enabling long term improvements in outcomes for children.

However the work of the children's centres appears to have moved away from its original Sure Start purpose to eradicate child poverty and improve outcomes for children, and as such there are many vulnerable children and families in Birmingham still not engaged with the centres. The Government has stated that children's centres must be more targeted in their work. In Birmingham it has been identified this should be through persistent targeted outreach that enables access to activities both universal (health, early education) and targeted (parenting/family support, reducing child poverty and narrowing the gap).

By developing a locality model, in particular with children's centres supporting the work of the Integrated Family Support Teams and Children's Social Care, there can be savings made in relation to management efficiencies and possible reductions of centres in the areas of least disadvantage that will enable the children's centre agenda to continue to promote safeguarding in the early years, to reduce child poverty, to narrow the gap and to improve outcomes for all young children. This work started this year and the requirement for further savings in 2012/13 will build on this. The proposals below outline the way in which we believe we can make savings with the least impact on families with higher levels of need.

We intend consulting directly with centre managers, with users of the service and with staff and recognise that alternative options may be brought forward as part of that process.

Options for savings 2012/13

Reductions can be made by:

- Continued development of the children centre locality model that looks at efficiencies through integrated working and the development of a hub and satellite model (around £2.7m – i.e. 10%).
- Applying a 5% reduction across all localities after the 10% reduction above equating to a 15 % reduction overall.
- Applying a 10% reduction across all localities after the (10% reduction above equating to a 20% reduction overall.
- The closure of some children's centres in the areas of least disadvantage as part of the above.

10% reduction – continuation of the locality model

All children's centres have been networked in the 16 localities. Work is currently underway with the strategic leads for each of the centres to determine local priorities and establish how best to meet the identified needs of children in across their areas in a collaborative, integrated manner. They are preparing a business case by the end of January which will identify how they have interpreted data and local knowledge to define local need in relation to delivery of the children's centre core purpose; this may include services that can be delivered from each centre as either a Hub (delivery of the full core purpose) or a satellite (delivery of one or more aspects of the core purpose). At Appendix 2 we have included a description of services covered by the core offer and core purpose. The business case will demonstrate budget spend to activity and how the required measures in their contracts will be met. This model allows for efficiencies through integrated working and as such does not suggest any closure of centres. The work of the centres will be to continue universal early education and health services to engage with all young children and families and, through this, to identify target groups of those most vulnerable children and those with additional need. The second target group will be those children and families not accessing the services and these will be a priority for persistent, targeted outreach. There will be integrated working with the Integrated Family Support Teams to ensure a Team Around the Child/Family approach.

15% - 20% reduction – continuation of the locality model with closure of some lower priority centres

Following the outcome of the above process, further reductions (an additional 5%-10%) could be applied across all centres. This could also involve reducing the number of centres in areas of least disadvantage in order to ensure available resources are targeted towards the greatest need, whilst ensuring children and families are able to access appropriate services and activities

from other centres in their locality. This ensures that all children, particularly those most vulnerable, have access to local services and support.

Consultation

The city's children's centres are delivered through a mixed economy of providers such as schools, voluntary organisations, private providers and local authority centres. A robust and meaningful consultation process will be undertaken including meetings with all centre providers/management, governors, users, staff, key local partners. Given the diversity of the centres and their management, the consultation process will take into account the differing needs of those involved and respond accordingly.

j) Recommission specialist and court-based assessments

We intend to agree more efficient and effective arrangements for assessments that form part of our work with the courts.

k) Introduce new eligibility criteria and extension of means tested contributions for special guardianship orders, residence orders and adoption allowances

The Council intends to make some changes to the schemes for providing financial support for children who are adopted and those who are cared for by relatives and friends after being made the subject of a resident order or a special guardianship order. We intend the new scheme to be fairer for the children concerned, as well as for their carers.

ELEMENTS OF THE NEW CHILDREN'S SERVICES ARRANGEMENTS

A critical element of the new model is that children and young people will have their needs met as close to where they live as possible. As such, the city has been divided into four geographical areas: East / North / South / West and Central, which have then been subdivided into sixteen delivery areas called 'localities' that are based upon school consortia and children's centre reach areas.

The new arrangements are part of the multi-agency work with families and comprise:

Integrated Access Teams (IATs) provide a single point of contact for professionals and members of the public who want to seek support or raise concerns about a child. They provide:

- An accessible and responsive service
- Screening assessments to determine appropriate action
- Advice about support available
- Referrals to the most appropriate services.

There are four IATs with one located in each of the four geographical areas. Each team includes:

- Referral and advice officers
- Social workers
- Integrated family support worker
- Team manager
- Data administrator.

The benefits of IATs...

- The child will be linked promptly to the most appropriate service to ensure they receive the right level of support at the right time.
- A reduction in avoidable referrals to Children's Social Care, enabling them to concentrate on the most complex cases.
- Improvements in user satisfaction through improved response times and appropriate referral on to relevant professionals.

Integrated Family Support Teams (IFSTs) bring together professionals from a range of children's services. They work in a coordinated way to meet the needs of the child and the family where additional support is required. There are sixteen IFSTs working in defined geographical areas that fit with school consortia and children's centre reach areas. The teams will engage directly with universal services and be based within a children's centre in each locality. The team size and make-up will vary to reflect the profile of need in each area.

The benefits of IFSTs...

- Integrated Family Support Teams include professionals from a range of services, so they can work effectively together to meet the needs of the child and family.
- Integrated Family Support Teams will reduce the number of cases held and referred to children's social care - this will enable social workers to focus on dealing with the most complex and critical cases.

- Each school is allocated a named link worker from the Integrated Family Support Team in their locality who will be their professional link to family support services and accessible as their first point of contact. They will also be their professional link to the rest of the Integrated Family Support Teams.
- School linked Integrated Family Support Team staff will address whole school approaches to support and engage families more efficiently in relation to school related issues.
- Integrated Family Support Teams will also track and support families who move address or school placements to ensure they do not slip through the net.

Children's Social Care – First Response Teams deal with referrals related to child protection concerns, or issues around the safeguarding of a child who may be at risk of significant harm. Work will either come in via the Integrated Access Teams or through the Integrated Family Support Teams when more formal statutory input is required.

The teams will be made up of:

- Senior Practitioner
- Social Workers
- Access and Referral Officers and;
- work is underway to develop Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs that will include both police officers and health staff. It is intended to pilot this in the south of the city initially.

They will:

- undertake initial intensive assessment work
- undertake Child Protection investigations
- provide an early assessment of risk
- set out plans for longer term intervention with families where needed.

Children's Social Care – Safeguarding Service The majority of children known to social care will be held within this service. The Safeguarding Service will:

- manage children subject to Child Protection or Child in Need Plans
- manage children in care for short periods under voluntary arrangements
- initiate and see through court proceedings, where it is not possible to secure safety for a child at home.

Children's Social Care – Children in Care Service will strengthen the support provided to children who are likely to remain in Council care for a considerable period of time.

The service will:

- respond to daily and short-term needs of the child, whilst delivering a longer-term plan
- maintain the stability of placements
- improve health and educational outcomes and celebrate achievements
- prevent drift in the care system.

Children's Social Care – After Care Service provides services to young people who require ongoing support as they leave the care system. It supports young people to get into further and higher education, training and employment, help with housing, support them as young parents and, where appropriate, assist with transition into adult services to enable independent living.

The benefit of the children's social care teams...

- Coordinated and more timely responses.
- Easier communication between agencies.
- Service areas that will allow for more specialist knowledge and expertise to be developed.
- Ease of transition for children within the service.
- Integrated Access Teams and Integrated Family Support Teams will reduce the number of cases referred to and held by children's social care, enabling social workers to focus on dealing with the most complex and critical cases.

Disabled Children's Social Care teams offer a city-wide service and consist of:

- Disabled Children's First Response and Occupational Therapy Teams
- Disabled Children's Integrated Family Support Team
- Disabled Children's Safeguarding and Support Teams
- Disabled Children in Care and Safeguarding Team.

The benefit of Disabled Children's Social Care teams...

These teams work jointly with complex needs and disabilities specialists including health, Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Teams, Looked after Children Education

Service, the voluntary sector and others, leading to:

- a clearer pathway for families
- integrated assessments – with reduced duplication
- improved and timely identification of need
- improved coordination of planning for children
- social workers will be able to focus on dealing with the most complex and critical cases.

Children's Centres bring together childcare, early education, health, family support, training and employment services for families with children under five years old. Their 'core purpose' is to improve outcomes and narrow the gaps, particularly in terms of identifying, reaching and supporting the families in greatest need to improve their:

- parenting capacity
- health and wellbeing (including economic wellbeing)
- child development and school readiness.

In Birmingham there are 75 Children's Centres that provide services across the city. Birmingham is developing its children's services so that they are delivered in 16 localities across the city, making services more available in local communities. It is proposed from April 2012, that the 75 Children's Centres will be networked in each of the 16 localities to deliver the core purpose services and activities from hub and satellite centres.

The new ways of working will enable Children's Centres to build on existing services and work in an integrated way with all other children's services such as the Integrated Family Support Teams and target services so that they are in the right place for the right children and families at the right time.

CHILDREN'S CENTRES – CORE OFFER

Currently each children's centre is required to deliver the core offer; the DfE has consulted on changing aspects of this to the Core Purpose which can be delivered at each children's centre or across a network of children's centres according to identified need.

Full core offer was defined as:

- Early years provision
- Outreach and family support
- Child and family health services
- Parental involvement
- Links with Jobcentre Plus

(Less intense services for children's centres serving more mixed communities)

Core Purpose is proposed as:

- Improving outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in child development and school readiness
- Supported by improved:
 - parenting aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills;
 - child and family health and life chances.

Achieving the core purpose (services)

- Assessing need across the local community
- Providing access to universal early years services in the local area including high quality and affordable early years education and childcare
- Providing targeted evidence-based early interventions for families in greatest need, in the context of integrated services
- Acting as a hub for the local community, building social capital and cohesion.
- Sharing expertise with other early years settings to improve quality

Key changes

- New emphasis on relationship support
- Increased emphasis on adult learning
- Different emphasis on early learning and childcare
- Increased emphasis on child and family health services, particularly in the context of 4,200 extra health visitors
- Increased emphasis on parenting and family support
- New emphasis on Big Society, working in partnership with parents and the community, as something that underpins children's centre work
- New emphasis on children's centres as leaders in the early years sector