

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 9 November 2022

Subject: Children and Education Services Budget 2023/24

Report of: Strategic Director for Children’s and Education Services

Summary

The Council is forecasting an estimated budget shortfall of £44m in 2023/24, £85m in 2024/25, and £112m by 2025/26. After the use of c£16m smoothing reserves in each of the three years, this reduces to £28m in 2023/24, £69m in 2024/25 and £96m by 2025/26. Officers have identified potential savings options to reduce the budget gap totalling £42.3m over three years.

This report sets out the priorities for the services in the remit of this committee and details the initial revenue budget changes proposed by officers.

Even after these proposals there remains a budget gap of £7m to close to get to a balanced budget in 2023/24 and further savings and cuts options will be required to be worked between now and January and be reported back to Scrutiny committees in February. Each scrutiny committee is invited to consider the current proposed changes which are within its remit and to make recommendations to the Executive before it agrees to the final budget proposals in February 2023.

Despite the socio-economic climate, Children’s and Education Services has continued to make service improvements. In part this is associated with continued and strengthening partnerships across Manchester and the conurbation that support even greater collaboration and robust leadership; underpinned by an effective performance/assurance framework.

The focus of the Directorate has continued to be delivering a safe, effective and efficient intervention that prevents the unnecessary escalation of children’s needs. This is translated into a budgetary approach that is driven by ‘cost avoidance, effective care planning, commissioning and ensuring services are efficient.

In addition, maintaining the Directorate’s commitment to securing a stable, confident and talented workforce to provide a high quality of social work practice and management oversight, whilst ensuring the education system is inclusive, delivers good or outstanding schools and meets the needs of all learners. This requires the Directorate to adapt, anticipate and respond to the challenges with purpose and focus. It is through this approach the Directorate has formulated a set of proposals that does not have any workforce implications and delivers £11.725m plus £75k Youth and Play services; this service’s budget currently sits in the Neighbourhood Directorate and are detailed in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- (1) To consider and comment on the forecast medium term revenue budget
 - (2) Consider the content of this report and comment on the proposed changes which are relevant to the remit of this scrutiny committee
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Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

The budget reflects the fact that the Council has declared a climate emergency by making carbon reduction a key consideration in the Council's planning and budget proposals.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

Consideration has been given to how the proposed savings could impact on different protected or disadvantaged groups. Where applicable proposals will be subject to completion of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and an Anti-Poverty Assessment.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The effective use of resources underpins the Council's activities in support of its strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan which is underpinned by the Our Manchester Strategy.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Ensuring children and young people are supported and afforded the opportunity to access and achieve in the City; empowered and supported by the delivery of a strong and cohesive system that works for all children.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Improving education and social care services that are connected to the wider partnership build the resilience of children and families needed to achieve their potential and be integrated into their communities
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The changes included within this report are officer proposals and, subject to Member comments and consultation, these will be included as part of the 2023/24 budget preparation.

Financial Consequences – Capital

None directly arising from this report.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

[Revenue Budget Report - Executive Meeting 16 February 2022](#)

[Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 -Executive Meeting 16 February 2022](#)

[Children and Education Services Budget 2022/23 - Executive 16 February 2022](#)

[Resource and Governance Scrutiny – 6 September 2022](#)

[Revenue Monitoring to the end of July 2022 and Budget update 2023/24 to 2025/26 - Executive 14 September 2022](#)

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 The report is the first in the cycle for the budget programme 2023-26. It sets out an overview of the services within the remit of this scrutiny committee and their key priorities. The budget growth assumptions in the MTFP (Medium Term Financial Plan) are set out. The report provides a draft set of officer proposals for further savings for 2023-26, developed in the context of the financial challenge facing the Council.

1.2 This report which for ease of reference is structured as follows.

- Section 1 Introduction
- Section 2 Service overview and priorities
- Section 3 Service budget and proposed changes
- Section 4 Future Opportunities and Risks
- Section 5 Dedicated Schools Grant
- Section 6 Workforce

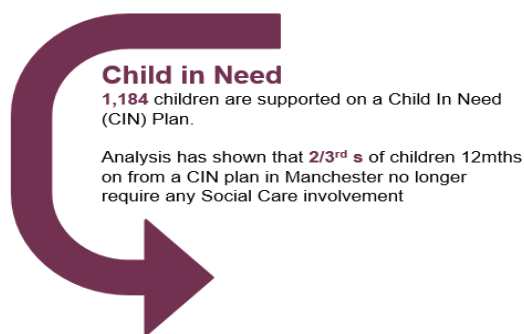
1.3 The Dedicated Schools Grant is £632m and is forecast to overspend by £3.5m in 2022/23. The recovery plan is outlined in section 5 of this report.

2. Service overview and priorities

2.1 The Children and Education Services Directorate effectively is responsible for delivering the Council's statutory duties and responsibilities in respect of children in need of help, support and protection. Whilst at the same time ensuring they have access to a high-quality education and learning experience.

2.2 **Children's social care services budget** - The Directorate brings together the Council's duties in relation to children identified and assessed to be in need of help, support, protection, looked after by the council and young people with care experience (leaving care service). It includes a range of services targeted to support families and help to avoid the need for children to become 'looked after' and Youth Justice Services. 57% of the overall Children's Social Care budget is committed to meeting the costs of care for our Looked after Children linked to the cost of placements. The remaining balance of the budget is given to Children's Social Care related services such as: Leaving Care, Early Years, Early Help and Youth Justice. Illustration one provides an outline of children supported by the Directorate.

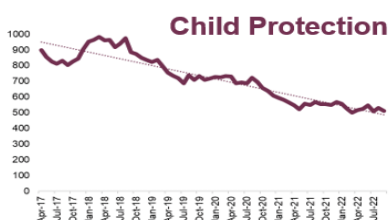
2.3 Illustration One: Outline of Key Support supplied Children's Social Care



Child in Need

1,184 children are supported on a Child In Need (CIN) Plan.

Analysis has shown that 2/3rd s of children 12mths on from a CIN plan in Manchester no longer require any Social Care involvement



507 children are supported on a Child Protection Plan.

The rate of children on Child Protection Plans in Manchester have halved over the last 4yrs from a peak of 80.4 per 10,000 in Mar-18 to 40.8 currently, equating to 475 less children on a plan

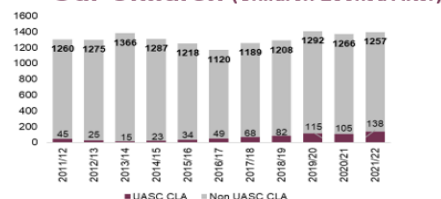
Early Help



Over the last 7yrs Early Help have supported nearly 15,000 families facing multiple issues to access effective family support.

The most recent evaluation of Early Help showed that 12mths post EH intervention 87% of families had no social care status. For those who did have a social care status when they began their EH intervention 79% saw a de-escalation in safeguarding status post intervention

Our Children (Children Looked After)

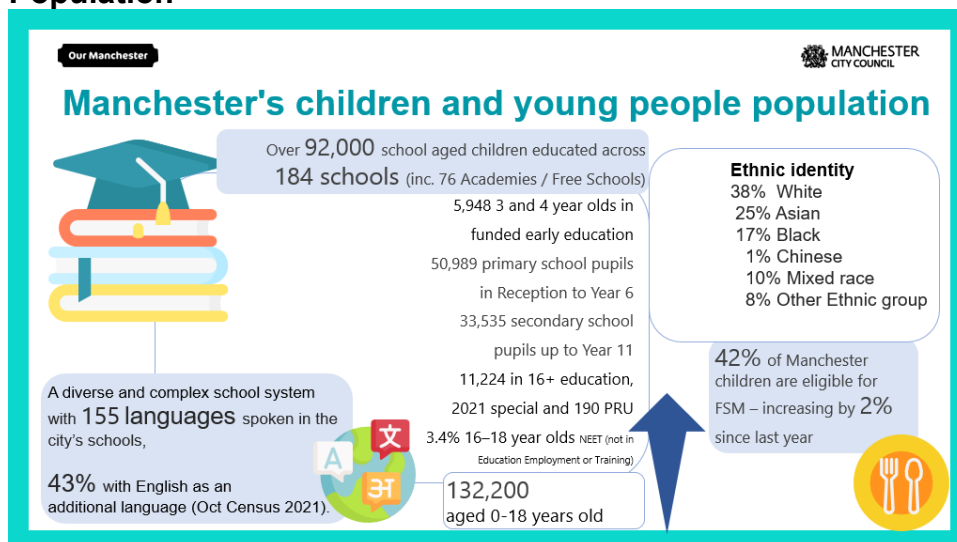


1,336 children are supported as Our Children.

The numbers of non UASC CLA have returned to the same volume as they were 10yrs ago, and the rate has significantly reduced from 120 per 10,000 in 2011/12 to 108 Oct-22 closing the gap between the NW regional rate and Manchester

2.4 Education Services - This service budget represents the Council's responsibilities for education and learning funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant and Council budget. The Council budget includes school admissions, place planning, home to school transport and school crossing patrols. Transport services makes up 57% of Education Services budget. 18% of the budget is given to support children with SEND such as short breaks and respite care. The remaining budget is for services such as Attendance and Education Psychology. The service also supports inclusion and other groups of vulnerable children and the education of children looked after through the Virtual School. In addition to the £25m Council budget the Service also oversees the £632m Dedicated Schools Grant budget, of which £289m is given to academies and £343m is earmarked for Council Maintained schools and the Council for Education services such as Admissions, Early Years education and special educational needs.

2.5 Illustration two: Outline of Manchester's Children and Young People Population



- 2.6 The improvements in both Children's and Education Services have in part been associated with continued and strengthening partnerships that support even greater collaboration and robust leadership; underpinned by an effective performance/assurance framework.
- 2.7 Earlier this year in April 2022, Ofsted Inspected and judged Manchester's Children's Services overall effectiveness as Good. Inspectors found that services had improved since the last inspection in 2017. Of note was Ofsted's judge of leadership and Management was 'good' and identified several areas supporting this judgement, including ongoing financial commitment to the recruitment and retention of social workers, effective quality assurance and performance management arrangements and strong political and professional leadership.
- 2.8 In January 2022 Inspectors have praised services for children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) in Manchester following a rigorous 5-day inspection last November and say they have continued to improve despite the pandemic. No serious weaknesses were found by inspectors who noted the ability of city leaders to make any changes necessary in the few areas shown for further improvement - all of which had already been shown by leaders themselves and have robust improvement plans in place.
- 2.9 The Children and Young People's Plan 2020 - 2024 - translates the Our Manchester priorities into a vision for 'building a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for children and young people'. The Council are passionate about children and young people. This is reflected not only in the way the Directorate work with them, but in all aspects of our service planning, commissioning and delivery of services. This is a value-based approach that involves a relentless drive and focus on improving all areas of children's and young people's lives, underpinned by a strength based, can do attitude.

2.10 To support the delivery of the city's strategic priorities the Children and Education Directorate Plan outlines the following key priorities for the next 2 years:

- Recognise and value the voices of children and young people in all areas of our work, listening to them and responding to what they tell us
- Support and develop children's readiness for school and adulthood embedded in an approach to early intervention and early help
- Everyone's a leader - an empowered, capable, confident, and stable workforce; effective in the management of risk, performance and planning for children
- Continually improve outcomes for all children and 'close the gap' against the national attainment averages
- Greater collaboration and partnerships consolidate children's services locality model to support and promote children living in stable, safe and loving homes - achieving 'permanency' to safely reduce the number of children looked after and/or in need of a statutory service.
- Ensure there is a sufficient range and choice of high-quality early years, school, college and youth provision for all children and young people
- Develop and implement a specialist service/offer for children with complex needs.

2.11 A timely intervention preventing the unnecessary escalation of children's needs is still a key Directorate priority, as is the range and choice of provision for those children who are looked after by the Council and our care leavers. The Directorate runs within a national context of a changing regulatory framework which has an increased focus on.

2.12 Maintaining the Directorate's commitment to the quality of social work practice and management oversight and ensuring the education system is inclusive, delivers good or outstanding schools and meets the needs of all learners. This requires the Directorate to adapt, anticipate and respond to the challenges with purpose and focus.

3. Service budget and proposed changes

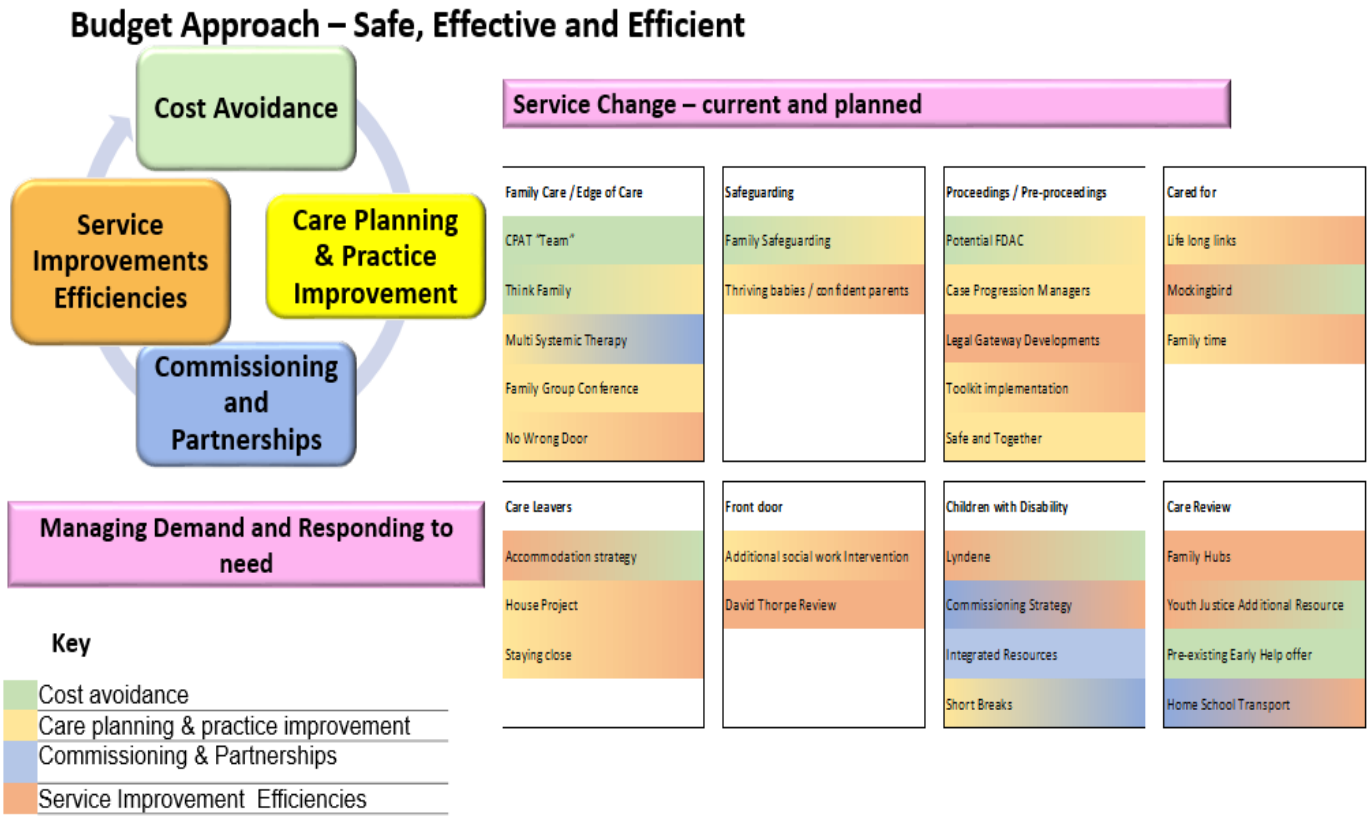
3.1 The gross 2022/23 budget detailed in the table below is £523.659m and the net budget of £127.122m.

Table 1: Base budget 2022/23

Service Area	2022/23 Gross budget £'000	2022 / 23 Net Budget £'000	2022 / 23 Budgeted posts (FTE)
LAC Placements	54,760	47,351	40
LAC Placement Services	7,213	7,213	137
Cared 4 Children & Leaving Care	23,358	13,148	15
Children Safeguarding Service Areas	42,183	35,511	779
Education Services (Includes DSG)	378,974	6,854	202
Home to School Transport	10,554	10,488	126
Targeted Youth Support Services	841	841	0
Children's Strategic Management and Business Support	5,776	5,716	138
Total	523,659	127,122	1,437

- 3.2 Full details of the proposed savings are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 In scope of this committee is £11.725m of the savings proposals which fall within the Children's Directorate and a further £75k of Youth and Play services, the service's budget currently sits in the Neighbourhood Directorate.
- 3.4 The Children's Directorate is committed to increasing the pace of implementing (already-shown) reforms and services improvements within children services and extending this to education services, as a way of making financial savings by reducing demand for expensive, reactive services, as illustrated in 3.7. This is included, but not limited to: Early Help investment, Family Group Conferencing, Thriving Babies - Think Family, Multi-Systemic Therapy, and the Adolescent Support Unit.
- 3.5 As in previous years the budget options for savings have been informed by the Directorate Budget approach to deliver safe, effective and efficient services, the progress and impact of the services to date. This approach has been developed by thinking through the way in which the Directorate can meet its statutory duties and make the maximum contribution to the priorities for the city, as set out in the earlier parts of this report. In some cases, this is by increasing the pace of implementing the already named reforms and services improvements as a way of making financial savings by reducing demand for expensive, reactive services.
- 3.6 In other cases, this is by choosing using alternative funding sources and, or service reductions which will have the least damaging impact on the achievement of our priorities. The 2023-26 savings proposals mostly focus on developing partnerships and service efficiencies and improvements.

3.7 Illustration three: Budget Approach



3.8 Savings Proposals 2023-26

Developing partnerships, service efficiencies and improvements

3.9 Directly attributable to the approach illustrated in paragraph 3.7, alongside the management oversight throughout the Directorate, contrary to the trend in most other local authorities, the overall net expenditure on children’s social care services decreased in Manchester when comparing financial year 2021/22 to the year prior, region of 5% reduction, £5.5m. This was due to the effective partnership working at a locality level and purposeful focus from services when they become involved with a family, leading to a reduction in the need for a statutory intervention with children and their families, rather than ‘cuts’ to services.

3.10 The approach adopted has contributed to overall looked after children numbers (rates) being relatively stable in Manchester. Cost reductions have been driven by a reduction in the number of expensive external residential placements. Part of the explanation for this reduction is felt to lie in the commitment in Manchester to increasing the pace of implementing reforms and services improvements, as a way of making financial savings by reducing demand for expensive, reactive services. This includes, but is not limited to: Early Help investment, Family Group Conferencing, Think Family, Multi-Systemic Therapy and the Adolescent Support Unit, as outlined in illustration one. Recognising the progress and impact of these services to date, this preventative work will continue into 2023/24 and beyond.

3.11 Another aspect of Manchester's work to reduce the use of external residential placements is:

- an increased use of semi-independent living placements. This reflects a concerted effort in transition planning, substantial market development work in partnership with residential housing providers,
- a commissioned preferred providers framework
- development of House Project, this offers a group of (up to) 10 care leavers with the opportunity to take ownership of their accommodation from the start, for example from furnishing/ decorating, minor structural changes to managing their own tenancy with specialist support from the House Project Team.
- increased use of supported lodgings
- Post 16 accommodation hub
- transitional accommodation options. Block contracts have been agreed with existing providers and this will further contribute to the existing overall reduction in unit cost for (semi-) independent living options of around 25%.

3.12 There has also been a parallel reduction in spend on external foster placements (12% reduction year on year, equating to £2.1m p.a. reduction in spend). There is a greater proportion of foster placements now made in-house.

3.13 The Directorate is also planning to develop the Take a Breath model. Whereby in response to children presenting in Accident and Emergency/paediatrics, the limitations in the current provider market to meet the needs of these children and leading to the inflated costs and risks associated with the use of an 'unregistered' arrangement; it is proposed through investment to establish two small residential provisions are developed to provide a bespoke and specialist placement for up to 4 children. The aim is to achieve this as soon as possible.

3.14 Investment in prevention by the Directorate and current placement stability has led to some confidence that placement numbers are not going to increase at the rate assumed in the 2022/23 budget setting process, Managing Demand savings proposal is partly achieved. Going forward Manchester is further looking to increase and continue to implement reforms and services improvements, as a way of making financial savings by reducing demand for expensive, reactive services. The new service reforms and innovative approaches are detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised below:

- Mockingbird - new model of support to internal foster carers.
- Family Safeguarding – strengths-based approach to child protection.
- Shared Care – children with disability placements splitting their week with their own family and residential care.
- Thriving Babies – promoting health, well-being and safeguarding

3.15 The placement savings anticipated from the above innovations as outlined above total £10.425m and mostly relate to preventing specialist intervention/children becoming looked after, stability in the care of children and overall service improvements.

Service Efficiencies

- 3.16 £1.3m of the savings proposals focus on charging of existing services to grant, reserves, ceasing activity that it is not achieving planned outcomes or applying different set of budget assumptions.

Service Reduction

- 3.17 The Youth Service is managed by the Neighbourhoods service but falls under the remit of this scrutiny panel. As part of the identification of saving options it is proposed to reduce the youth Commissioning by £75k or 3.75% from the current c.£2m. Whilst this will reduce the levels of activities that can be provided through the year by a reduced number of providers, officers will be looking to draw in additional funding from various funding streams including the #iWill fund.

Growth and Demography 2023-26

Growth and Emerging Budget Pressures to be considered

- 3.18 In order to develop a sustainable budget alongside the need to identify savings work has been carried out to assess the unavoidable pressures. £0.940m of the growth proposed is following a review of what can be charged to grant. £4.567m are inflation related and £1m of the pressures the Directorate is seeking to manage and mitigate through their service improvement plan, more detail is provided in Appendix 3.

Demography

- 3.19 It is proposed that the Children and Education Services cash limit budget will increase by £2.357m, £2.419m and £2.479m in 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 respectively and was agreed in 2021/22 budget setting process. Looked after Children placements and Home to School Transport demographic demand was determined based on the placement numbers on which the budget was set compared to the current position and potential increase in demand informed by 3% population growth predictions.

4. Future opportunities and Risks

- 4.1 **Public Health Kickstart Programme** - Children and Young people will be part of the Kickstarter scheme. The Making Manchester Fairer plan is ambitious and will take time to develop and embed. Four Kickstarter schemes have commenced. These schemes will kickstart delivery of the plan by exemplifying our principles in terms of health equity, proportionate universalism, and involving and engaging Manchester's diverse local communities. The focus will be on some of the longer-term challenges to help us start narrowing the gap, particularly the need to tackle poverty and the additional barriers of racism and discrimination for some communities.

- 4.2 Children, young people and their families particularly those most impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and those from communities that experience racial inequality. This scheme will include a focus on the mental health and wellbeing of young people, and work to address health, income and education inequalities among the target groups. The Directorate will receive £1m for the scheme, this is non-recurrent.
- 4.3 **Public Health saving proposals School Nurses - £270k** of savings have been identified as deliverable without impacting on delivery of public health commissioned services in the city. It is the commissioning intention to review and revise the service model and specification. This will be co-designed with stakeholders including the Director of Population Health, the Local Care Organisation and the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services. More detail of this saving is provided in the November 2022 Public Health Scrutiny report, paragraph 4.8 and does form part of the population Health Directorate's budget proposals.
- 4.4 **Transport Saving – Adults Social Care are proposing to save £250k on 2023/24 and a further £250k 2024/25 on transport costs for day services.** This will be through a review of recharges, review of access criteria, exploration of alternative transport models and encouraging independent travel. Adults Social Care use the Home to School Transport service and share costs of the routes. The impact of the proposed saving on the Home to School Transport will need to be worked through, more detail on this proposal can be found in Appendix 2 of the Adults Social Care November Health Scrutiny report and does not form part of the Directorate's budget proposals.

Inflation Pressures

- 4.5 Budgets set aside for price inflation are held centrally and allocated in year once they materialise and are subject to consideration by the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, before being recommended to Executive to be released to Directorates. To date the following potential inflation requirements have been highlighted for 2023/24:
- 4.6 **Home to School Transport** – This is a statutory service and provides transport to eligible children at the start and end of the school day. The total budget for this service is £9.7m p.a. The increasing number of pupils with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP) as a result of increasing levels of need have resulted in more individualised and specialised packages of support being put in place. In addition, the extension of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to young people aged up to the age of 25 has seen an increasing number of young people eligible and requiring transport for longer. The service is currently overspent by £2.5m, of which £1m is inflation, relating to: fuel costs, driver availability and vehicle maintenance costs. The full year effect of inflation is expected to be £1.5m next financial year. The service is planning to manage the balance of the pressure, estimated to be £1m, by working with parents and carers to co-design the response and through route planning, re-commissioning of routes, and the promotion and support of independent travel training, where appropriate.

4.7 **External Placements** – Nationally costs of Looked After Children, permanence placements and short breaks are starting to increase. Placement cost pressures concerns were raised in the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care Case for Change. The service is looking to mitigate this pressure by developing and shaping the external residential market, by:

- increasing use of Special Guardianship Orders
- Increasing numbers of internal carers
- developing new models of support.
- After taking these developments into account it is predicted inflation for external placements will total £1.235m next year.

4.8 **Internal Placements** - Manchester has always sought to support foster carers the Council supports directly, our internal foster carers. Current inflation and cost of living pressures will need to be recognised in the support provided to carers. At this stage it is predicted that this will total £1.832m next year.

4.9 Approved budget and proposed changes are provided in the budget table 2.

Table 2: Budget Movements Approved and Proposed

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Approved Budget Movements	£,000		
	127,122	131,728	134,047
Early Years Saving	-100	-100	0
Reversal of one off Saving from 22/23	1,409	0	0
Budget adj. Early Years	940	0	0
Demography	2,357	2,419	2,479
Total	131,728	134,047	136,526
New savings proposals			
Managing Demand	4,000	2,000	2,000
Mockingbird	47	219	257
Family Safeguarding		500	500
Shared Care		351	351
Thriving Babies	200	0	0
School Crossing Patrols	386	0	0
Early Help	250	250	
Early Years	280		
Vacancy Factor	134		
Total	5,297	3,320	3,108
Opportunities and Risks			
Kickstart – reserves funded	1,000		
Home to School Transport	1,500		

External Placements	1,235		
Internal Placements	1,832		
Total	5,567		

5. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

5.1 The DSG is a specific grant that funds the education system. The grant totals £632m and is allocated to four separate funding blocks:

- Early Years – supports 2-,3- and 4-year-old education offers.
- Schools Block – 5–16-year-olds primary and secondary school education offer
- High Needs Block – funds specialist education provision 0 – 25 years
- Central Services Block – funds Council services such as Admissions.

5.2 The high needs block (HNB) was overspent by £3.14m 2021/22. The HNB deficit was offset by underspends in the early years block and school's block. The Dedicated School Grant (DSG) 2021/22 overall final position of £2.702m deficit and was reported to Schools Forum June 2022.

5.3 The HNB collectively funds specialist education provision for children and young people up to 25 years old with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The fundamental areas of funding within the HNB are for:

- special school and further education (FE) college places
- top-up funding for nurseries, mainstream schools, special schools, FE colleges and independent schools linked to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- support for the provision of special services provided by schools and the local authority (LA), which include but are not limited to, the Sensory Service and resource provision in mainstream schools

5.4 Primarily due to the significant growth in the Education, Health, & Care Plans (EHCP) and Post-16 within the HNB it has resulted in a structural DSG deficit. The HNB pressure has been recognised on a national level, and forms part of the governments SEND review, including looking at how to better equip mainstream settings and support children and young people's needs, instead of being met by EHCPs or specialist provision.

5.5 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has regulated ring-fence to DSG deficits from councils' wider financial position in their statutory accounts. So, any DSG balance from an earlier financial year is carried forward and addressed in the following funding period. This ring-fence is due to end after the accounts for the 2022/23 financial year, at which point local authorities will need to show their ability to cover DSG deficits from their future available reserves. This means that DSG deficit will become a greater risk to the Council, potentially affecting other services. It is therefore crucial that the HNB pressures are addressed.

5.6 The Council has produced DSG recovery plan, before recovery the gap is estimated to be £6m 2022/23, £20m 2023/24 and £44m 2024/25. The recovery plan was presented to Schools Forum in September and can be found in the following link to [DSG Recovery Plan](#). The plan seeks to recover and reduce the deficit to £3.5m this year, £2.8m next year and £7.7m 2024/25.

6. Workforce Implications

6.1 The Children and Education Directorate currently has a gross budgeted workforce of 1,437 FTE, of which 1,310 FTE are funded by Council budget. There is no projected workforce impact of activity to deliver the savings. Effective and robust workforce planning arrangements are in place to ensure that, as functions and roles change, the skills and focus of the workforce are effectively developed to ensure the Directorate is able to meet its strategic priorities.

6.2 The workforce implications for children's and education services represent a continuation and improvement of existing priorities as expressed in the workforce strategy, which is to achieve a stable, confident and talented workforce through a culture of success, strengths-based approach and strong and effective leadership and management which will be achieved through: The continuing development and implementation of the Children's improvement plan

- Implementation of the Children's Locality Model programme
- Developing strong and effective leaders and managers; enabling them to create high performing and motivated team
- Effective recruitment and retention; to ensure the Directorate has the skills to meet current and future needs.
- Managing and improving the health and wellbeing of the workforce; with a specific focus on reducing absence and improving attendance.
- Building a high impact learning culture which ensures staff feel empowered and equipped to practice to high standards.
- Ensuring professionals that work with children and young people have manageable workloads
- Continue to reduce the reliance on interim and agency worker

Vacancy Factor

6.3 The Council's establishment is fully budgeted for at the top of the grade. In reality there are vacancies caused by staff turnover, recruitment difficulties and staff employed throughout the grade scale. To avoid budgeting for costs that will not be required and making bigger cuts elsewhere, adjustments are being made to reflect these issues by applying a vacancy factor to recognise that vacancies will always exist. The continued challenges in filling posts also means that the council is working hard on ensuring we are an employer of choice and can attract people and minimise the pressures on our existing workforce.