

Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 8 February 2023
Executive - 15 February 2023

Subject: Children and Education Services Budget 2023/24

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

Summary

Members will recall that at the November round of scrutiny meetings the Council was forecasting an estimated budget shortfall of £112m over the three years with £44m in 2023/24. As part of the action to address the budget shortfall officers identified potential savings options of £42.3m over three years, of which there were savings options of £11.8m within the remit of this scrutiny committee.

The provisional financial settlement announced 19 December reflected a change in government policy in relation to funding inflation and social care pressures. This has given the opportunity to review the quantum and phasing of savings. It is now proposed that options of £36.2m are progressed, of which £11.725m is within the remit of this scrutiny committee.

This report provides a further update to members on the priorities for the services in the remit of this committee and details the changes to the initial revenue budget options proposed by officers in November 2022.

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 on 15 February 2023.

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

The Executive is recommended to approve these budget proposals.

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 will, subject to Member comments and consultation, be included in the final 2023/24 revenue budget set by Council on 3 March.

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](#)

[Children and Young People Budget Report 2023-26 - Scrutiny Committee 9th November 2022](#)

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 The report sets out an overview of the services within the remit of this scrutiny committee and their key priorities. This report provides a draft set of proposals for further savings and investments 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 Use of Grants and Reserves
- Section 5 Workforce

2. Service overview and priorities

2.1 The Children and Education Services Directorate 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 their needs escalating and services for those who need to become 'looked after' and Youth Justice Services. 57% of the overall Children's Social Care budget is committed to meeting the costs of caring for our Looked after Children; linked to the cost of placements. The remaining balance of the budget is allocated to Children's Social Care Services such as: Leaving Care, Early Years, Early Help and Youth Justice.

2.3 Illustration one provides an overview of children and young people supported by the Education system, as at October 2022 census, unless stated otherwise. Illustration two sets out the range and profile of children and young people population in the city and those who are supported by the Directorate as of January 2023. There are a total of 1,350 Looked After Children (LAC), of which 152 were Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), representing 11.3% of LAC, the highest ever proportion of UASC supported in Manchester.

Illustration1: Manchester's Children and Young People Population

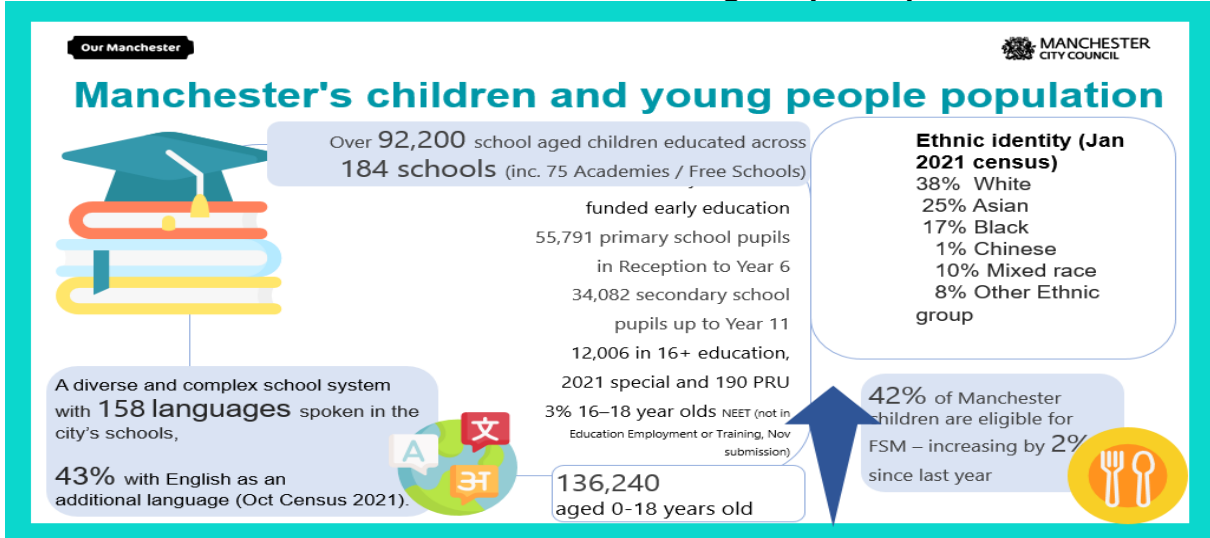
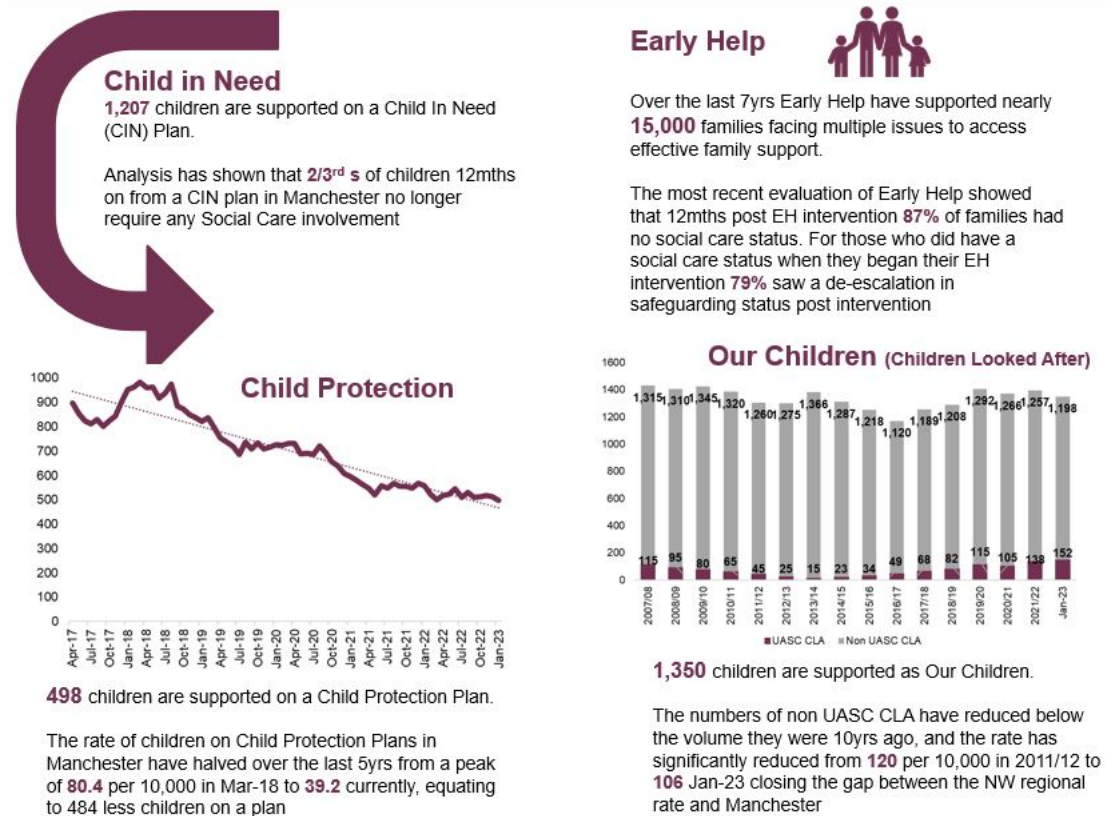


Illustration2: Children's Social Care



2.4 Directorate's planned use of reserves planned for the next few years is outlined in section 4, of note are:

- **Our Year** - In last's year budget process Youth received an extra £500k per year budget. Proposals that were presented to Scrutiny in November 2023 was to reduce that investment by £75k, this saving has now been withdrawn. The £0.5m investment is on-going. There is also a commitment to the legacy of Our Year. The legacy commitments plan spans over the next two years and amounts to £250k per year. Manchester seeks to embed and build upon the

number of UNICEF rights respecting schools and supplementary schools, this will help in our ambition to accreditation as a child friendly city.

- **Kickstart** – This scheme will implement a ‘task force’ of services able to provide intensive support and intervention around a cohort of children in Early Years including year 1 in a school working with a cluster of schools where Early year’s data shows a significant and widening gap compared to the national/local data and where high levels of deprivation and/or low engagement with services are a predominant factor. The total drawdown from reserve will be £1m and will be over a two year period.

- 2.5 **Education Services** - This service budget represents the Council's responsibilities for education and learning funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant and Council budget (the vast majority of which is passported directly to schools). Included on this agenda is a report outlining the position on the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) which sets out the £671m grant settlement for next year
- 2.6 The Council’s Education Services budget is £25m and provides effective and efficient school admissions, place planning, home to school transport services as well as school crossing patrols.
- 2.7 Transport services makes up 57% of Education Services budget, alongside a further 18% to support children with SEND such as short breaks including overnight stays. The remaining budget is allocated to deliver services such as school attendance and education psychology.
- 2.8 Education Services also supports and promotes the inclusion of key groups such as the education of children looked after. This is overseen and delivered via a ‘virtual school’.
- 2.9 The improvements in both Children’s and Education Services have been associated with a clear ambition and vision to build a safe, healthy, happy and successful future, delivered through continued and strengthening partnerships that support even greater collaboration and robust leadership; underpinned by an effective performance/assurance framework.
- 2.10 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 judgement 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.
- 2.11 In January 2022 Inspectors praised services for children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) following an Area SEND Inspection that was undertaken during November 2021. Inspectors 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.

2.12 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.

2.13 To support the delivery of the city's strategic priorities the Children and Education Directorate Plan outlines the following key priorities:

- 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;
- 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;
- Leading the education system to deliver excellent schools and settings with good attendance and support to meet the needs of all learners.

2.14 The Directorate priorities are reviewed annually to ensure they remain contemporaneous with feedback received, changes in national and local policies and priorities. 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 £528.598m, which includes DSG delegated to maintained schools. Full details of the proposed savings, investment, demographic and inflation pressures are detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report. The net budget is £132.052m.

Table 1: Base budget 2022/23

Service Area	2022/23 Gross budget	2022 / 23 Net Budget	2022 / 23 Budgeted posts (FTE)
	£'000	£'000	
LAC Placements	55,842	48,433	40
LAC Placement Services	7,210	7,210	137
Cared 4 Children & Leaving Care	24,753	14,533	15
Children Safeguarding Service Areas	43,394	36,723	779
Education Services (Includes DSG)	378,788	6,668	202
Home to School Transport	11,949	11,883	126
Targeted Youth Support Services	841	841	0
Children's Strategic Management and Business Support	5,821	5,761	138
Total	528,598	132,052	1,437

- 3.2 Full details of the proposed savings, investment, demographic and inflation pressures are detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.
- 3.3 In November 2022 this scrutiny Committee was presented with a set of financial savings proposals totalling £11.8m by 2025/26, relating to services within the remit of this committee for consideration. The provisional settlement on 19 December 2022 reflected a significant change in government policy and associated funding than was much better than initially expected. This alongside observations and challenge from committee members, has given the opportunity to review both the quantum and phasing of savings. As a result, the £75k Youth saving proposal has been removed and inflation assumptions have been reviewed. In addition, due to increasing Looked After Placement and Permanence placement costs the Managing Demand saving has been delayed and reprofiled. Furthermore, the School Crossing Patrol savings proposal has also been rephased, the Council does not believe there is sufficient Parking and Bus Lane reserve to meet the costs of it. Whilst it is proposed that savings of £11.725m savings are progressed, the timing of these have been deferred to later years. Table 2 below shows total of savings, reprofiling of them. Appendix 1 sets out savings schedule.

Table 2: Savings Profile in scope of this Committee

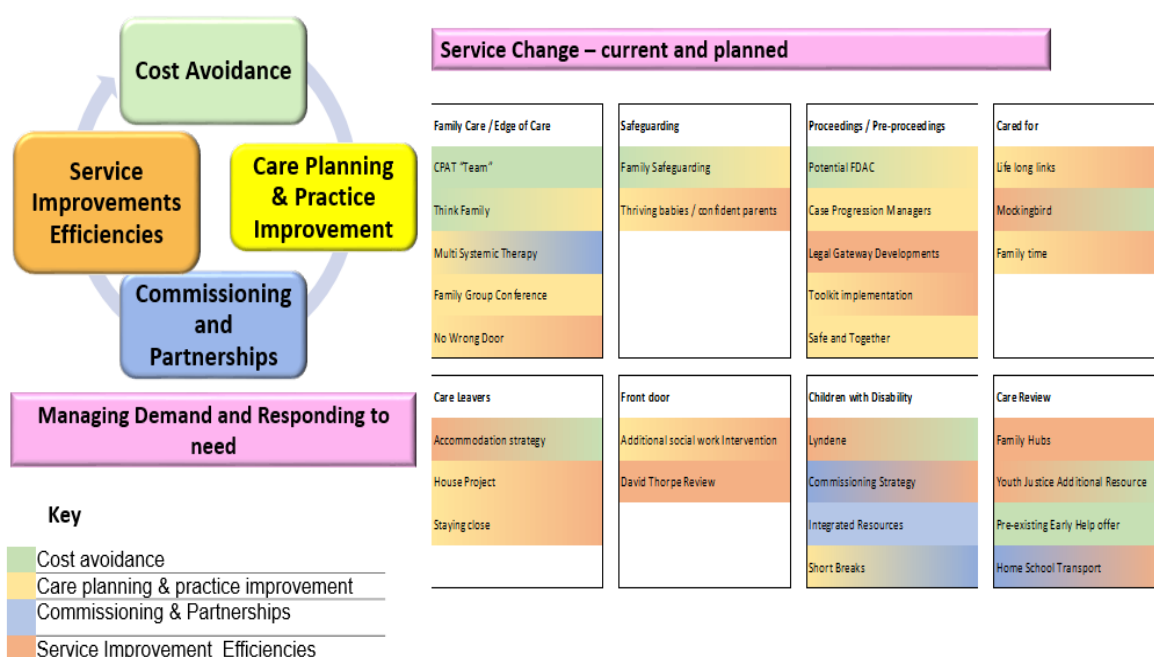
	2023/24	2024/26	2025/26	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000

Revised Savings Profile	4,411	3,920	3,394	11,725
Original Savings Profile	5,372	3,320	3,108	11,800
Change	(961)	600	286	(75)

- 3.4 The settlement also gave some scope for some targeted additional investments focused on preventing and managing future demand to leave the council in a more sustainable position in 2025/26 when the current spending review period ends. Investments relevant to this committee are detailed in Appendix 2 of this report. The Children’s Directorate is committed to increasing the pace of implementing (already-shown) reforms and continuous service improvements within the Directorate; delivering safe, effective and efficient services as a vehicle to deliver financial savings. This will be achieved by reducing demand for expensive services through, but not limited to, investment in Manchester’s Early Help, 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. This includes increasing the pace of implementing already identified reforms and services improvements as a way of making financial savings by reducing avoidable demand for expensive, reactive services and ensuring those being delivered are achieving the best outcomes for the best value.
- 3.6 In other cases, this is by choosing use of alternative funding sources and, or service reductions which will have the least detrimental impact on the achievement of our priorities. The 2023-26 savings proposals mostly focus on further strengthening our partnerships, collaboration and shared service efficiencies and improvements.

3.7 Illustration three: Budget Approach Proposals 2023-24

Budget Approach – Safe, Effective and Efficient



Developing partnerships, service efficiencies and improvements

- 3.8 The progress made by the Directorate is directly attributable to the above approach. When comparing the spend in 2021/22 to the previous year contrary to the national trend, the overall net expenditure in Manchester's children's social care services decreased by 5% (c£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.
- 3.9 The approach adopted has contributed to overall looked after children numbers (rates) reducing and remaining 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 a commitment to securing a plan of permanence for children and a clear sufficiency strategy (range and choice of provision to meet children's needs) and delivering at pace the implementation of reforms and service improvements. This includes, but is not limited to: Early Help investment, Family Group Conferencing, think 'whole' Family initiatives, Multi-Systemic Therapy and the Adolescent Support Unit, as outlined in illustration 3. It is expected the impact of these reforms and improvements will be embedded and sustained into 2023/24 and beyond.
- 3.10 Key aspects of Manchester's Sufficiency Strategy that has had a tangible impact on financial expenditure include;
- Effective and targeted use of semi-independent living provision. This reflects a concerted effort in transition planning, substantial market development work in partnership with residential housing providers,
 - A commissioned preferred providers framework

- Adoption and development of the National House Project, this provides 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.
- Development of Staying close scheme
- Increased recruitment and use of supported lodgings
- Development of a post 16 accommodation hub - making the best use of provision through effective coordination and allocation.
- 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%.

3.11 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.

3.12 Children are presenting in Accident and Emergency/paediatrics with self-harming behaviours, who are assessed to need specialist services but not 'mentally ill'. There are limitations in the current provider market to meet the needs of these children, which in turn has led to inflated costs and risks associated with the use of an 'unregistered' arrangement, it is proposed through investment to develop a 'Take a Breath' model. Take a Breath constitutes two small residential provisions which will provide a bespoke and specialist 6-month placements for up to 4 children. The aim is to achieve this as soon as possible.

3.13 An analysis of the 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 remains committed to innovation, promote practice creativity to continually improve the experiences and outcomes of children. We are confident approach outlined this can also deliver financial savings. Subsequently the new service reforms and innovative approaches are detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 and are summarised below:

- Mockingbird - new model of support to internal foster carers.
- Thriving Families – strengths-based, multi-disciplinary and co-located approach to delivering a statutory child protection service.
- Thriving Babies – promoting health, well-being and safeguarding
- Family Group Conferencing
- Development of Social Work Bursary Scheme
- Foster Care recruitment campaigns
- Development of Staying close scheme
- Development of Specialist Short Breaks
- Participation in a Greater Manchester Family Drugs and Alcohol Court

3.14 Whilst at the time of writing and is imminent, the Government's response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care has yet to be published.

However, it is anticipated the approach adopted to date and initiatives outlined in paragraph 3.14 will align very well. The subsequent savings, which are expected to be achieved through fewer and reduced placement costs, total £10.615m. Placement investments from the above innovations as outlined above total £2.454m, both savings and investment relate to preventing specialist intervention/children becoming looked after, stability in the care of children and overall service improvements. The Directorate is committed to prioritising investment to where it leads to service improvements and a return. Evaluation of these investments is scheduled to be undertaken in 18 months.

Service Efficiencies

- 3.15 Of the savings proposals, £1.110m 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.
- 3.16 In March 2022 Ofsted's judged Manchester's leadership and Management identified one of the areas supporting this judgement, included the ongoing financial commitment to the recruitment and retention of social workers. £0.748m of the investment proposals ensures there is sufficient budget to support Children's Social Work recruitment and retention requirements.

Demography and Inflation Pressures 2023-26

Demography

- 3.17 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. Subsequently 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 as estimated in the 2021/22 budget setting process.

Inflation

- 3.18 Usually, budgets set aside for price inflation are held corporately and allocated in year once they materialise. These are subject to consideration by the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, before being recommended to Executive to be released to Directorates. The high and volatile inflationary environment has seen an increase to the corporate inflation allowance and immediate pressures affecting budgets in 2023/24 have already been identified and are deemed unavoidable. Requirements are highlighted in Appendix 2 of this report illustrate that there are £2.687m of known and confirmed inflation pressures, this will be allocated to the budget at the start of the year and £1.515m will be set aside Corporately for price inflation and will be drawn down, if needed. Known funding and the corporate inflation provision will be reviewed later date in order to ensure that it can support likely fee increases for external providers and foster carers.

3.19 Approved budget and proposed changes are provided in the budget Table

Table 3: Budget Movements Approved and Proposed

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Approved Budget Movements	£,000			
	132,052	138,234	136,633	406,919
Early Years Saving	-100	-100	0	-200
Reversal of one off Saving from 22/23	1,409	0	0	1,409
Budget adj. Early Years	940	0	0	940
Demography	2,357	2,419	2,479	7,255
Sub-total	136,658	140,553	139,112	416,323
Less New savings proposals				
Managing Demand	3,000	3,000	2,000	8,000
Use of Reserves	500	(500)		0
Mockingbird	47	219	257	523
Thriving Families (Formerly Family Safeguarding)		500	500	1,000
Thriving Babies	300	90	0	390
Shared Care		351	351	702
School Crossing Patrols		100	286	386
Early Help	430	160		590
Vacancy Factor	134			134
Sub-total	4,411	3,920	3,394	11,725
New Investment				
Take a Breath	915			915
Short Breaks	125			125
Social Work Recruitment and Retention	748			748
Family Group Conferencing	250			250
Foster Recruitment	98			98
Placement Pressures and Home to School Transport	1,000			1,000
Family, Drug, Alcohol Courts	164			164
Sub-total	3,300			3,300
Funded Inflation Pressures				
Internal Placements	1,966			1,966
Home to School Transport	500			500
Care Leavers – First Home & Winter payment	221			221
Sub-total	2,687			2,687
Total	138,234	136,633	135,718	410,585

4. Use of Reserves and New Grants

- 4.1 Reserves are a corporate resource and planned use of the resource needs to be to cross reference to the Reserves Strategy as part of the medium-term financial plan, in line with the reserves policy.

Reserves

- 4.2 **Our Year** – Celebrates Manchester’s children and young people with a whole-city approach to help them shape a future that’s safe, happy, healthy and successful. 2022/23 has been a year of action, together to create more activities, opportunities, experiences and support for our children and young people. There are a few ‘Our Year’ legacy commitments plan that span over the next two years, the proposal is to fund £250k per annum from a designated children’s reserve.
- 4.3 **Thriving Families** – is a whole family, strengths-based approach to child protection. Work is undertaken by children’s social workers, adult mental health practitioners, substance misuse and probation officers, working together as one team. Joint knowledge and expertise are used to assess the needs of the whole family, supplying services to meet those needs and supporting parents to achieve sustained change for themselves and their children. At this stage whilst the structures requirements to support this approach is still being finalised the staffing requirement will be around 27.5fte. In the short term to establish the team and embed this approach the service is looking to fund the service from the Supporting Families reserve over the next two years. If successful to sustain the service after this use of reserves 22 placements per annum would be avoided because of this intervention. As savings cumulate, they would both cover the cost of the service and provide a saving by year three of the program. It is proposed that Thriving Families is supported by the Supporting Families reserve by £0.8m in year one, £1.2m in year two and £0.4m in year three of the programme. Support would taper in year three as savings are generated from the work being undertaken. The reserve will be fully used by year three.
- 4.4 **Kickstart Programme** - Children, young people and their families particularly those most impacted by the pandemic, cost-of-living crisis and those from communities that experience racial inequality. The Kickstart task force will comprise professionals from multi – agency/voluntary community services who can provide interventions to accelerate progress of children through working within the school, partners and community assets to address some of the developmental gaps and to provide different holistic family support. In addition to direct intervention provided to children through the additional resources delegated to the school and specialist advice and support allocated to the cluster of schools, support will include help for families such as financial advice/signposting, work and skills support, Early Help, mental health, support for home learning and health and well-being needs. The membership of the task force will vary depending on the school, community and identifying needs but will build on the existing Early Years integrated delivery model and successful outreach service. The reserve requirements are over two years, whereby £0.6m is needed 2023/24 and £0.4m will be called upon the year after.

- 4.5 **Social Work Bursaries** - Manchester has shown an ongoing financial commitment to the recruitment and retention of social workers. Whilst this is an ongoing challenge nationally, the support and approach taken to date has led to an increasingly stable and confident workforce. To further develop Manchester's future approach, it proposed that £30k per annum bursary is created to support and encourage staff who have experience of working with children and their families seek a social work qualification via a Social Work Apprenticeship Scheme delivered by the Greater Manchester Social Work Academy. The Social Work Apprenticeship Scheme is a three program, whereby students attend University one day a week, in recognition that it will take a period of time to scale up the plans. Drawn down on investment will phased over 2 years, £0.6m next year and a further £0.6m the year after. £0.8m of the support will come from a Children's reserve, the balance is yet to be worked through.
- 4.6 **School Crossing Patrols** – November's scrutiny report included the proposal to charge all the School Crossing Patrol (SCP) service to a reserve going forward. In accordance with the reserve's conditions road safety measures can be charged to the reserve. Capital support will also be provided, however, it is not expected that this will significantly reduce the need for school cross patrols. Further work is required to develop the longer-term funding and approach. In order to progress this work and make further improvements to management of the SCP it is proposed £124k is drawn down from the Road Parking and Bus Lane Penalties Reserve in the short to medium term.

Grants

- 4.7 **Family Hub** – the Council has received confirmation of grant funding of £5.3m over three years. Family hubs make effective, integrated early help easily accessible to families. This programme will fund a network of Family Hubs, Start for Life and family help services, including breastfeeding services, parenting programmes and parent-infant mental health support. To deliver the programme it is planned that the grant will be spent over workforce and commissions, plans are yet to be finalised.
- 4.8 **Staying Close** – after a successful bid grant notification of £1.4m over three years has been received. Under this scheme the narrative is that young people determine their transition to independence. They decide what support will help them the most and work with staff to come up with a care plan. This means care leavers know they have someone who they can rely on for when they need a bit of help.
- 4.9 A summary of Children Social Care and Education services grants are provided in Appendix 5 of this report.

5. Workforce Implications

- 5.1 The Children and Educations Directorate currently has a gross budgeted workforce of 1,437 fte, of which 1,310 fte are funded by Council budget, and the remainder through grants and external income. There is no projected workforce impact of activity to deliver the savings. There are workforce implications

underlying investment and use of reserves of approximately 51fte. 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 can meet its strategic priorities.

5.2 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

5.3 The Council's establishment is fully budgeted for at the top of the grade. However, there are to be expected 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 in an organisation of Manchester's size. 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.