

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

31.01.22



Children's Services

2021/22 BUDGET BY SERVICE

The key controllable service area budgets for 2021/22 are as follows:

Service Area	Expenditure Budget £m	Income Budget £m	Net Budget £m	
CLS Directorate	8.12	(3.01)	5.11	PFI and Pension Fund Budget
Inclusion	0.98	(0.63)	0.34	
Slough Children First	31.06	0.00	31.06	
School Services	4.96	(0.89)	4.07	£3.7m SEN Transport Budget
Early Help Hub	1.51	(0.01)	1.51	
Early Years Education	0.34	(0.05)	0.30	
People Children Management	(0.20)	0.00	(0.20)	
Children's Centres / Family Hubs	1.49	(0.59)	0.89	
Total People - Children's Budget	48.26	(5.19)	43.07	

This is the budget figures as at Period 9 (Q3)

2021/22 BUDGET PROGRESS

2021/22 Budget Progress SBC

- SBC is reporting a £8k adverse position to budget
- **Early Help Hub and Early Years Education**, showing an underspend mainly due to not recruiting to vacant posts and underspend on Supplies and Services
- **Children's Centres** small overspend across Supplies and Services which will be funded from underspend on Early years.
- **Inclusion and School services** are showing overspend which is mitigated by underspends across Early Years Education and the Early Help Hub.

2021/22 SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Savings target of £1.044m for 2021/22:

- **£125k Home to School Transport** savings, Transformation of Slough (SBC) Passenger Travel and Transport
- **£73k Early Help Hub / Early Years Education**, reduction in Supplies and Services budgets
- **£344k Early Years Education**, reduction in staffing (vacancies)
- **£67k Inclusion** increase in DSG recharges
- **£270k School Services**, reduction in staffing and Supplies and Services budgets
- **£166k People Management**, increase recharges to other directorate services and reduction in supplies and services budgets

2021/22 KEY ISSUES

- **SEND:** post SEND local area inspection will highlight major systemic and sustained weaknesses across the system since 2014. The service is impacted significantly from the downgrading of SEND case officers (resulting in 85% turnover) leaving a significant backlog of overdue statutory EHCP applications
- GM post is currently vacant
- Any staffing reduction will result in the services' inability to meet minimum statutory duties.
- **Children's Centres:** 3 options were proposed, with a presentation that stated reducing centres by more than 5, will have a detrimental effect on the levels of need across communities and lead to additional, more costly pressure on the Front Door (which is already exceeding capacity with the potential of placing children at risk. However the decision has been made to limit the reduction to 5 with an exploration of further options to be decided in the future.
- **Staffing reductions across children's services:** Key issues relate to the reduction of 1 x Attendance Officers which will result in the services' inability to track vulnerable children which in turn will present a safeguarding issue, to mitigate this risk, the service is proposing a reduction of one officer.

2022/23 SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Savings target of £1.109m for 2022/23, allocated savings are £1.109m:

- **£77k Home to School Transport** savings, Transformation of Slough (SBC) Passenger Travel and Transport
- **£272k Children and Families**, staffing reductions across the division
- **£61k Children and Families**, reduction in supplies and services budgets
- **£63k Inclusion**, reduction in supplies and services budgets
- **£180k School Services**, reduction in staffing and supplies and services budgets and increase DSG recharges for staff cost
- **£407k Children's Centre/Family Hubs**: repurposing of children's centres (option 5/5)
- **£49k Children's Centres/Family Hubs**: to keep Group Manager's post vacant in 2022/23 and after restructure will be taken as permanent savings.

DEPARTMENTAL EMERGING PRESSURES LIKELY TO BE FACED **IN 2022/23**

Costc	Costc(T)	Account(T)	Historic Budget pressures 2022/23 £'000	Comments
F137	Comm, Partnership & Performance	Fees and Charges	130,500	This unachievable income line is added in 2021/22 amended budget
F158	Strategic Information Resources	Computing - Purchase of Hardware	104,000	Pressure on CAPITA contract
F420	Attendance Service	Fines and Penalty Notices	77,000	This income is for penalty charges for parents when children missed the school, unachievable income target
F143	Sust of Childcare Mkt & Business Support	Internal Department Recharges to/from	282,500	Reduction in staffing recharges to DSG
F146	Workforce Development Training	Fees and Charges	36,400	Reduction in Training budget, reduction in recharges
F253	Music Service (SF26)	Music Service (SF26)	148,400	Teachers staffing budget taken out in 2021/22 , this is grant funded service by Arts Council
F640	Traded Services Educational Psychologists	Fees and Charges	78,700	Unachievable income target
			857,500	

BUDGET CONSULTATION

Timeline:

- **Children's Centres consultation, details outlined in the Business Case**
- **Home to School Transport, details outlined in the Business Case**

Children's Services – Slough Children First

2021/22 BUDGET BY SERVICE

The key controllable service area budgets for 2021/22 are as follows:

Service Area	Expenditure Budget £m	Income Budget £m	Net Budget £m
Slough Children First	£36.8	£6.6	£30.2

This is the budget figures as at Period 6 (Q2)

2021/22 BUDGET PROGRESS

2021/22 Budget Progress SCF

- SCF reporting a bottom line £1,318k adverse position to budget, includes;
 - covid driven costs estimated at £2,896k partially offset by covid funding (£714k),
 - sharp increase in unaccompanied asylum seeking children with no attached home office funding £420k
 - Pay inflation pressure £217k
 - Additional savings identified to mitigate the pressures (£1,501k)
 - **Service reductions £266k**, includes targeted Early Help reductions £201k, corporate function reductions £65
 - **Service efficiencies £399k**, commissioning activity £331k, negotiations of contracts £52k, changes in practice through remote working £25k
 - **Income generation £584k**, health contributions £137k, grant funding £185k & Public Health contribution to targeted early help £262k
 - **Staffing savings £252k**, holding vacancies £240k, cessation of protected pay period £12k
 - On target to deliver budgeted savings targets £1,050k

2021/22 KEY ISSUES SCF

- An average of **1700-1800 children** (excluding EH) children requiring support, driven by the impact of Covid: increase in domestic abuse levels, substance misuse, neglect, food and fuel poverty, increase in court proceedings delayed
- The increase in **demand** has placed significant strains on services and requiring continued support of additional capacity through Innovate teams but caseloads are still too high
- **Workforce pressures** have slightly improved, there continues to be a high reliance on agency staff (35%) with instability of workforce, the volume of referrals this is causing further attrition.
- **Fragility** of the workforce noted as a concern by **Ofsted** and they will return in 3 months
- **Recruitment** is challenging due to; legacy reputation of Slough, high caseloads and now S114, children are being managed in the wrong part of the system, leading potential leading to drift and delay in casework
- A rise in the **children looked after** standing at 251 the highest in the company's history, an increase of 27 (12%) on March 2021
- **Placement cost and choice** an issue range from in house fostering provision of £18k to residential placements of circa £240k per annum per child (CMA investigating)
- Children are presenting with **complex needs** , which will escalate if they are not managed at the right time in the right part of the system, further loss of EH will impact on this

2022/23 SAVINGS PROPOSALS SCF

SCF savings targets of £4,726k including £2,052k of growth to be absorbed. £4,726k savings made up as follows;

- **Service reduction savings £494k** reductions in targeted early help £340k (deletion of 9.3 full time equivalent posts, 7.3 FTE of which are currently vacant), reduction in corporate support £154k (deletion of 3 posts, 2 of which will be vacant)
- **Staffing savings £1,185k** £935k reduction in agency and Innovate team spend, restructure of management posts £104k reducing numbers of assistant team managers (currently vacant), reductions in staffing from efficiencies in technology £96k (recording software, improved reporting capabilities), cessation of protect pay period £50k
- **Service efficiencies £871k** alternate provision for exploited teenagers £238k, development of the semi independent market £313k, respite services £140k, local residential development £49k, contract negotiation £82k, overheads £49k reduced printing, mileage & telephony charges.
- **Income generation £1,955k** Health contributions to packages £1,083k, Public health contributions £500k, strengthening families contribution £286k, Domestic abuse funding £86k
- **Commercial initiatives £221k** In house fostering recruitment, expectation to recruit a net increase of 8 new carers in year.

2022/23 SCF BUSINESS CASES

Company business cases	Proposed savings 2022/23 £000's	Delivery Risk H/M/L	Estimated delivery risk £000's	Comments
AMZ - local provision	238	Green	0	Updated savings based on average rates
Income stream maximisation	1,955	Yellow	1,000	Inclusion of additional savings targets
Other commissioning opportunities	80	Green	0	Inclusion of risk of resource requirements to deliver programme
Staffing structures	404	Yellow	50	No Change from previous presentation
Staffing structures - early help	340	Yellow	64	Reduction in targets to protect key posts
Recruitment & retention strategies	935	Yellow	680	New business case
16-25 accommodation commission plan	313	Yellow	156	Revised profile of savings from delays in procurement
IFA carer recruitment & new tier systems	221	Yellow	21	No Change from previous presentation
Overheads	49	Green	0	No Change from previous presentation
Contract negotiations	50	Green	0	Inclusion of risk of resource requirements to deliver programme
Respite services	140	Yellow	70	Inclusion of risk of resource requirements to deliver programme
Total proposals 2022/23	<u>4,726</u>		<u>2,041</u>	

2022/23 MITIGATING SAVING RISKS SCF

- Close and regular engagement with key strategic partners incl opportunities for joint funding
- Support of the DfE with responses to the funding requests to deliver the improvement and savings programme
- On board capable resources to drive the programme of works
- Continued regular monitoring and challenge of performance, including new performance measures for targeted early help to sustain savings
- Regular review of demand and the ability to flex Innovate resources
- Continued cost panels chaired by Director of Operations for high cost placements, access to resources, care leavers, children with disabilities packages of care.
- Continued S114 cost panels for all other spend >£500
- Continued vacancy management agreed at the executive leadership team
- Continued review for efficiencies within services
- Close working with council on technology enhancements to drive efficiencies
- Monthly budget overview sessions with Heads of Service and at Joint Executive Board
- Benchmarking and sharing of best practice from Other Local Authorities

DEPARTMENTAL EMERGING PRESSURES

LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2022/23

- **Staffing pressures** and recruitment issues impacting on our ability to offer good enough services to safeguard children in a timely way and risk of having to maintain Innovate with higher costs
- Due to **decrease in early help staff**, statutory caseloads will increase, with higher-level of intervention for children and adding significant costs for statutory services.
- Longer term impact of **Covid on children and families**,, increasing levels of food and fuel poverty, Neglect, mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse will increase demand
- Impact on front line staff from any **reductions in business support**, who are essential to effectively manage the system, and to recruit and retain social workers, without them less time will be spent with children and their families.
- Other **cuts in adult social care and housing** are directly impacting on children's lives, due to delays in assessment and moving on accommodation, causing financial pressures in children's services
- Impact of **re-profiling of children's** centres not yet known
- Further Ofsted inspection expected in May 2022

BUDGET CONSULTATION

Timeline

Consultation with Early help and corporate staff to follow review strategic reviews of both service areas.

Plans