

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 8 January 2020

Subject: Children and Education Services Budget 2020/21

Report of: Strategic Director for Children and Education Services

Summary

This report sets out the directorate’s medium term financial plan and budget proposals and strategy for 2020/21. The report should be read in conjunction with the Council’s Business Plan report.

The proposed budget for 2020/21 makes proposals to apply **£6m** of additional social care grant announced as part of the Spending Round and seeks approval for year two of the additional non-recurrent resource from the Social Care reserve of **£10.674m** to ensure there is sufficient resources to meet the care and placement needs of those children who are looked after by the Council.

The Council’s budget proposals for 2020/21 will be subject to further refinement following feedback from public consultation and scrutiny committees. The figures may be subject to change following the contents of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement which has been delayed from 5th December 2019 as a result of the decision to call a General Election. At this point an indicative date has not been provided for the likely publication of the Settlement. Final budget proposals will be made to Scrutiny and Executive in February 2020.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee members consider the content of this report and comment on challenges, priorities and opportunities.

Wards Affected: All

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable):

Manchester Strategy Outcomes	Summary of the Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Effective Children and Education Services are critical to ensuring our children are afforded opportunities and supported to connect and contribute to the city’s sustainability and growth.

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	Improving outcomes for the children and families across the City, helps build and develop whole communities and increases the livability of the City
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Successful services support successful families who are able to deliver continuing growth in the City

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

- Equal Opportunities
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences for the Capital and Revenue Budgets

The proposals set out in this report forms part of the preparation of the Council's draft revenue and capital budget for 2020/21 to be reported to the Executive for approval in February 2020.

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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.

Children and Education Services Business Planning: 2019-2020, Executive 13th
February 2019

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the budget strategy for Children's and Education Services and revenue budget proposals for 2020/21. The budget proposals for 2020/21 reflect the anticipated outcome of the Spending Round as set out in the Council's Business Plan as part of the overall financial strategy for the directorate.
- 1.2 The budget strategy for Children's and Education Services in 2019/20 was to put the directorate onto a sustainable footing for 2019/20 given the local and national pressures being faced by Children's Social Care Services. Additional non-recurrent resources of £10.674m per annum over three years were approved to go into a 'Social Care' reserve to address the pressures across all budget areas to provide the capacity that will enable a longer term approach by investing in early help and prevention alongside evidenced based interventions which support improving outcomes for children and financial sustainability.
- 1.3 For 2020/21 it will be a one year budget plan to reflect the Government's Spending Round for local government. However, the 2020/21 budget proposals are part of a longer term budget strategy for Children and Education Services. That strategy is intelligence led and reflects the Directorate priorities that aim to work within existing economies of scale to strengthen partnerships and deliver services local, place based services on a city wide, locality and neighbourhood footprint. This delivery model includes collaboration with Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO), is being aligned with Bringing Services Together and Manchester's Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MMASA).
- 1.4 In addition, following a detailed benchmarking review in 2018 and in response to the volatility in the children looked after population and provider market, a sufficiency strategy has also been developed to inform the budget strategy and commissioning priorities to ensure there is the right provision available and locally to meet the needs of Manchester's children that are looked after by the council.
- 1.5 The draft budget for 2020/21 makes proposals to apply **£6m** of additional social care grant announced as part of the Spending Round and seeks approval for year two of the additional non-recurrent resource from the Social Care reserve of **£10.674m** to ensure there is sufficient resources to meet the care and placement needs of those children who are looked after by the Council

2. Background and Context

- 2.1 In line with the priorities of the Our Manchester Strategy, and Our Corporate Plan, the Directorate's focus is to work with our partners and stakeholders so that Manchester' children and young people to be safe, happy and successful; attending a 'good or better' school.
- 2.2 The Directorate also contributes to other corporate priorities, including supporting Manchester's Children and Young People to be healthy, well and safe (**Healthy, cared for people**), enabling clean, safe and vibrant neighbourhoods through

promoting the welfare of young people (**Neighbourhoods**) and reducing demand through reform and enabling our workforce to be the best they can be (**Well-managed Council**). It also plays a leading role in ensuring our young people are equipped with the skills they need to benefit from the growth of the city (**Growth that benefits everyone**).

- 2.3 The priorities, guiding principles and behaviours of Our Manchester, run throughout all key strategies and approaches being taken forward in the city from the overarching Children and Young People's Plan (Our Manchester, Our Children) through to Early Help, Our Promise to Looked After Children and Care Leavers, All Age Disability, Youth Justice Plan, Valuing Young People and Young Carers Strategy; as well as contributing to other strategy/delivery plans to improve the experiences and outcomes for our children and young people.
- 2.4 The Directorate for Children and Education Services is responsible for the following services:
- Early Help
 - Early years
 - Education services
 - Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for 0-25 years
 - Children's social care services for children and their families
 - Statutory responsibilities for safeguarding, looked after children and young people, care leavers
 - Youth Justice Services
 - And a broad range of associated functions.
- 2.5 Manchester is a large, diverse and complex local authority with a growing child population; increasing by 22.6% between 2008 and 2018 and projected to increase by a further 17.2% between 2018 and 2028. The numbers of pupils recorded on the October school census increased by 15,875 (26%) between October 2013 and October 2018, with 8,466 (43%) of the increase relating to secondary aged pupils.
- 2.6 The total number of children and young people aged 0 to 25 year with SEND that have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) maintained by Manchester in 2018 was 4,099. This is a 61% increase since the end of 2015 and the Council is receiving more requests for EHCPs for young people aged 20 to 25 years. In Manchester schools, there are a total of 2,895 EHCPs which is a 23% increase over three years. The most common types of primary need for pupils in Manchester with an ECHP is autism (26%), social, emotional and mental health (21% - compared to 12.8% nationally) and severe learning difficulties (19% - compared to 12.5% nationally).
- 2.7 The basic level of unit funding for primary and secondary pupils in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) has risen from £5,088 in 2014/15 to £5,288 in 2019/20, an increase of £200 per pupil in cash terms. However, when compared to the Retail Price Index (RPI) over the same period, it represents an actual real term reduction of around £643 per pupil. This is similar for those children with SEND/high needs, which has seen funding for 2-18 year olds increase from £615

to £657; an increase of £42 per child. However, when the RPI is applied it represents an actual reduction of approximately £105 per pupil, thus compounding the impact of children in need of services from the council and growth in Manchester's child population.

- 2.8 Following the publication of the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services in 2014 additional Council resources were invested into Children's Services, specifically targeted at supporting improvements in the Statutory Safeguarding, Looked After Children's Services and Early Help Services. Significant progress and success has been achieved since 2014, characterised by the Ofsted judgement in December 2017 that our services for children and young people looked after and those in need of help and protection are no longer inadequate.
- 2.9 Positively, there is strong evidence that progress continues to be made across both Children and Education services as outlined the bi-annual self assessments and 2018/19 outturn performance report; both of which demonstrate Children and Education Services have performed well against the majority of targets compared to the 2017/18 reporting period. The exception to this and most significantly is the increase in children looked after by the council; a pattern that is similar to all comparable with statistical neighbours and areas where there are high levels of deprivation.
- 2.10 Since 2015/16 there has been significant progress in reducing the number of children placed in residential provision with an increase in those placed within internal foster care placements. In addition there have been improvements in securing a 'permanent' arrangement for children through adoption and the increased number of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs).
- 2.11 The Council has been part of a Regional Adoption Agency since 2017 which has maintained the good performance and mitigated the removal of the 'inter-agency fee' grant.
- 2.12 In addition, during the same time period there has also been a significant improvement in the quality of settings and schools in the City; reflected in the end of school year in July 2019 when:
- 93% of school children in Manchester attend a good or better primary school compared to 88% in 2014
 - 79% of pupils attend a good or better secondary school compared to 64% in 2014.
 - 98% Early years setting are good or better compared to 64% in 2014
- 2.13 The improvements in both Children and Education Services has in part been associated with stronger partnerships supporting greater collaboration and robust leadership; underpinned by an effective performance/assurance framework.

3. Budget Strategy

- 3.1 Manchester's Children and Education Services continue on a 'journey to excellence' to increase the effectiveness of services and outcomes for children

and young people. This and delivery of our financial plan cannot be achieved in isolation, rather a strong partnership (internally within MCC and externally with our key partners). This is facilitated through effective leadership and management at a locality level and development of programmes of activity with our key partners, adopting a targeted and systematic approach that delivers:

- Improved standards of practice;
- Earlier prevention to reduce reliance on expensive specialist services;
- Better commissioning and market management to increase impact and reduces costs;
- Making efficiencies where possible in service delivery.

Children's Locality Programme

- 3.2 The aim of the Children's Locality Programme is to deliver with partners an integrated, multi-agency place based teams centred around locality partnerships and understanding and resolving of the specific complexities for children in each geographical area. The Children's Locality Programme is made up of the following series of interconnected projects/workstreams:
1. Complex safeguarding;
 2. Front door reform;
 3. Early Help / Early Years to include a further strengthening of partnerships and collaboration with the Manchester Local Care Organisation and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams;
 4. Social work teams;
 5. School clusters;
 6. Youth Justice Service;
 7. Leadership across children's partnership.
- 3.3 The current project plan has a timeline for completion by April 2020 when all expected structural and service changes will be completed. This has already started and will propagate greater collaboration. The aim is for practitioners working together in a locality, having conversations to agree effective, right and timely interventions resulting in positive change for our children to have a *safe, happy, healthy and successful lives*; preventing unnecessary escalation of children's needs and negative long term outcomes.
- 3.4 It is anticipated the impact of the Children's Services Locality Programme will release social worker capacity to redirected to better support a timely plan of 'permanence' for children who become looked after and support the continued improvement in the overall quality of practice and divert resources to early help services.
- 3.5 Joint commissioning activity and focused evidenced based interventions such as the implementation of No Wrong Door, 'Front Door' reform and Complex Safeguarding Hub are expected to lead to a sustained reduction in the number of children requiring a statutory intervention and specialist care placements.

- 3.6 Manchester's children's services and its partners have expressed a commitment to implement the Strengthening Families programme which is a multi-agency approach that uses motivational interviewing taking a 'think family' approach facilitated by the co-location of Adult, Mental Health and Domestic Abuse and Children's Services. Developed in Hertfordshire, the evidence demonstrated a reduction in both admissions and length of time children spent in local authority care. It is anticipated this project will begin following Ofsted's ILACS (inspection of local authority children's services) and require additional investment of £350k. Following the review of Children's Services Front Door which has taken place during 2019/20, this is expected to release costs from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Duty and Assessment Teams which will support the investment into Strengthening Families.
- 3.7 Children require consistency and continuity of care in order to provide them with a foundation from which their physical, emotional and developmental needs can be met. Permanence is a framework of emotional, physical and legal conditions to give a child a feeling of security, continuity, commitment and identity. The greater degree of permanence will come from practice standards and guidance, systems to enhance outcomes and workforce development to identify best permanence options and understand the journey to permanence must start from the outset. This will be supported by the tracking of individual children to ensure more timely and better outcomes for children using alternatives to care. It is expected that children will secure 'permanence' quicker, which would mean for some children the average length of time in care will reduce; the cost of this will be met from within existing resources and the financial benefits should be realised in the medium to long term.
- 3.8 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 mandates Local Safeguarding Children Boards to replace their current arrangements with new flexible local safeguarding arrangements. The revised statutory guidance underpinning the Act, Working Together to Safeguard Children, came into force on 29 June 2018. The Act establishes collective responsibility and accountability of these arrangements across the three chief officers (local authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and the Police). It is expected that the introduction of the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership will lead to a reduced supporting infrastructure (business unit and commissioning of reviews) and therefore level of financial contribution once established and practices embedded. This is likely to result in a financial saving in the medium and long term.

Integration with partners

- 3.9 The development of greater collaboration and partnerships in the delivery of services for children and families at a locality level is central to improving the experiences and outcomes for Manchester's children and the Directorate Budget Strategy. Subsequently, underpinned by the 'Our Manchester' behaviours a key component of the 'Delivering Children's Services in a Locality' programme of work is the development of local leadership arrangements to drive changes in behaviour and culture.
- 3.10 Since 2017 Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (MHCC), Children's Social Care and Education Services have worked increasingly closer together in

the commissioning of services for children with complex/high needs. This is achieved via agreed processes and the establishment of a High Needs Multi-agency Commissioning Panel. The panel considers and agrees funding requests to commission specialist services for any child or young person who has complex physical, psychological or behavioural needs, that cannot not be met by universal services and require either dual or tripartite funding. The panel covers all children from the age of 0 to 18 years. In 2019/20 MHCC has contributed £3.4m towards meeting the needs of children with complex/high needs.

- 3.11 There remains negotiations to establish an aligned budget for children with complex/high needs for 2020/21. Notwithstanding this a formula for the commissioning of specialist provision has been agreed, progress towards an aligned budget and collaborate in the commissioning of provision where gaps have been identified through an analysis of needs. It is expected the following and agreed activity will positively impact on outcomes, improve value for money:
- Review and refresh the Children’s Commissioning Strategy and the priorities set out therein. This will be informed by an analysis of the ‘top’ 100 most expensive placements which is c£20m in totality, working across Greater Manchester to secure a joint budget and commissioning approach that works in harmony with the work taking place across Greater Manchester and dovetails with Placement North West.
 - Develop and implement early transitions for children and young adults with high needs inc joint assessments, planning and reviews with Adult Transitions Services.
- 3.12 Manchester City Council operates two children’s homes, Lyndene and Olanyian, through a commissioning arrangement with external providers. These two children’s homes are currently being recommissioned in partnership with MHCC against a specification that will promote occupancy rates and targeting a specific cohort of young people (informed by analytics and need). It is expected this will lead to a medium to long term reduction in spend through better occupancy rates and a more effective intervention with young people that improve their outcomes and avoid expensive external placement costs. MCC and MHCC have recently submitted a bid and secured capital funding from the NHS England which will contribute to costs associated with the remodelling of the homes; particularly in relation to supporting children and young people with a learning disability.
- 3.13 In addition, as part of the NHS transformation/Ithrive programme MHCC has reviewed, developed and issued a new specification with Manchester Foundation Trust (MFT) for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), making reference to the needs of children looked after, care leavers and using the ‘Ithrive’ model to focus on determining positive outcomes for all Manchester children. The new commission will extend the current offer to children looked after, children and young people aged up to 25 years and those placed outside of Manchester and care leavers. The new contract commenced in September 2019. This brings to an end the £0.5m contribution in 2020/21 that the Council has made to MFT since the Early Intervention Grant funding ended in 2011. The funding released will be used to support the development of provision for children with high and complex needs.

Commissioning Strategy

- 3.14 Children's Services commissioning expenditure accounts for c£50m of the budget through the commissioning of a broad range of services which contribute to and meet the needs of our children and young people. Over the last few months the Directorate has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the range of children's needs, demand and placement requirements to inform a strategic commissioning strategy; essential to inform the medium and long term financial plan. The strategy in development will aim to manage the complexity of presenting needs and rising placement costs within the local and regional market, specifically:
- The alignment of current internal and external market capacity and existing commissions with the current and projected future needs.
 - Consider and development opportunities to shape and influence the internal and local/regional external provider market
 - Identify future opportunities for the Council to invest capital such as developing partnerships with charitable or non for profit organisations.
- 3.15 To support the medium term financial plan a quantitative cost and activity model has been undertaken internally by the Council which identified potential growth scenarios for children looked after based on recent trends and projections of referrals, admissions and discharge rates and 0-18 population projections. There is projected to be a greater number of children living in the city by 2025, estimated at around 14,500 more children. Consistently the proportion of the under 18 population in care for the last five years has remained between 1.1 and 0.9%. Therefore the most likely scenario for financial planning purposes is for 1% of projected child population.
- 3.16 In addition an external provider has undertaken a benchmarking exercise that considers the costs, profile of children and the range and choice of placements for our looked after children against similar local authorities. The findings from this exercise indicated the correlation between need and the 'trilogy of risk' (domestic violence, substance misuse and mental health) and social determinants indicate a more prudent forecast for financial modelling should be used for financial planning purposes. The recommendation is for a 3% increase per annum in admissions to care, rather than 1% of 0-18 year old population which has previously been considered.
- 3.17 In addition further findings from the external provider were as follows and will be used to inform the placement sufficiency plan;
- Manchester has succeeded in maximising Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) conversions compared to other areas, therefore ongoing high growth in that area would be unrealistic for future planning.
 - Whilst the shift from external foster care to internal foster care between 2016 and 2019 of c100 placements has been achieved, it was highlighted that 63% of internal carers are over 50 years old. Internal foster care recruitment needs to plan for replacement of 19 carers per year just based

on attrition alone. It is unlikely that recruitment target of Recommendation is for target of 40 new carers per year and improved recruitment and retention of existing internal foster cares.

- There were 56 adoptions in 2018/19, which was a reduction in 2017/18. As the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), Adoption Counts has only been in practice for two years, it is suggested that the adoption rates will start to increase again, now that the RAA is more established and better understands the needs of Manchester's children. It is proposed there is an increase of 10 adoptions every year for the next 5 years.
- Manchester uses a high number of Independent Foster care Agencies (IFAs) compared to other GM local authorities; proposing a strategic approach that reviews processes and engagement with external provider market; negotiating on price and is reflective of Manchester's presence in the local market.
- Manchester has the lowest proportion of children looked after in residential care when compared to other GM authorities at 10.2%, therefore significant reductions in the use of residential are not likely to be achieved.
- Whilst there was no specific recommendation finding and proposal that considered the growth of internal provision, it is suggested that a focus should be on marketing, increasing the number of placements made locally and better use of North West Framework to manage and reduce costs.
- In addition to making better use of 'step down' from residential settings to fostering, a specific recommendations indicated there was insufficient commissioning capacity at a senior level with children's services and for this to be focused on delivering the following four strategic aims;
 1. Grow internal fostering refocus the IFA market
 2. Reform processes to manage complexity
 3. Commission for outcomes
 4. Reduce avoidable residential care unit costs

3.18 Informed by our own analysis and that of the external provider a detailed action plan for the sufficiency strategy will be produced by the service over the next few months. Progress against the plan will be overseen by the Strategic Director of Children's Services and Education reported quarterly to Strategic Management Team and Executive Members. This will require the Directorate to secure additional commissioning capacity; the estimated cost implications of this are reflected in the budget proposals for 2020/21 in the next section.

Directorate review for Children and Education Services

3.19 Since 2018 there is clear evidence that the Directorate priorities and strategies have had a positive impact. Subsequently alongside changes in the presenting needs of children, trends and patterns of service requirements inform us there is

now a need to 'realign' resources in order to ensure this progress is sustained and the Directorate positively contributes to building a *'safe, healthy, happy and successful' future for our children*. Consequently a directorate review is being undertaken to ensure resources/capacity are better aligned to the service priorities. This review is expected create opportunities and lead to changes in roles, responsibilities and deployment of staff. In addition there are a number of specific service/team reviews being undertaken to identify how the respective service area can build on our success to date and better supports our strategic priorities and improve the outcomes for children.

- 3.20 Significant progress has been made since 2015/16 and has reduced the 'agency spend by £1.7m. If this can be sustained the aim is reduce the agency spend further by March 2020. However, an analysis of 'leavers' indicates an emerging pattern of staff terminating their employment after two years in post, with no apparent single issue. Consequently progress is reliant on effective 'branding/communications', management support/span of responsibility, manageable workloads, competitive terms and conditions for Social Workers including career progression. Plans to address this are in development and the estimated cost implications of this are reflected in the budget proposals for 2020/21 in the next section.

Education and schools

- 3.21 The schools Funding Settlement was announced on the 19th December 2019. The settlement includes funding for pupil growth, inflation, high needs funding and increases where core funding is below the national minimum funding levels. Manchester's additional grant for primary and secondary school at local authority area level is £16.9m in total. £8.7m of the increase relates to a 2,071 additional pupils in the city and £8.2m is as a result of the 1.9% increase in the amount of the grant allocated on a per pupil basis.
- 3.22 The part of the grant supporting high needs is expected to increase by £12m in 2020/21. This will enable the Council to avoid any reduction in funding to schools to fund pressure on high needs budget as other authorities have done and Manchester considered and consulted on for 2019/20.
- 3.23 The high needs block includes the funding for special school places and independent specialist placements, special services such as the Sensory Service, resourced provision in mainstream schools and top up funding for mainstream schools and colleges linked to statements/Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). These children are often found to require specialist health and social care provision and are reflected tripartite funding protocol described above.
- 3.24 The estimated £12.4m will be allocated in full to meet the existing and new pressures on the budget. There will be a significant carry forward deficit from 2019/20 projected to be £3.7m and a similar underlying deficit for 2021/22. Provision in the independent sector is commissioned on a more costly place by place basis and not using block contracts. Currently the majority of provision used is provided by one Trust that has just announced a 5% uplift on all

provision. Work has been initiated to work with this Trust to ensure that our arrangements for commissioning provision is more cost effective.

- 3.25 In the medium term there is a planned programme of capital investment to significantly increase the number of special school places in the city. This will reduce spend on specialist placements in independent provision which is currently being used to meet increased need. On average a place in specialist independent day provision is £35k compared to an average of £17k in a Manchester special school. Increasing the number of places available in areas of high need in the city such as north Manchester, will also reduce costs of providing home to school transport.
- 3.26 The capital programme includes £4.8m of investment in additional provision for young people with SEND who are post 16. Once completed, there will be the option to register this provision so it can meet the needs of young people up to the age of 25. This will also reduce pressure on this element of the high needs budget.
- 3.27 The launch of a strategy for the city to reduce exclusion and promote inclusion will also impact on children who wherever possible should be educated in mainstream schools. This strategy aims to reduce the number of children in the city excluded from school, will reduce the requirement for places and the pupil referral unit (PRU) which is creating a pressure within the high needs block and contributes to the pressures within Children’s Services. Consequently the strategy is multi-agency/disciplinary and will include a ‘deep dive’ to better understand the increases in numbers of pupils in the city with social, emotional, mental health needs and how this could be reduced.

4. Revenue Budget 2020/21

Introduction

- 4.1 The Children and Education Services net annual budget for 2019/20 is £119.933m with 1,316 full time equivalent staff summarised in the table below:

Table: 2019/20 Base budget

Service Area	2019/20 Gross Budget £'000	2019/20 Net Budget £'000	2019/20 Budgeted Posts (FTE)
Children’s Safeguarding	114,150	99,090	885
Education*	334,998	16,383	314
Directorate Core and Back Office	4,564	4,460	117
Total	453,712	119,933	1,316

*Education gross budget includes the Dedicated Schools Grant (excluding Academy Schools)

- 4.2 In 2019/20 the additional investment from the social care reserve of £10.674m of has been applied to the Children's Services Safeguarding budget to provide sufficient funding to respond and meet the needs of children in need of help, support or protection. The majority of the investment has been applied to meet the costs of children and young people placements in foster-care, residential and supported accommodation. The main factors that drive numbers and costs of care for children are:
- Market 'saturation' attributed to local, regional and national needs of children becoming and/or looked after and attributed to a complex interaction between demographics, socio-economic trends and new contextual challenges.
 - Cost of placements affected by the market and effectiveness of the approach and contract and commissioning strategy.
 - Placement types and the ratios of different types of care provided which has a significant impact on the overall cost of care to Council.
- 4.3 In 2020/21 the continued investment of £10.674m will be required to ensure the Directorate is able to meet levels of need of children in 2019/20; supported by the application of £6m social care grant to reflect existing and future potential pressures from predicted increasing need.
- 4.4 The existing and new investment will be applied to stabilise the service and meet the cost of children looked after placements. This will enable the directorate to maintain capacity for early help services and social work which will impact the effectiveness of the service and outcomes for children and young people from improved standards of practice and earlier prevention to reduce reliance on expensive specialist services. There is a small amount of the investment proposed to be used to improve commissioning and market management to increase impact and reduces costs and making efficiencies.
- 4.5 It is proposed that the use of social care grant is phased over 2020/21 and 2021/22 to smooth the impact of budget strategy and efficiencies from the investment that are projected for 2021/22 and 2022/23. It is estimated that £4.2m of the grant will be used in 2020/21 and the remaining £1.8m transferred to the social care reserve for use in 2021/22. The following paragraphs set out proposed use of the social care grant in 2020/21:

Children looked after placements

- 4.6 Over the last five years the number of children looked after per 10,000 aged under 18 years old in Manchester has reduced compared to other similarly deprived authorities and most Greater Manchester authorities. The trend over recent years has been for children looked after numbers to be c1% of the under 18 population. A continuation of this trend would lead to an increase of 82 in 2020/21 from the 2019 baseline of 1,281 (on which the 2019/20 budget is based). This would be an additional budget requirement of £0.692m.
- 4.7 Following an external review considering the potential future impact on admissions to care from factors such as domestic violence, substance misuse, mental health and other social determinants, a more prudent forecast is

recommended. This reflects the impact of admissions to care increasing by 3% per annum (para 3.16) which would increase children looked after numbers to 1386 in 2020/21, an increase of 105 against the April 2019 baseline. Current children looked after numbers in October 2019 are 1,335, which suggests there is an increase in looked after children that already exceeds the growth anticipated at 1% of child population. To allow for a more prudent increase would require a further investment of £1.186m.

- 4.8 This would be an additional budget requirement for an increase in children looked after in 2020/21 of **£1.878m** which has been reflected in the proposed budget.
- 4.9 The full year cost impact in 2020/21 of increases to children looked after during 2019/20 is estimated to be £0.964m. Resources of £500k that are currently committed to CAMHS in 2019/20 will be redirected in 2020/21 to reduce the pressure on the complex placements budget. It is proposed that the balance **£464k** is committed from the social care grant to meet the full year effect cost of current placements in 2020/21.

Leaving Care

- 4.10 Despite placements being more cost effective and of better quality, the number of placements has continued to increase during 2019/20. Leaving Care allowances have also increased by 35% following change to extend support up to the age of 25 for all care leavers through the Children and Social Work Act last year.
- 4.11 Work continues with Strategic Housing to increase the range and choice of provision for care leavers that is both suitable and achieves value for money; whilst enabling young people to successfully live independently. This includes investment in Supported Accommodation provision at Seymour Road and adoption of the National House Project; providing supported tenancies for care leavers in the Spring 2020 onwards. In addition, there is ongoing work with Homelessness in order to review the response and offer to young people (16/17 year olds) presenting as homeless and the associated costs. For 2020/21 investment of **£950k** is required to provide sufficient budget to meet the current and presenting need.

Support for Families

- 4.12 Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and so far as it is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families. This support can include a wide range of services but usually includes accommodation and/or essential living expenses; often associated with families at risk of homelessness, including those with refugee status, limited leave to remain or discretionary leave; all of whom are eligible for an assessment and/or support under s17 if so identified. The Council's budget for this support is currently forecast to overspend by **£390k**, with a risk this may increase due to the impact of welfare reform and the uncertainty with Brexit.

- 4.13 People who remain in the UK unlawfully or are refused asylum seekers and have 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) may still be entitled to support to avoid a breach of the family's human rights and to support a child directly. The Council supports families in this position through the NRPF team which supports people with their application to the Home Office and has a separate budget. At this stage this budget has an underspend of £200k which provides some capacity for the pressure in this area increasing further.

Workforce

- 4.14 Social Work Recruitment and Retention - Manchester's City Council's Children's Services have continued to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and their families in receipt of services. This has been supported by an increase in the stability of the workforce and reduced social worker turnover, which has also shown a reduction in the use of interim/agency staff by £1.7m since 2017. However, in recent months the turnover and vacancy rates for children and family social workers has increased. An analysis of exit interviews, 'leavers' and a terms and conditions benchmarking exercise indicates a pattern of social workers leaving the employment of the council after two years and a significant difference in the salary paid by Manchester and neighbouring authorities for 'experienced' social workers. A series of measures are being considered, to be in place by March 2020, that seek to build on the strengths in the service to recognise and celebrate the commitment and loyalty of our staff, slow the increase in social work turnover, increase the social work experience in the service and remove the reliance on agency staff. The estimated cost of these proposals is **£500k** in 2020/21, reducing in 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 4.15 Families First Service delivers an intensive short-term family support intervention to children who are considered to be on the 'edge of care'. A review of the service has been completed to evaluate the impact of the service, value for money and alignment with strategic and practice priorities. The findings from the review concluded that whilst there are benefits the service can be more efficient, better aligned to the developing locality delivery model and support wider Directorate priorities. These changes are anticipated to result the workforce capacity, skills and knowledge being reinvested to support the proposals set out within this report; creating alternative opportunities for the affected staff.
- 4.16 Commissioning - Despite much improved planning and joint commissioning arrangements between children's social care, education and MHCC, since 2015/16 the average cost of residential care has increased by £1,500 (60%) per week. This presents one of the most significant financial challenges for the directorate's budget. The delivery of the commissioning strategy described above needs to be supported by sufficient strategic commissioning capacity with skills, knowledge and expertise to implement and deliver the aforementioned commissioning and placement sufficiency plan; against which financial costs and benefits could then be determined for future years. It is estimated that an additional investment of **£145k** for workforce capacity will be required. This capacity is expected to achieve the following:

- Work in partnership with Council, Manchester Health and Care Commission (MHCC) and Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO) to contribute to wider strategies and develop a Commissioning Strategy for Children and Education Services
- Oversee and deliver strategic commissioning and contract management priorities for the Directorate
- Engage with and develop the private and public sector market to be more responsive to the presenting needs of Manchester's children; ensuring there is 'sufficient' range and choice of placements for 'our' children and are value for money.

4.17 Placement Stability Service - Children's Services is reliant upon universal and edge of care services to address the identified needs. There is no specific service to support carers at times when they are experiencing difficulties and all too often has resulted in instability of and/or breakdown of fostering arrangements; which has at times led to the use of expensive external provision. Children's Services is seeking to establish a Placement Stability Service with the aim of providing a targeted and specialist intervention to prevent the breakdown of fostering arrangements, high cost external placements and improves the wellbeing and outcomes for our children and young people. Additional investment of **£200k** for workforce capacity is required to support this.

Children's Legal Services

4.18 The cost of legal support for Children's Services has continued to increase significantly this year. The Strategic Director of Children's Services and the City Solicitor having considered the cost drivers are working together to manage need, reduce the use of experts, streamline decision making/legal advice processes to create solicitor capacity. Children's Services and the Corporate Legal Service are working to address this position. For 2020/21 the Corporate Legal Service requires investment of £300k to reduce the use of external legal services by improving the recruitment and retention of solicitors within the Council and to increase capacity to deal with more complex cases. Children's Services require investment of **£0.9m** to address the need for legal services and to meet the requirements of the courts, of which £300k is funded from a transfer of budget from Corporate Core.

4.19 Nationally, the number of children being referred to children's social care services and who require statutory intervention that has resulted in legal care and/or supervision proceedings has risen by 25% since 2016. The President of the Family Division for the Judiciary has reported more needs to be done to strengthen the pre-proceedings work/assessments prior to making a legal application; this in turn would at times avoid expensive and protracted legal proceedings. This highlights the importance of having sufficient children legal and social work capacity to manage the volume of activity and complexity of children and their family needs.

Regional Adoption Agency

4.20 From July 2017, adoption services in Stockport, Manchester, Trafford, Salford

and Cheshire East local authorities have been delivered through an integrated service called Adoption Counts. This is a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) as set out in the Education and Adoption Act 2016 and was the second regional adoption agency to become operational nationally. By 2020, the government expects all adoption services to be delivered via regional adoption agencies. Adoption Counts is responsible for recruiting adopters, family finding for children and providing support to adoptive families.

- 4.21 In 2019/20 MCC invested £200k into the RAA to reflect the national challenge with identifying prospective adopters and the need for greater capacity to increase the number of adoptions opportunities for Manchester children. In 2019/20 the interagency fees have increased due to using placements from other agencies to meet assessed need. In the longer term recruitment of prospective adopters should provide greater capacity for meeting diversity of need. It is proposed that the RAA budget is increased by **£95k** in 2020/21 to meet the cost of interagency fees and the position is reviewed for 2021/22 to reflect progress by the RAA to manage the overall cost of the service. .

Education Psychology

- 4.22 The Education Psychology budget is currently forecast to overspend by £349k in 2019/20. EHCPs for children and young people aged up to 25 were introduced on 1 September 2014 as part of the Special Educational Needs and Disability provisions in the Children and Families Act 2014. In Manchester schools, there are a total of 4531 EHCPs which is a 23% increase over three years. Subsequently, Education Psychologists assessments have had to increase beyond current available budget. In 2018/19 the Special Education Needs reform grant was used to manage this pressure, this grant is no longer available.
- 4.23 There is a further risk that costs may increase in 2020/21 because the commission for Educational Psychology is being tendered for the first time since it transferred to One Education and became a traded service. Nationally, the demand for Educational Psychology exceeds supply and this could influence the response to the tender and increase costs. This service is not permitted to be funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant consequently pressures on this budget will need to be offset through other Education budgets.
- 4.24 In order to manage further increases in need the Directorate is appraising if delegating funding to special schools and PRUs for Educational Psychology and commissioning some Educational Psychology time to provide support and advice to school clusters will reduce the need for re-assessments and reduce the pressure on this budget. For 2020/21 investment of **£350k** is required to provide sufficient budget to meet current need.

Home to School Transport

- 4.25 The budget is currently forecast to overspend by **£134k**, which is a significant reduction on the 2018/19 pressure of £0.7m. In the medium term, options to reduce the spend for home to school travel include:

- Procurement of an ICT programme which is more efficient at modelling routes for transport;
- A complete service redesign which will allow more capacity for home to school travel assessments and more creative solutions;
- Continuing to review arrangements where transport is provided but is not a statutory requirement;
- Working with special schools on arrangements whereby they support transport arrangements for the most complex young people.
- Working with placement commissioning team to ensure that providers and foster carers provide home to school transport as part of commissioning arrangements; removing duplication.

Early Years Children's Centres

- 4.26 In 2012, the Council took the decision to withdraw from the direct provision of day-care services in order to move to a new model, with the Council acting as commissioner of day-care services. The Council entered into leases of 37 vacant properties with day-care operators across the city. All leases included a full repair and maintenance responsibility. A number of leases have now reached expiry point or a rent review. This has led to day-care providers requesting a renegotiation of their lease terms as the current leases are no longer financially viable or providers have chosen to withdraw their services. The condition of the Manchester City Council estate for tendered day care is in a poor state, which is having an impact on the environment Manchester children are experiencing. The cost of maintaining the buildings is prohibitive with providers requesting that the Council takes responsibility for repair and maintenance of the property whereupon they would be willing to pay a higher market rent. With lease income being lower than expected and running costs of maintained tendered day care site being higher than budgeted for there is a recurring pressure on the budget; with a risk this may increase should 'provider income' reduce.
- 4.27 In light of these challenges the procurement process for tendered sites, maintenance and repair of the day care estate, management of the estate and the process of recharges is being considered. Condition surveys of properties will take place over the next few months to inform the review of leases and to ensure young people in the City get the opportunity to attend a good or better childcare provider that is situated in a fit for purpose education environment. Additional investment of **£250k** is required reflect the ongoing costs for maintaining the properties.

Short breaks for disabled children and their families

- 4.28 Local authorities are required to provide for families short breaks from caring for disabled children to support them to sustain their caring role. The types of short breaks includes: day care, overnight stays, weekend stays, occasional longer stays, befriending, and leisure and social activities. In 2019/20 there is an overspend due to a 15% increase being made to carers and young people. For 2020/21 investment of **£80k** is required to provide sufficient budget to meet current and presenting need.

Summary

- 4.29 The proposals above would lead an increased budget of £8.187m of which £1.851m of social care grant will be transferred to the social care reserve for 2021/22. This is a total Children’s and Education Services budget of £128.120m broken down as follows:

	2020/21 Gross Budget	2020/21 Net Budget
Service Area	£'000	£'000
Children’s Safeguarding	122,337	107,277
Education*	334,998	16,383
Directorate Core and Back Office	4,564	4,460
Total	461,899	128,120

*Education gross budget includes the Dedicated Schools Grant (excluding Academy Schools)

5. Capital Strategy / Programme

- 5.1 The capital programme for Children’s and Education totals £109.0m over the period 2019/20 - 2023/24. This includes basic need grant funding for the creation of new school places, maintenance grant for the upkeep of school buildings, and other schemes including the use of grant funding on schools providing provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 5.2 A summary of the current forecast budget is shown in the table below, and details of the individual projects will be found in the Capital Strategy and Budget report for Executive in February:

Capital Programme from 2019/20

	2019/20 £m’s	2020/21 £m’s	2021/22 £m’s	2022/23 £m’s	Future Years £m’s	Total £m’s
Basic Need	3.9	37.7	48.9	0.1	0.0	90.6
School Maintenance	4.9	3.2	3.0	0.0	0.0	11.1
Other	4.6	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.3
Total	13.4	43.6	51.9	0.1	0.0	109.0

- 5.3 During the 2019/20 financial year work has continued in providing school places to meet the demand with the city. The programme to increase provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities has progressed with a construction partner appointed for works at four sites across the city. The

maintenance programme of work that was planned for summer 2019 is nearing completion, with the 2020/21 programme being drafted.

- 5.4 The Capital Strategy and Budget represents a continuation of the existing approved capital budget. The report to Executive is anticipated to provide information on the expected future investment requirements for the Council, including the challenge of providing sufficient school places across primary and secondary education alongside the Government's Free School programme, and undertaking condition surveys across the entire educational estate, including children's centres, to strengthen decision making around the focus of maintenance works.

6. Impact on Workforce

- 6.1 The framework for how the Council supports its workforce is set out in the People Strategy. This is currently being updated and the revised version will form part of the suite of budget reports. As the 2020/21 budget is a roll forward from 2019/20 there are limited changes to the agreed priorities, budget and workforce implications agreed last year. The proposals in this report include options to strengthen the recruitment and retention of front line social workers and provide additional capacity for commissioning and market management; both of which are important to successfully delivering the Children and Education Services Directorate budget strategy.
- 6.2 The Our Manchester strategy and approach is underpinned by strengths based working, building trusting relationship and innovative working; which is embedded across Children's and Education Services through an asset based approach to engaging with children and families; the approach starts from the point of "what matters to you" instead of "what is the matter with you" which truly embraces the Our Manchester way of working. This way of working has been embedded into early help assessments, education health and care plans and is a key part of the sign of safety social work model used across locality social work.
- 6.3 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, skilled and confident workforce through a culture of success, strengths-based approach and strong and effective leadership 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
 - Ensuring professionals that work with children and young people have manageable workloads
 - Continue to reduce the reliance on interim and agency workers

7. Impact on Residents, Communities and Customers

- 7.1 Children's and Education Services deliver core business in line with the Council's strategic equality objectives in particular improving Life Chances; where there are specific needs identified these are informed by a individual assessment that gives due regard to their race, culture, gender, sexual orientation and disability.
- 7.2 We will continue to ensure that the Council meets its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, building on our successes at fostering good relations between Manchester's communities of identity and maintaining fair and equal access to Council functions. Through ongoing customer monitoring, satisfaction and engagement approaches, we will strengthen and utilise our growing evidence bases at both Corporate and Directorate levels to identify the differential experiences of individual identity groups in Manchester accessing Council services, and proactively respond to make these as fair and equitable as possible.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The budget strategy provides information on the work ongoing within the directorate to achieve longer term financial sustainability in the longer term by investing in early help and prevention, working with partners to deliver interventions that deliver longer term achieve better outcomes.
- 8.2 The proposed revenue budget for 2020/21 sets out the budget proposals as part of the preparation of the Council's budget. It is a one year budget which recognises that the Children and Education budget is under significant pressure due to increased complexity and need.
- 8.3 The Council's budget proposals for 2020/21 will be subject to further refinement following feedback from public consultation and scrutiny committees. The figures may be subject to change following the contents of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement which has been delayed from 5th December as a result of the decision to call a General Election. At this point an indicative date has not been provided for the likely publication of the Settlement. Final budget proposals will be made to Scrutiny and Executive in February 2020.