

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families held on Tuesday, 5 March 2019 at 4.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Rob Wood (in the Chair)

Councillors Judith Smyth

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor Wood declared that his son-in-law worked for the Harbour School, and his daughter worked for Motiv8. He also wished to record that he was a local authority governor at Charter Academy, Ark Ayrton Primary Academy and Ark Dickens Primary Academy.

3. Children & Families budget monitoring report for the third quarter 2018-19

The Finance Manager presented the report and highlighted the following issues:

- The current projected overspend for the Portfolio was £7m, mostly attributable to the Children's Social Care and Safeguarding service.
- The Troubled Families service was fully grant funded. Following a review, the grant was currently estimated at some £629,400 for 2018-19, of which £431k was dependent on achieving a cumulative attachment of 1,875 families to the programme. There was funding available for an anticipated spend level of £688k. Current spending was in line with the estimates
- Looked After Children placements was the most significant overspend area. The overspend on placements was projected at £5,039k. As a result of increased numbers and prices this had increased by £1,289k since the beginning of the year. The number of children in care continued to rise and there was a predicted average for the year of 526.3.
- Unaccompanied minors (UAM) were currently forecasting an overspend as numbers continued to grow. The forecast had increased by £379k since quarter 2 following a revision to the projected grant income. An increase in both the number of and support costs for UAM care leavers has also contributed to the position. The figures included the cost of UAM care leavers which were previously covered by the care leaver budget. Four secure placements made during the year, two of which were active, had generated a further budget pressure of £384k

- Whilst spending was outside the allocated budget, the Council was seen as low spending in Children's Social Care in comparison with other authorities. The Service was currently working with Local Authorities across the region to identify joint strategies for cost reductions.
- The service had a robust sufficiency plan to manage placement demands, reviewed monthly by the Director of Children's Services, to achieve performance targets and reduce spending.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Cabinet Member

- a) Noted the Children and Families Portfolio forecast budget position, at the end of December 2018, of £7.0m in excess of current approved cash limit provision.**
- b) Supported the ongoing process of budget review and implementation of proposals to reduce the projected overspend position and move towards the delivery of a balanced budget within the area of Children's Social Care.**
- c) Noted the position in respect of the approved capital schemes for the portfolio.**

The meeting concluded at 4.29 pm.

Councillor Rob Wood
Chair