

For general release

REPORT TO:	Scrutiny Children and Young People Sub-Committee 20 April 2021
SUBJECT:	Service impact and budget update
LEAD OFFICER:	Debbie Jones, Executive Director, Children, Families & Education
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Debbie Jones, Executive Director, Children, Families & Education

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

The plans and recommendations in this report focus on ensuring that all Croydon's children live a happy, healthy life, free from harm and that they have every opportunity to thrive and become fulfilled adults.

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item forms part of the sub-committee's work programme.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	An overview of the staff changes, service impact and response to the budget reductions proposed under the Croydon Renewal Plan

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out progress in taking forward the Children's Delivery Plan 2021-22 and an overview of staff changes and service developments.

2. Children's Delivery Plan

- 2.1 As the Croydon Renewal Plan was being finalised in November 2020 work commenced to develop a Children, Families and Education delivery plan to set out the approach to reviewing how children's social care and education is delivered in Croydon, to reduce the cost of services and work within the

council's available resources. The delivery plan will help the council achieve the overall spending reductions required, and put children's services in Croydon on a sustainable financial footing for the future. The CFE delivery plan is included at appendix 1.

- 2.2 For those savings projects that are more complex or across more than one financial year detailed plans have been worked up by the project managers to set out the actions and accountabilities required to deliver the savings. Progress against these plans is reported fortnightly to the corporate programme management office (PMO) with a score for completion and delivery assurance. The PMO compiles the regular reports for the Executive Leadership Team, cabinet and through the Improvement and Assurance Panel for MHCLG.
- 2.3 At departmental level a schedule is in place to review the plans in more detail at the weekly Departmental Leadership Team meeting. Each will be scrutinised on a nine-weekly cycle.
- 2.4 Detailed action plans have been developed for the following savings projects:
 1. Reconfiguration of early help services
 2. Reconfiguration of adolescent services
 3. Review children with disabilities care packages
 4. Reduction in the numbers of children in care
 5. Review support for young people where Appeal Rights Exhausted
 6. Improve practice system efficiency
 7. Embed systemic practice model
 8. Review children's centres delivery model
 9. Review Family Group Conference service
- 2.5 In addition, an action plan is being worked up for the SEND growth, a one-off investment in line with the Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Recovery Plan that aims to inject pace to the deficit recovery through locality-based additional capacity to support inclusion in schools.

3. Service impact

- 3.1 Service reconfigurations needed to deliver the savings are either underway or near completion. These include:
 - Restructuring of the children in care service with proposals to integrate the local and UASC teams and create services for children aged 0-15 and young people aged 16-25
 - Transformation of early help, working across organisational boundaries to develop a revised service model with partners from health, schools and the voluntary sector to transform service delivery through multi-agency working
 - Restructure of the adolescent service, retaining specialist expertise to work with this vulnerable cohort
 - A reduction in the family Group Conference service, following consultation, to retain co-ordination capacity in the locality social work teams
 - Consultation on delivery models for children's centres will commence in May 2021.

4. Staffing impact

- 4.1 The impact of leadership changes in the department alongside the council's financial challenge is likely to impact on staff morale, retention and recruitment. The confirmation of secure leadership at Executive Director and Director level for the next crucial year has brought stability to the departmental leadership.
- 4.2 Social care vacancy rates are being carefully monitored, weekly at the Departmental Leadership Team and monthly at the Children's Continuous Improvement Board.
- 4.3 Vacancy rates have begun to rise and are currently at 27%. Recruiting both permanent and agency staff is a challenge in the social work with families and Croydon supporting families (assessment) services. The Director Early Help & Children's Social care has established a monthly recruitment group to add drive and pace to a refreshed recruitment strategy for social workers.
- 4.4 There are a number of vacancies in the SEND team, coupled with the recruitment needed to deliver the growth projects. This will also need to be carefully monitored.

CONTACT OFFICER: Debbie Jones
Executive Director
Children Families and Education

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

APPENDICES: Appendix 1 CFE Delivery Plan 2021-24