



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 3RD DECEMBER 2019

SUBJECT: DRAFT SOCIAL SERVICES BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2020/21

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Scrutiny Committee with the proposed approach to setting the budget for the Directorate of Social Services for 2020/21.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides details of the proposed approach to setting the Social Services budget for 2020/2021. The report will outline a range of assumptions and also reference our investment in preventative services and potential use of service reserves to allow these preventative measures to fully embed.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Scrutiny is asked to: -
- 3.1.1 Note the proposed approach to setting the Social Services budget.
- 3.1.2 Note the intended emphasis of the range of initiatives to help mitigate current cost pressures.
- 3.1.3 Endorse the draft 2020/21 budget proposals, inclusive of the potential use of £800k of Social Services service reserves.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Council is required annually to approve proposals to set a balanced budget
- 4.2 It is believed that an emphasis on preventative services will alleviate those areas of service experiencing the greatest demand and consequentially reduce the cost pressures.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Members will be aware that in previous years the Social Services Directorate, like all other Directorates in the Council has had to develop a range of savings proposals in order to deliver a balanced budget. In most years those savings requirements have also been accompanied by an element of growth to assist with demographic pressures, particularly in relation to an ageing population and an increase in the numbers of Children Looked After.

- 5.2 In previous years the emphasis has been on protecting front line services with savings coming predominantly from realignment of budgets, deletion of vacant posts and some reduction in third sector funding. Despite these efforts there have been some reductions in services such as the restructuring of Day Services which, whilst not impacting on current service users, has led to a reduction in overall capacity.
- 5.3 It is clear that the Directorate simply cannot go on with the approach that has served us well to date. Whilst we always strive to work more efficiently, the brunt of any further budget reductions would have to be borne by our public facing services. Consequently, staff have been looking at alternative ways in which we can meet our financial pressures moving forward.
- 5.4 Over the past five years the Directorate has performed well in terms of managing its overall budget and this can be demonstrated as follows;

Year	Outturn £000's Overspend (Underspend)
2018/19	(1,923)
2017/18	262
2016/17	(264)
2015/16	(1,546)
2014/15	(3,753)

- 5.5 Members will recall the 2019/20 month 5 budget report considered by Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd October 2019, showed a projected underspend of £457k. An exercise undertaken to look at the committed costs of current placements for 2020/2021 currently indicates a shortfall of around £800k
- 5.6 The MTFP presented to Council in February 2019 included further anticipated Social Services growth of £1.5m for 2020/21. Based on current information the projected 2020/21 growth requirement is now £800k. For 2020/21 only it is proposed that this anticipated growth requirement will be met through a one-off contribution of £800k from Social Services reserves. This is proposed on the basis that there are a number of initiatives currently underway that will reduce costs in the medium to long-term and therefore mitigate the current cost pressures in the system. These initiatives include the following: -
- Ty Isaf, the second residential children's home funded through the Intermediate Care Funding (ICF) capital grant, is expected to be fully operational from the summer of 2020 providing four placements, which will be offered to children currently placed out of area in the first instance.
 - An additional bid for further ICF capital has been confirmed for 2019/20 to purchase another house to convert into a third residential children's home, which will also offer four beds at some point during 2020/21.
 - The multi-disciplinary My Support Team (MyST) is currently working with fifteen children, nine of whom are in out of county residential care with plans to stepping down to foster care or returning to their families.
 - A Specialist Health Visitor is being employed to support teams with pre-birth assessments to reduce the numbers of babies being removed from parents and placed into care at birth.
 - Using ICF funding, the Intensive Support Team is expanding to include a full-time Child Psychologist, an Education Worker and a Community Connector with the aim of supporting children to remain within their families wherever it is safe to do so.

- ICF investment is also being used to establish a Family Meeting Service aimed at supporting extended family members to come together to identify safe solutions to enable children to remain living within their family network.
- There is an ongoing recruitment drive for in-house foster carers, which is reducing the reliance on more expensive independent fostering agency placements. Committee is aware that recruitment numbers have doubled in the last 12 months.
- Reserve funding has been earmarked for the continued investment in single handed lifting equipment in order to reduce the need for double handed home care calls.

5.7 In future years £750k in growth will be allocated to social services to help with the cost of anticipated further increases in demand.

5.8 This approach will be regularly evaluated in order that we are aware of the impact. In the event of the impact not as being as anticipated or an increase in demand for services being experienced, then this will be reported back to members as part of our ongoing budget monitoring work.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 The approach being taken is based on the assumption that anticipated growth pressures for 2020/21 can be partially offset by an emphasis on the development of a range preventative services.

6.2 A range of other assumptions have been made throughout the report in respect of pay and non-pay inflationary increases and inescapable service pressures moving forward.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 The budget setting process encompasses all the resources used by the Council to deliver services and meet priorities.

7.2 Effective financial planning and the setting of a balanced budget support the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015: -

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
- A globally responsible Wales.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 Effective financial planning is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 are met.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Equalities Impact Screenings have been be undertaken for all of the draft 2020/21 savings

proposals and Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA's) will be completed where they are required. This is to ensure that decisions that affect different individuals and groups with protected characteristics are assessed at an appropriate and relevant level and at the correct stage in the process. Completed EIA's will be available on the Council's website.

- 9.2 Consultation with residents, when done in accordance with the Council's Communications & Engagement Strategy and the Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance, also ensures that every resident, regardless of circumstances, has the opportunity to have their views heard and considered in the Council's decision-making process.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As detailed throughout the report.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no direct personnel implications.
- 11.2 The Trade Unions will be fully consulted on the 2020/21 draft budget proposals.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 Scrutiny will note that, along with all other MTFP proposals, the social services proposals contained in this report will now be subject to a period of consultation prior to final budget proposals being presented to Cabinet on 12th February 2020 and then Council on 20th February 2020. The consultation process will run from 18th November 2019 to 13th January 2020. Consultation and engagement methods to be used will include: -

- Online and hard copy consultation – a survey and supporting documentation.
- A dedicated 'pull-out' in the December edition of Newline.
- Enhanced use of digital media – including question and answer sessions, other digital engagement and signposting to the online survey.
- Consultation/engagement with local members/AMs/MPs.
- Face to face engagement including: -
 - Drop in sessions at locations across the county borough.
 - Engagement with the Viewpoint Panel, 50+ Forum, Youth Forum, Caerphilly Business Forum, Parent Network etc.
 - Engagement with affected staff groups and Trade Unions.
- Consultation with the Voluntary Sector.
- Consultation with Town and Community Councils.
- Targeted consultation with Equalities Network contacts – Menter Iaith, Caerphilly County Borough Access Group, Action Hearing Loss Cymru etc.
- Consultation with council staff.
- Posters displayed at affected establishments.
- Consultation with partner organisations and other targeted stakeholder engagement as appropriate.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

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Consultees:

- Corporate Management Team
- Councillor Carl Cuss, Cabinet Member
- Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director, Children's Services
- Jo Williams, Assistant Director, Adult Services
- Mike Jones, Interim Financial Services Manager, Social Services
- Steve Harris, Interim Head of Business Improvement Services