

Title of Meeting: Cabinet Member for Children's and Families

Date of meeting: 21 February 2020

Subject: Children and Families Portfolio Budget Monitoring

Report for the Third Quarter 2019/20

Report from: Chris Ward, Director of Finance and Resources,

Section 151 Officer and Alison Jeffery, Director of

Children, Families and Education

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Budget & policy framework decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1. To inform the Cabinet Member of the projected revenue expenditure within the portfolio cash limit and capital programme for the current financial year 2019/20. This report sets out the budget position and contributing factors to the projected yearend overspend within the portfolio, as at the end of December 2019.

2. Summary

- 2.1. Following overspend positions in the previous six years, and an initial projected financial pressure of around £1.9m on the budget for this year, the portfolio revenue cash limit is currently forecast to overspend by £3.8m in 2019/20, of which £2.8m of the overspend is on external residential placements, as shown in 5.10.3. There has been a reduction of the budget of £0.1m since Quarter 1 as a result of all portfolios having their inflation reassessed centrally.
- 2.2. The Council agreed capital programme incorporates two ongoing capital schemes for the portfolio. As outlined in the Quarter 1 report the implementation of the case management system has been delayed until spring 2020, at an additional cost of £0.8m. Capital funding has been identified and the scheme remains within the revised budget. As at the end of December the capital programme for the children's portfolio is forecast to stay within budget.

3 Recommendations

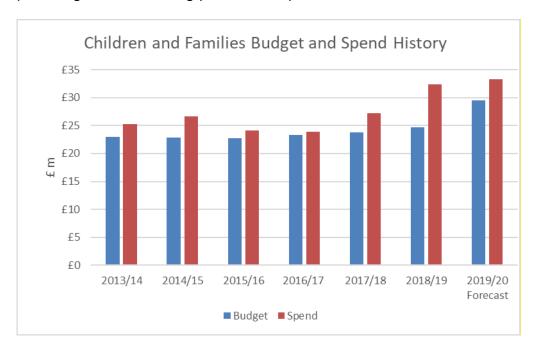
- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member:
 - 3.1.1 Notes the Children and Families Portfolio forecast budget position as at the end of December 2019, of £3.8m in excess of the current approved cash limit provision.



- 3.1.2 Notes the continuing implementation of the "Stronger Futures" strategic programme designed to reduce the number of looked after children in the city, the key driver of the overspend in this portfolio.
- 3.1.3 Approves the transfer of £10,200 funding from the Adaptions to Foster Carer Properties scheme to the scheme for a disabled looked after child.
- 3.1.4 Notes the position in respect of the approved capital schemes for the portfolio.

4 Background

4.1 Expenditure on Children's Social Care and Safeguarding has been subject to much scrutiny during the last few years, exceeding the budget provision for each of the last six years. Under the approved financial arrangements, an overspend is carried forward by the portfolio in the following financial year, since portfolios are expected to manage their financial resources across financial years in order to encourage medium term operational and financial planning. However, the overspends in this portfolio from prior years have been subsumed corporately, recognising the pressures already being placed on the portfolio at the beginning of each year and providing a clean starting point for the portfolio.



4.2 In Autumn 2018 the Government announced £1.5m of additional funding for Adults and Children's Social Care (confirmed for 2019/20 only). Full Council on 12 February 2019 approved the allocation of £1m of this funding to the Children and Families Portfolio. A further £3m was also added to the Children's Social Care Budget on an ongoing basis, recognising the financial impact of the sustained rise of Looked After Children (LAC) over the last five years, which just over the last two years has seen an increase of 108 (29%) Looked After Children. In October 2019 it was confirmed that the Social Care Support Grant would be greater than in 2019/20, with £5.4m indicated. Full council will approve the allocation of this in



February 2020 and it is anticipated that Children's will receive a greater allocation than in 2019/20.

5 Summary Position against Cash Limited Budget at the end of December 2019

5.1 The current projected overspend for the Children and Families Portfolio is £3.8m, all attributable to the Children's Social Care and Safeguarding service. The table below shows the current projection in comparison to the Day 1 projection, the 2018/19 outturn position and the December 2018/19 projection.

Service Area	Budget	Forecast/Outturn	Variation
	£000	£000	£000
Children Social Care & Safeguarding	29,545	33,335	3,790
Troubled Families	0	0	0
2019/20 (December Projection)	29,545	33,335	3,790
2019/20 (Day 1 Projection)	29,422	31,417	1,996
2018/19 (Outturn)	24,699	32,411	7,712
2018/19 (December Projection)	24,753	31,793	6,972

5.2 The Children's Social Care and Safeguarding position is broken down in the table below, and more information can be found in paragraphs 5.9.1 to 5.9.11.

	Current		
	Budget	Forecast Spend	Variation
	£000	£000	£000
Assessment & Intervention	5,326	5,553	227
Looked After Children	19,570	22,812	3,242
Commissioning & Performance	140	140	0
Safeguarding & Monitoring	1,034	1,211	177
Support Activities	2,906	3,036	130
Edge of Care Support Service	569	583	14
Children's Social Care And Safeguarding	29,545	33,335	3,790
Troubled Families	0	0	0
TOTAL PORTFOLIO	29,545	33,335	3,790

- 5.3 Whilst this encompasses variations across the service areas as outlined below, the most significant area of overspend relates to the cost of Looked After Children placements.
- 5.4 The number and cost of external residential placements remains a significant driver with an overspend of £2.8m. This is due to having fifteen more external residential placements than budgeted, although the average annual cost is slightly lower than budgeted.
- 5.5 Residential placements is the focus of a significant commissioning project being undertaken across the South East region with Department For Education (DFE) financial support; the aim is to develop a collaborative approach with children's



home providers which reduces cost overall as well as meeting the range of children's needs, which are complex, more effectively. This should help bring down costs for Portsmouth in due course, but not in the short term.

- 5.6 Within the overall number of looked after children, the proportion of placements provided through the less expensive in-house fostering service is positive at 52%. The Head Looked After Children will be undertaking some further analysis of the overall use of our in house carers to ensure that we are operating at capacity. The service is continuously working to recruit more foster carers to expand this offer. This will help to keep placement costs down although additional in-house placements places pressure on the fostering service which supports these carers (see below).
- 5.7 In house residential placements are fully utilised, and at the end of quarter 3 there are no vacancies
- 5.8 The strategy to reduce the number of children needing to be looked after is known as the "Stronger Futures" strategy. It is wide ranging and is overseen closely by the Director of Children, Families and Education. The first phase of the strategy, from 2016-2018, saw the establishment of a much stronger, targeted whole family early help service, integrated with a refocused health visiting service. This enabled a better line of sight on need in the city but also a more effective earlier response which is now keeping down the total number of children requiring a statutory children's social care intervention. The second phase of the strategy while maintaining appropriate focus on early intervention has two new strands:
 - reshaping statutory work to provide stronger whole family support with new adult service posts co-located with children's social workers (family safeguarding)
 - (ii) remodelling our in-house foster care service to strengthen support to carers and provide a more collective approach to meeting children's needs (implementing the Mockingbird Family Model of Care).
- 5.9 Both strands increase staffing costs, to the Assessment and Intervention and Looked After Children's services respectively, but are designed to reduce costs overall by reducing Looked After Children numbers and providing more stable inhouse care where needed. The short term increase in staffing costs will be mitigated by the Troubled Families carry forward referred to in paragraph 5.10.
- 5.10 The number of looked after children has started to stabilise over the last 8 months. The main reason for the increased variance in Quarter 3 compared to Quarter 1 is that within the broadly stable overall number of looked after children, a higher number of more expensive residential placements have had to be made. Each of these decisions is overseen very closely by the Deputy Director of Children and Families.
- 5.11 The detailed reasons for the projected variations are detailed in the following paragraphs.



- 5.11.1 **Assessment and Intervention Service** (£227,000 forecast overspend): This level of overspend is the result of higher than budgeted costs in relation to Children's Disability Team placements (£339,000), homeless families (£55,000), families with no recourse to public funds (£29,000) and other operational costs (£25,000). Current staffing levels, which include the use of agency social workers and general staffing vacancies, have led to staffing costs projected at £221,000 under budget. The impact of the Family Safeguarding programme has not yet been realised as it is still in its initial stages.
- 5.11.2 Looked After Children (LAC) (£3,242,000 forecast overspend): This covers five main areas LAC placements & residential units, Unaccompanied Minor (UAM) placements, Adoption & Fostering, Care Leavers and staffing costs. There is a projected overspend on LAC placements of £3,107,000 as shown in the table below of which £2,812,000 relates to external residential placements. To increase scrutiny of placements the Director Children, Families and Education and Deputy Director are to introduce a process to review all high cost packages to ensure placements and placement costs are relevant and appropriate. It is acknowledged that whilst we need to ensure there is value for money the children in many of these placements have complex needs and present very challenging behaviour. In undertaking this exercise we will not compromise the safety or wellbeing of children As referenced above, the number of external residential placements has risen since Quarter 1, accounting for the increased projected overspend.
- 5.11.3 The below table shows the budgets and projections for the different placement types, and how this compares to other periods overall, with detailed information in Appendix 1. Details of new Adoption, Special Guardianship and Care Arrrangement Orders can be found in Appendix 2.

December 2019 Projection	Budget				Current	Projection	
Placement Type	Average	Av Unit Cost	Budget	Average Predicted No.s		Estimated Outturn	Budget Pressure
	Nos	£	£	Nos	£	£	£
External Residential	11.95	207,593	2,479,900	26.99	1 96,085	5,292,334	2,812,434
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	40.45	49,575	2,005,400	36.24	49,601	1,797,505	-207,895
In-House Fostercare	238.96	24,092	5,757,100	247.25	25,615	6,333,267	576,167
Adoption	54.00	9,009	486,500	52.58	9,145	480,898	-5,602
Residence Orders	19.80	5,071	100,400	11.17	5,250	58,628	-41,772
Special Guardianship	146.01	5,695	831,500	143.00	5,634	805,629	-25,871
TOTAL	513.50	22,708	11,660,800	517.23	28,553	14,768,262	3,107,462
2019/20 Day 1 Projection	514.04	22,899	11,771,000	534.25	25,650	13,703,270	1,932,270
2018/19 Outturn	425.35	20,250	8,613,100	523.28	26,666	13,953,722	5,340,622
2017/18 Outturn	408.60	20,386	8,329,750	501.33	23,722	11,892,530	3,562,780

The figures in the above table are subject to rounding and may not calculate exactly

Numbers for Adoption, Residence Orders and Special Guardianship only reflect those children for whom we pay financial support.



- 5.11.4 Unaccompanied Minor (UAM) costs are currently forecasting an underspend of £165,000. A £382,000 underspend is projected against under 18 UAM placement costs as all the under 18 UAM grant is shown there. However the grant also covers support costs, which are shown within staffing. This was not previously budgeted for as notification of the grant increase was given in May 2019. There remains a pressure on the UAM care leavers budget of £217,000, as the grant does not cover the full placement costs. The Home Office are currently reviewing their funding arrangements for UAM care leavers.
- 5.11.5 At the end of December 2019 there were 111 under 18 Unaccompanied Minor (UAM) placements compared with 69 at the end of December 2017. With the growth of under 18 UAM placements the pressure is now beginning to increase in the UAM care leavers budget as they become 18.
- 5.11.6 The adoption service is currently forecasting an overspend of £196,000. This is due to the budget being reduced in anticipation of £50,000 savings for the introduction of the regional adoption agency, which have yet to be realised, and also timing issues of inter-agency placements being made beforehand.
 - The Fostering Support and Supervision team has staffing pressure of £108,000 forecast which is due to experienced staff being in post where the costs are greater than the budget.
- 5.11.7 **Commissioning & Performance** (on budget): This is a newly formed service area encompassing the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership which is forecast to be on budget.
- 5.11.8 **Safeguarding & Monitoring** (£176,000 forecast over spend): Staffing forecasts are showing an overall overspend of £172,000 due to staffing pressures within the Service Quality Team and part year costs of the Children's Disability Team manager post and redundancy costs.
- 5.11.9 The service have had to employ one more independent reviewing officer in order to meet statutory duties for Looked After Children, and the previous staffing levels could not fulfil this (there has been an increase of 108 Looked After Children since September 2017 to September 2019).
- 5.11.10 **Support Activities** (£130,000 forecast overspend): There is a forecast overspend of £95,000 on legal fees. This is largely a result of HM Courts and Tribunal Services identifying a backlog of payments due to them of which £58,000 related to prior financial years.
- 5.11.11 Recruitment and retention payments to Social Workers are £17,000 in excess of budget provision while software costs across the service have created an overspend of £15,000.
- 5.11.12 **Edge of Care Services** (£14,000 forecast overspend): The service is facing a £50,000 pressure as it is funding the reunification work, which improves the outcomes of the children and young people, and reduces our



Looked After Children numbers and costs, which are reported under the Looked After Children section. This is largely offset by a vacant post within the Edge of Care team (Battenburg) (£14,000) and an underspend on remand strategy (£26,000).

5.11 By the end of the financial year, the Troubled Families Programme is expecting a carry forward. Currently 70% payment by results is projected which would result in a carry forward of £971,000. In September 2019 it was announced that Troubled Families would continue for another year and a more detailed announcement in January 2020 confirmed sufficient funding to continue to operate the troubled families programme in full for a further year.

6 Capital

6.1 Shown below is the approved capital programme as at the end of September and payments made to date. Funding for all schemes was approved by Council on 12 February 2019, further approvals were granted to provide a Capital Grant regarding housing for a looked after child and an increase in funding due to the necessary delay to the case management implementation. Funding for both projects has been identified through transfers from underspent schemes, use of reserves and corporate contingency.

Scheme	Approve d funding previous quarter	Approved adjustment s	Current approve d funding	Actual expenditur e to December 2019	Forecast spend
	£	£	£	£	£
Adaptions to Foster carer properties	195,000		195,000	108,300	184,800
Capital Grant - Housing for Looked After Child	200,000		200,000	210,200	210,200
Children's Case Management software replacement	1,907,00 0	800,000	2,707,00 0	1,566,600	2,707,00 0
Tangier Road Children's Home	495,000		495,000	506,000	495,000
Beechside Children's Home	55,000		55,000	53,700	55,000
E C Roberts - Refurbishment Loan	250,000		250,000	7,200	250,000
Enable and Improve Mobile Working	191,000		191,000	0	191,000
Total	3,293,00 0	800,000	4,093,00 0	2,452,000	4,093,00 0



- 6.2 Adaptations to Foster Carer properties relates to capital grants that assist in delivering foster placements. Each proposal is subject to a separate financial appraisal and approval arrangement. There has been one payment of £13,750 during the current financial year. A further request is currently progressing and it is anticipated that the grant will be fully spent by the end of the financial year
- 6.3 As mentioned in Quarter 1 report a grant was approved to provide suitable housing for a disabled looked after child. The budget is forecast to overspend due to the complex legal arrangement attached to the grant and it is proposed to cover these costs through transferring funding from the Adaptions to Foster Carer Properties scheme.
- 6.4 The supplier of the current Children's Case Management system has indicated their intention to cease supporting the system from 2020. Work is underway to implement a replacement system, this has been delayed until Spring 2020 to ensure effective and complete migration of case management data, the additional costs of the delay have been identified and funded. The cost of the implementation is expected to be within the revised budget allocation.
- 6.5 The Tangier Road Children's Home works have been completed, following a challenge to the level of fees charged to the project, the project is expected to be completed within the available budget, however we are expecting some final transactions outstanding at the end of December.
- 6.6 The Beechside Children's Home had been identified as requiring some specific renovation works to comply with regulations and standards. These works have now been completed within the budget availability, with some final payments outstanding at the end of December.
- 6.7 The Enable and Improve Mobile Working Scheme was approved in the capital programme in February 2019, but was published in the wrong portfolio this has now been corrected. No expenditure is expected on this scheme in 2019-20, as the project is expected to be considered in 2020-21 due to the delay in Mosaic implementation.

7 Summary

- 7.1 The portfolio revenue budget is currently overspending, which can largely be attributed to placement costs as described in Section 5 of this report.
- 7.2 Whilst spending in Children's Social Care is outside of the allocated budget in Portsmouth, we are not considered a high spending service when benchmarked against comparators. The Children and Families Department has begun implementation of the 'Stronger Futures Phase Two' strategy to enable the service to achieve financial sustainability over the 2019 2023 period, which is closely overseen by the Director of Children, Families and Education. The strategy has been externally scrutinised by external consultants from Peopletoo who have endorsed that the strategy is fit for purpose.



8 Integrated impact assessment

8.1 An integrated impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a positive or negative impact on communities and safety, regeneration and culture, environment and public space or equality and diversity.

9 Legal comments

9.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations set out in paragraphs 3.1.1 to 3.1.4 of this report.

10 Director of Finance comments

10.1 Financial comments are contained within the body of the report.

Chris Ward, Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The information upon which this report has been based has been drawn from a variety of sources; however much of the information used is held in budget files prepared by the Children and Education Finance Team. Please contact Angela Mann, Finance Manager, if required.

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by the Cabinet on

Signed by: Cabinet Member



Appendix 1

Historical and Current LAC Placement Information

December 2018 Projection		Budget		Current Projection			
Placement Type	Average	Av Unit Cost	Budget	Average Predicted No.s	Av Unit Cost	Estimated Outturn	Budget Pressure
	Nos	£	£	Nos	£	£	£
External Residential	9.02	137,151	1,237,100	21.55	198,446	4,276,514	3,039,414
Semi Residential	0	0	0	3.22	34,998	112,694	112,694
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	36.62	39,379	1,442,000	40.27	49,682	2,000,678	558,678
In-House Fostercare	207.10	23,253	4,815,600	241.08	24,263	5,849,444	1,033,844
Adoption	41.81	8,371	350,000	58.17	8,768	510,003	160,003
Residence Orders	37.24	4,834	180,000	13.33	5,026	67,014	-112,986
Special Guardianship	93.56	6,289	588,400	148.67	5,624	836,061	247,661
TOTAL			8,613,100			13,652,408	5,039,308

March 2019 Outturn		Budget			Curre	nt Projection		
Placement Type	Average	Av Unit Cost	it Budget FTE 2018/19		Av Unit Cost Final Outturn		Budget Pressure	
	Nos	£	£	Nos	£	£	£	
External Residential	9.02	137,151	1,237,100	25.79	183,415	4,729,486	3,492,386	
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	36.62	39,379	1,442,000	40.07	49,575	1,986,669	544,669	
In-House Fostercare	207.10	23,253	4,815,600	242.25	24,092	5,836,264	1,020,664	
Adoption	41.81	8,371	350,000	55.50	9,009	500,010	150,010	
Residence Orders	37.24	4,834	180,000	12.75	5,071	64,653	-115,347	
Special Guardianship	93.56	6,289	588,400	146.92	5,695	836,641	248,241	
TOTAL			8,613,100			13,953,722	5,340,622	

April 2019 Day 1 Projection	Budget			Current Projection			
Placement Type	Average Av Unit Cost Bu		Budget	Average Predicted No.s	Av Unit Cost	Estimated Outturn	Budget Pressure
	Nos	£	£	Nos	£	£	£
External Residential	12.48	207,593	2,590,100	23.00	1 83,649	4,223,930	1,633,830
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	40.45	49,575	2,005,400	45.25	46,733	2,114,668	109,268
In-House Fostercare	238.96	24,092	5,757,100	254.00	23,567	5,985,905	228,805
Adoption	54.00	9,009	486,500	54.00	9,009	486,496	-4
Residence Orders	19.80	5,071	100,400	12.00	5,071	60,850	-39,550
Special Guardianship	146.01	5,695	831,500	146.00	5,695	831,421	-79
TOTAL	514.04	22,899	11,771,000	534.25	25,650	13,703,270	1,932,270



June 2019 Projection	Budget				Current	Projection	
Placement Type	Average	Av Unit Cost	Budget	Average Predicted No.s	Av Unit Cost	Estimated Outturn	Budget Pressure
	Nos	£	£	Nos	£	£	£
External Residential	12.48	207,593	2,590,100	20.80	1 97,089	4,099,558	1,509,458
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	40.45	49,575	2,005,400	34.82	47,841	1,665,932	-339,468
In-House Fostercare	238.96	24,092	5,757,100	250.83	24,022	6,025,519	268,419
Adoption	54.00	9,009	486,500	54.25	9,100	493,667	7,167
Residence Orders	19.80	5,071	100,400	12.00	5,097	61,163	-39,237
Special Guardianship	146.01	5,695	831,500	146.25	5,721	836,631	5,131
TOTAL	514.04	22,899	11,771,000	518.95	25,402	13,182,471	1,411,471

September 2019 Projection	Budget				Current	Projection	•
Placement Type	Average	Av Unit Cost	Budget	Average Predicted No.s	Av Unit Cost	Estimated Outturn	Budget Pressure
	Nos	£	£	Nos	£	£	£
External Residential	12.48	207,593	2,590,100	24.74	183,941	4,550,706	1,960,606
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	40.45	49,575	2,005,400	32.66	48,002	1,567,760	-437,640
In-House Fostercare	238.96	24,092	5,757,100	256.25	24,040	6,160,187	403,087
Adoption	54.00	9,009	486,500	52.67	9,053	476,816	-9,684
Residence Orders	19.80	5,071	100,400	11.42	5,198	59,349	-41,051
Special Guardianship	146.01	5,695	831,500	144.67	5,720	827,457	-4,043
TOTAL	514.04	22,899	11,771,000	522.40	26,115	13,642,276	1,871,276

December 2019 Projection		Bud	get	Current Projection			
Placement Type	Average	verage Rudget Predicted		Predicted Cost		Estimated Outturn	Budget Pressure
	Nos	£	£	Nos	£	£	£
External Residential	11.95	207,593	2,479,900	26.99	196,085	5,292,334	2,812,434
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	40.45	49,575	2,005,400	36.24	49,601	1,797,505	-207,895
In-House Fostercare	238.96	24,092	5,757,100	247.25	25,615	6,333,267	576,167
Adoption	54.00	9,009	486,500	52.58	9,145	480,898	-5,602
Residence Orders	19.80	5,071	100,400	11.17	5,250	58,628	-41,772
Special Guardianship	146.01	5,695	831,500	143.00	5,634	805,629	-25,871
TOTAL	513.50	22,708	11,660,800	517.23	28,553	14,768,262	3,107,462



Appendix 2

Numbers of Adoption Orders, Special Guardianship Orders and Child Arrangement Orders

Quarter 3			
	Adoption Orders	Special Guardianship Orders (previously LAC)	Child Arrangement Orders (previously LAC)
Quarter 3 2019/20	8	3	3
Quarter 3 2018/19	9	2	4
2019/20 to end of Quarter 3	20	10	5
Total 2018/19	15	10	10