

Children, Families & Education Delivery Plan 2021 - 2024

February 2021

Delivering for Croydon

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Croydon Council faces serious governance, financial and operational challenges. Resolving this crisis requires one of the most significant change programmes in local government. So far, the council has identified £81.5m of savings over the next three years, leaving an ongoing deficit of £78.7m.
- 1.2. The service transformation that lifted children's services from an inadequate Ofsted rating to good in March 2020 was underpinned by significant investment, although the children in care and care leavers services were rated as requires improvement with key recommendations to be fulfilled.
- 1.3. Whilst some of the additional investment has been removed, children's services are still higher cost compared to other good council services. We must now review how we deliver children's social care and education in Croydon to reduce the cost of services and work within the council's available resources. This plan will help the council achieve the overall spending reduction required and put children's services in Croydon on a sustainable financial footing.
- 1.4. The overall objective is to reduce Croydon's expenditure to the London average or below for children's social care services by March 2024. At the same time we must continue to fulfil our statutory responsibilities and sustain the improvements made in the quality and impact of services on outcomes for children and families. The plan aligns to the following Croydon Renewal Plan priorities:
 - We will live within our means, balance the books and provide value for money for our residents.
 - We will focus on providing the best quality core service we can afford. First and foremost, providing social care services that keep our most vulnerable residents safe and healthy.
- 1.5. The key high cost drivers in children's services are:
 - More children in care compared to London and statistical neighbours;
 - More unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and care leavers compared to all other councils;
 - Significant investment in additional staff to reduce caseloads and increase management oversight across all care services;
 - Insufficient or outdated commissioning frameworks for placements and packages of care for children in care and with disabilities.
- 1.6. The location of the Home Office Asylum Intake Unit (AIU) at Lunar House effectively makes Croydon a national point of entry for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). Croydon has accepted responsibility for UASC and taken into the council's care for a number of years. This has resulted in a disproportionate number in Croydon compared to other councils, and a very high proportion of care leavers who were previously unaccompanied children. Given the council's serious financial position this expectation cannot continue, and negotiations are advanced with the Home Office, Department for Education and MHCLG to reach a fair solution for the borough.

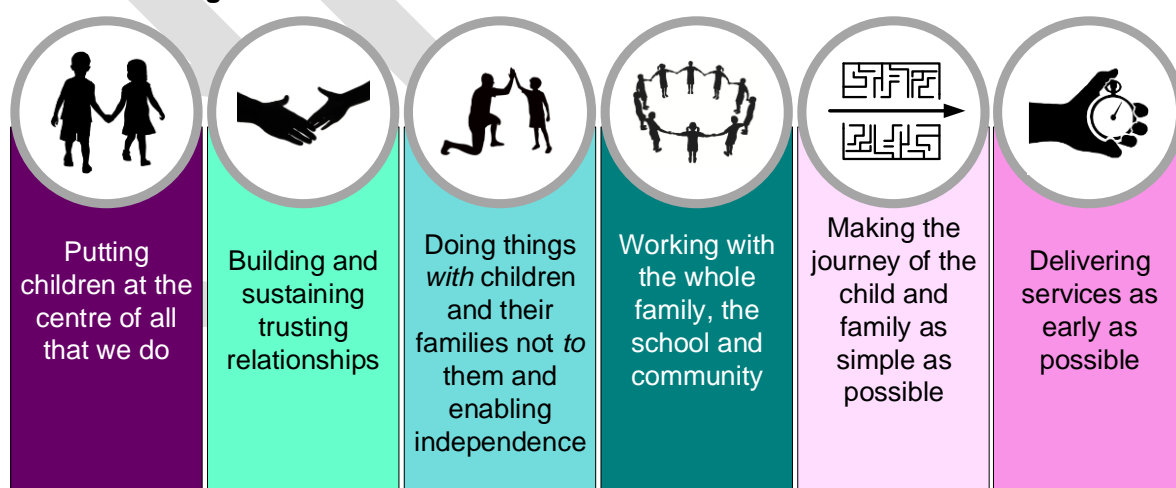
1.7. The key deliverables for this plan are:

- Re-base placement budgets to address demographic and historic pressures in 2020-21, with no further growth required;
- Reduce the numbers of local children in care to a target of 430 from 484 on the 31st January 2021 and improve value for money to reduce spend to the London average or below by 2024;
- Increase the number of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) educated in the borough; 1608 in borough and 544 out of borough;
- 5% budget savings each year on placement and care package costs for children with disabilities over 2021-24, challenged against benchmarking to London or national average;
- Improve the efficiency of the practice system whilst sustaining the effectiveness.

1.8. This delivery plan is an amalgamation of the detailed plans for savings activities which are being project managed by Heads of Services across the Children, Families and Education department. This is to ensure delivery is rooted in the operational changes needed to reduce the cost of services, whilst ensuring the changes are linked into the broader organisational renewal.

2. KEY PRINCIPLES

2.1. The changes across education and children’s social care aim to sustain the service offer to children, families and schools at reduced cost, whilst continuing to meet statutory responsibilities. We will retain our commitment to the following values:



2.2. Our work to deliver the savings set out in this delivery plan will be underpinned by our commitment to the following principles:

- We will support families to keep children and young people safely at home, and make sound decisions to bring children into our care when we need to;

- We will develop local provision so more children with SEND attend Croydon schools, keeping close to their friends and community and relieving the pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG);
- We will get the best possible value for the Croydon pound for placements and packages of care for children and young people, commissioning for cost and quality;
- We will continuously challenge ourselves to improve efficiency and reduce the cost of services, improving the business systems and processes needed to enable us to understand our spend and accurately benchmark ourselves against others locally, regionally and nationally.

2.3. For the majority of savings projects outlined in this delivery plan we are not proposing to consult residents, as the proposed changes relate to operational delivery using relevant legislative frameworks. Changes to the delivery of children’s centres will require resident consultation which will be embedded in the detailed action plan.

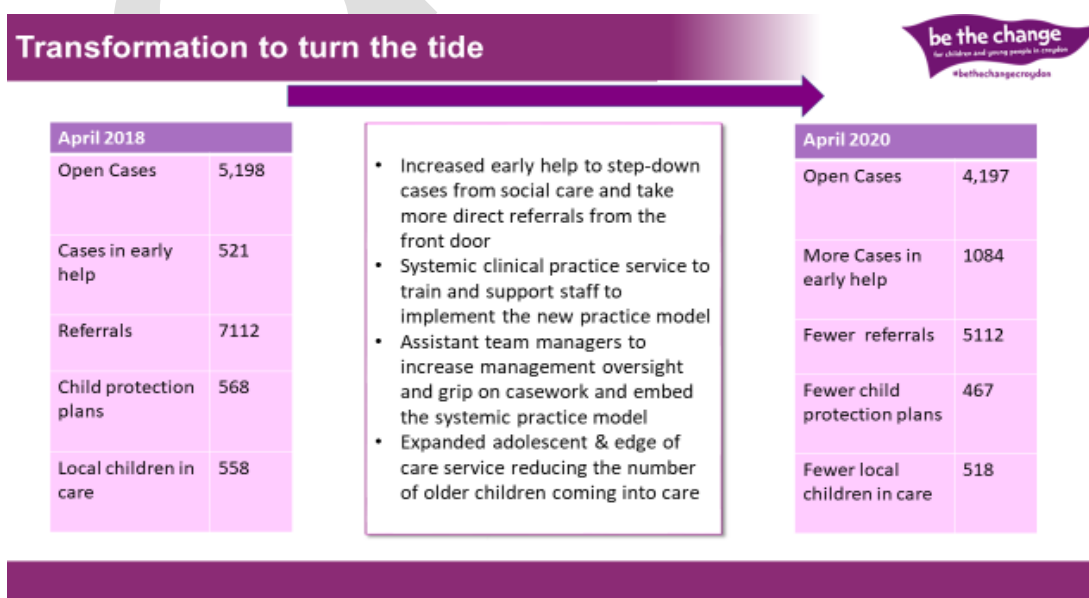
2.4. Equality impact assessments will be used to support decision making.

3. SERVICE TRANSFORMATION

Early Help and Children’s Social Care

3.1. In April 2019 the department set out an ambitious transformation programme, Destination 2020-21, aiming to shift the demand for care services right across early help and children’s social care.

3.2. The overall aim was for children and families to get the right services at the right time, challenging the long-standing high numbers of children on statutory plans and coming into Croydon’s care in a costly, reactive and inefficient care system. Inspectors’ judgements in March 2020 provide clear evidence of the impact of the transformation programme and its essential contribution to the overall ‘good’ judgement achieved. The impact of the transformation can be seen across early help and children’s social care:



- 3.3. The challenge now is to sustain the improvements in the quality and effectiveness of day to day practice, whilst reviewing service delivery to reduce costs. Benchmarking overall spend against London averages at 2019/20 Croydon is a high spender, and tackling this is the delivery plan challenge.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

- 3.4. The 'New Approach to SEN delivery' strategy aims to work with schools to ensure that more of our SEND pupils are educated in mainstream provision in the borough.

| Location | Establishments | No of Pupils | Costs |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| In Croydon | 145 | 1608 | £20,484,571 |
| Out of Croydon | 164 | 544 | £15,818,826 |
| Total | | | £36,303,397 |

Table 1

Inclusion focus – more SEN pupils educated in mainstream schools

- 3.5. Recent work to drill down into EHCPs (Education Health and Care Plans) indicates there is more work to do to improve the quality of plans, and that these are the right response to meet children's needs. Effective school-based interventions that can be quickly targeted to support children's learning will increasingly become a credible alternative to an EHC plan. Reduced caseloads for SEN coordinators will provide the capacity for better quality planning, overseen by skilled locality managers working closely with school. The resulting reduction in EHC plans could result in savings to be reinvested in school-based provision through our inclusion funding model. This model will ensure that the needs of our children and young people continue to be met but through a different approach.

| Average cost per EHCP | £17,031 | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Reduction by % | Number of EHCP's reduced | Potential Savings |
| 10 | 326 | £5,552,106 |
| 20 | 652 | £11,104,212 |
| 30 | 978 | £16,656,318 |
| 40 | 1304 | £22,208,424 |
| 50 | 1630 | £27,760,530 |

Table 2

- 3.6. School and college places are commissioned by the council and funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant high needs block. As the RIPI noted there is significant pressure on this budget.
- 3.7. One-off investment in 2021-22 will enable us to:
- Offer locality-based support for clusters of mainstream schools to develop their curriculum offer for children with SEND
 - Maintain the Local Offer to provide up to date, local information for parents and carers, a statutory duty for the council

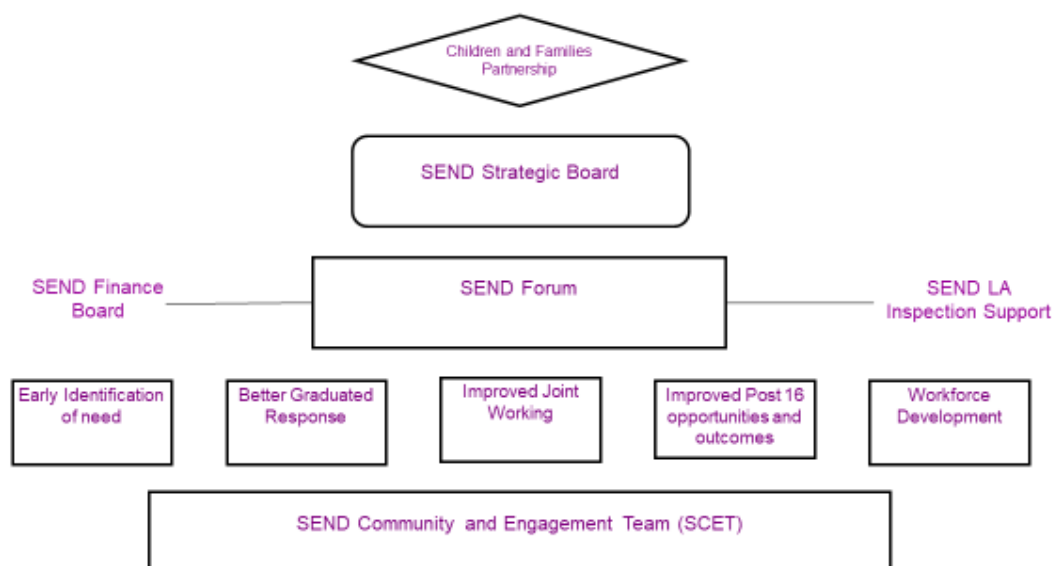
- Increase capacity to ensure EHC plans and reviewed annually, to ensure provision continues to meet children’s needs

3.8. In summary, the aim is to utilise the growth to ensure that the Council is meeting its statutory duties and the needs of our pupils;

- Through the delivery of the 0 – 25 SEND strategy
- By a continued focus on securing the best outcome for children and their families
- By injecting pace into how quickly the DSG High Needs deficit can be recovered whilst meeting the needs of our pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

3.9. Our progress on SEND will be monitored and challenged through the governance arrangements set out below.

SEND Strategy Governance Board



Strategic Commissioning

3.11 A Commissioning Plan for CFE was agreed at DLT on 24th November 2020. The plan outlines the strategic context of each of the areas of spend listed below, and details the key commissioning and procurement activity which will be undertaken over the next 24 months. Contractual negotiations on existing contracts or re-procurements to achieve better value for money from the market will be the focus within each category along with effective contract management:

- Children with disabilities
- Children social care – placement sufficiency
- Care leavers accommodation
- Best start early help – children’s centres
- SEND and Education
- Joint funding

4. KEY ISSUES

UASC & Care Leavers

- 4.1. The location of the Home Office Asylum Intake Unit (AIU) at Lunar House effectively makes Croydon a national point of entry for asylum seekers including families and UASC. The AIU serves a national and regional role in relation to unaccompanied children arriving to claim asylum in the United Kingdom. For many years children under 16 have become the responsibility of Croydon, with over-16s transferring out through the pan-London rota. In effect, Croydon Council is the corporate parent for UASC aged under 16 arriving at the AIU on behalf of the nation. The port authorities of Kent and Portsmouth found themselves in a similar situation over the summer of 2020; however this has been the position in Croydon for many years.
- 4.2. The National Transfer Scheme is a voluntary arrangements whereby local authorities commit to accommodating UASC up to 0.07% of their child population. In Croydon, this should equate to 66 children. As at December 2020 there were 228 UASC in Croydon's care, over three times the NTS rate. It is clear that the voluntary NTS is not working despite many discussions at local and national level. A recent consultation by the Home Office has not led to a firm conclusion or commitment to implement the agreement nationwide.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children



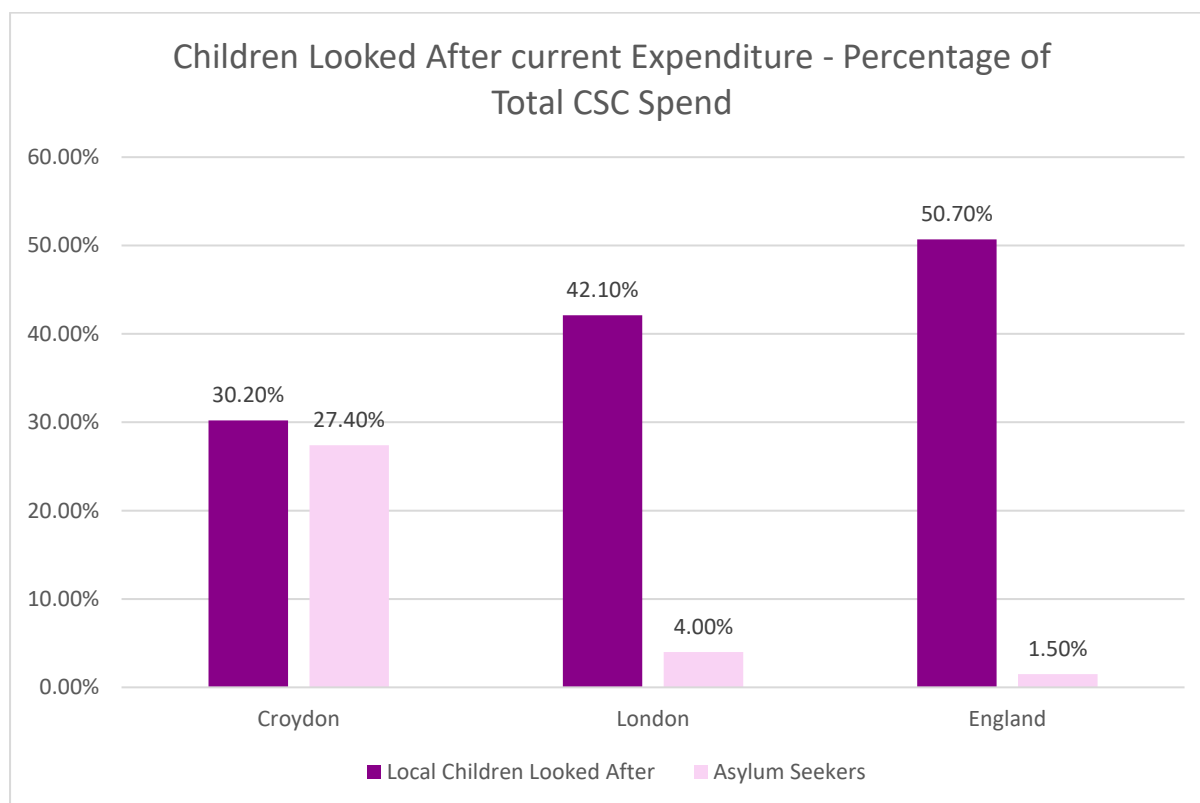
| Local Authority | Population of 0-17 year olds ONS mid-2019 estimate | Unaccompanied asylum seeking children looked after at 31 March 2019-20 | % of 0-17 population who are UASC | Government 0.07% quota | Number of UASC +/- Government 0.07% quota |
|----------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Croydon | 94,931 | 270 | 0.28% | 66 | 204 |
| Portsmouth | 43,756 | 99 | 0.23% | 31 | 68 |
| Westminster | 48,791 | 89 | 0.18% | 34 | 55 |
| Islington | 42,424 | 67 | 0.16% | 30 | 37 |
| Solihull | 47,549 | 69 | 0.15% | 33 | 36 |
| Hammersmith & Fulham | 37,032 | 51 | 0.14% | 26 | 25 |
| Hillingdon | 74,077 | 102 | 0.14% | 52 | 50 |
| Liverpool | 96,052 | 130 | 0.14% | 67 | 63 |
| Kent | 343,839 | 426 | 0.12% | 241 | 185 |
| Camden | 52,407 | 52 | 0.10% | 37 | 15 |
| Manchester | 122,914 | 115 | 0.09% | 86 | 29 |
| Waltham Forest | 66,757 | 57 | 0.09% | 47 | 10 |
| Lambeth | 62,085 | 52 | 0.08% | 43 | 9 |
| Newham | 86,068 | 72 | 0.08% | 60 | 12 |
| Haringey | 59,847 | 47 | 0.08% | 42 | 5 |
| Brent | 77,687 | 61 | 0.08% | 54 | 7 |
| Enfield | 84,509 | 64 | 0.08% | 59 | 5 |

Source: DfE LAC statistics 2019/20 ONS Mid Year Estimates

Table 3

- 4.3. If the headline data on the total number of children in care and the overall spend is considered, Croydon is high in both areas by some distance compared to London averages, as the Rapid Review report points out. However, this headline data masks the high number of UASC in Croydon's care, and the high proportion of care leavers aged 18-25 who were previously UASC. Of the latter, in December 2020, 429 of Croydon's 765 care leavers were formerly UASC or 56% of the total care leaving population.

- 4.4. Croydon's 2020-21 forecast spend on UASC as a proportion of overall spend on children in care compared to London and England average is almost eight times that of London and eighteen times the England percentage.



Revenue Account Budget (RA) 2020-21: Revenue Account data
Graph 1

- 4.5. A number of meetings with the Home Office, DfE and MHCLG have taken place to agree help and support to secure a solution that addresses the unfair and disproportionate financial burden on Croydon Council and ultimately its residents. This has been underpinned by detailed modelling of the additional costs in 2020-21 and forecast for 2021-24. These costs are summarised below:

| Nature of expenditure | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Staffing | 4,213 | 4,279 | 4,680 | 4,925 |
| Placements | 17,979 | 15,836 | 16,701 | 17,227 |
| Running Costs | 3,887 | 2,566 | 3,112 | 3,209 |
| Home Office reimbursement | -18,604 | -17,285 | -18,110 | -18,611 |
| Net cost | 7,475 | 5,397 | 6,384 | 6,749 |
| Cumulative cost over 2020/24 | 7,475 | 12,872 | 19,256 | 26,005 |
| Cumulative cost over 2021/24 | | 5,397 | 11,781 | 18,530 |

Table 4

- 4.6. Our modelling indicates that if Croydon stopped accepting UASC, the numbers would not reduce to 0.07% of the child population until 2031-32. Until that time Croydon is accommodating children at an additional annual cost to the taxpayer of between £5.4 - £7.5m. There are additional 'opportunity costs' that are not captured, for example the increased use of more expensive independent fostering agencies for placement because of the high numbers of children in care including UASC.

4.7. A workshop involving finance and service leads from Croydon together with representatives from central government departments was held on 28th January 2021 to press the case for financial support. Croydon's position is unique, with the location of the AIU, the historical impact, and the council's current financial situation. The negotiations are ongoing at this time.

Changes in Leadership

4.8. Children's services improved dramatically after the appointment in early 2019 of a skilled and experienced Executive Director for Children, Families and Education and a new Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care, as well as other key senior managers.

4.9. Unfortunately both directors left the organisation within a very short period of time. Experienced interim appointments have prevented any loss in continuity of leadership and there is strong management oversight, however the impact on staff confidence, morale and turnover is being closely monitored.

Retaining and Recruiting Staff

4.10. In September 2018 over 40% of social workers were agency staff. This had reduced to 15% by January 2021. Key actions to tackle this issue included the establishment of the Social Work Academy and a renewed partnership with Frontline to 'grow our own' permanent staff, the systemic practice model backed with an exciting learning and development offer for staff at levels, welcome and retention payments, and overseas recruitment.

4.11. The service, however, cannot be complacent and as set out above the turnover of permanent staff is being closely monitored, with targeted strategies to recruit and retain staff in a competitive local market being refreshed. Changes of social worker make forming effective relationship with children and families more difficult, and this has a vast impact on the quality of front line work. In addition, each locum social worker costs over £20,000 more per annum compared to a permanent member of staff, so there is a strong a financial imperative to retain, attract and recruit good quality permanent staff.

External Review and Report Recommendations

| Report in Public Interest – Key Points (Oct 20) | MHCLG Rapid Review – Key Points (Nov 20) |
|---|--|
| <p>Recommendation 1A The Executive Director Children Families and Education needs to address the underlying causes of social care overspends in children's social care and take effective action to manage both the demand and the resulting cost pressures.</p> | <p>Recommendation i) The Council should undertake a review within 6 months of the implementation of its integrated social care IT systems (ControCC and Liquid Logic) intended to link activity to Finance.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 5 The GPAC should receive reports on the actions being taken to address the DSG deficit and challenge whether sufficient progress is being made.</p> | <p>(Section 8.1, table section 1) - 2020/21 budget was unrealistic. Costs were probably understated in Adults and Children's giving rise to overspends in year. The level of savings budgeted for were very high and impacted on by Covid</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 6 The Executive Director Children, Families and Education needs to review the services provided to UASC and to identify</p> | <p>(Section 9.1) 1 Generally speaking, Croydon's services appear to perform reasonably well. Detailed performance monitoring of services has suffered with</p> |

| |
|---|
| options to meet their needs within the grant funding provided by the Home Office. |
| Recommendation 7 The Executive Director Children, Families and Education needs to identify the capacity threshold for the numbers of UASC that it has the capacity to deliver safe UASC services to. |

Table 5

| |
|--|
| the disruption caused by the pandemic, but this is the case in many Local Authorities. |
| (Section 9.2) After receiving a very negative Ofsted report on Children’s services in 2017 (judged “inadequate”), the most recent Ofsted report in at the beginning of 2020 recorded dramatic improvements over the 3 years and the service is now rated as “good”. However, spend in Children’s Services is (per capita) the highest in London, by some distance. The number of Children Looked After in Croydon is the highest in the capital, by some distance. Recent figures showed Croydon to have one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in London. |
| (Section 9.4) Both of these key services have struggled to deliver services within budget, failing to make target savings and recording significant overspends, year after year. |

Table 6

- 4.12. Progress against the RIPI action plan is monitored as part of the Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan, and this delivery plan ensures that the agreed actions are gripped and taken forward at pace.
- 4.13. The delivery plan will be adjusted as the response to the recently received Rapid Review report is developed and agreed.

5. CURRENT BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

5.1. The overall objective is to reduce expenditure for children’s social care services to the London average or below by March 2024. Benchmarking against London for 2019-20 the gap in spend is £11.192m. This is the target for the MTFs delivered through the projects detailed in this delivery plan. Annual adjustment will re-profile the target against the updated London average outturn, to sustain the challenge.

5.2. The detailed comparison is as follows: **this table is being refreshed**

| Children’s Social Care Service 2019 - 20 | LBC | London Ave | Difference |
|---|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Sure start children's centres and early years | 2,941 | 3,904 | - 963 |
| Children Looked After | 37,251 | 34,021 | 3,230 |
| Other children's and families services | 4,828 | 3,102 | 1,726 |
| Family Support Services | 10,846 | 10,056 | 790 |
| Youth Justice | 1,719 | 2,118 | - 399 |
| Safeguarding children and young people’s services | 25,997 | 18,364 | 7,633 |
| Asylum Seekers | 32,780 | 3,597 | 29,184 |
| Services for young people | 2,832 | 3,657 | - 825 |
| TOTAL CHILDREN SOCIAL CARE | 119,194 | 78,818 | 40,375 |
| Asylum Seekers | - 32,780 | - 3,597 | - 29,184 |
| TOTAL CHILDREN SOCIAL CARE (exc AS) | 86,413 | 75,222 | 11,192 |

Table 7

6. YEAR ONE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY PROPOSED SAVINGS

6.1. The following areas of savings and growth are proposed over 2021-24:

| PROPOSAL | 2021/22 (£,000's) | 2022/23 (£,000's) | 2023/24 (£,000's) |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Reconfiguration of Early Help Services | (424) | (185) | - |
| Reconfiguration of Adolescent Services | (1,608) | - | - |
| Review of Children with Disabilities Care Packages | (384) | (384) | (384) |
| Reduction in the numbers of children in care | (794) | (1,654) | (1,385) |
| Review Support for Young People where Appeal Rights Exhausted | (295) | (560) | (142) |
| Improve Practice System Efficiency | (1,065) | (1,450) | (385) |
| Embed Systemic Practice Model | (272) | - | - |
| Release of one off investment / full year effect of savings from 2020/21 | (1,462) | - | - |
| Staffing Review | (1,471) | - | - |
| Review Children's Centres Delivery Model | (660) | (240) | - |
| Reduce Non-Statutory Education Functions | (587) | (221) | - |
| Early Learning Collaboration Contract | (82) | - | - |
| Cease Family Group Conference Service | (203) | - | - |
| Croydon Music & Arts (CMA) | (126) | - | - |
| Children, Families & Education - Efficiencies | (9,433) | (4,694) | (2,296) |
| Children Looked After Placements - fund Demographic and Cost Pressures | 8,211 | 85 | 77 |
| Leaving Care - fund Demographic and Cost Pressures | 2,031 | - | - |
| Asylum Seekers Budget Correction | 220 | - | - |
| Children with Disabilities - fund Demographic and Cost Pressures | 6,477 | - | - |
| Realignment of Budgets where other funding sources have ceased | 1,719 | - | - |
| Realignment of Budgets from 2020/21 | 909 | - | - |
| SEND Strategy - support inclusion and access to local provision | 866 | - | - |
| Children, Families & Education - Growth | 20,433 | 85 | 77 |
| Children, Families & Education - Net | 11,000 | (4,609) | (2,219) |

Table 8

6.2. The main cost drivers for the pressures for children's services are:

- Children in care
- Children with disabilities
- Staffing costs
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

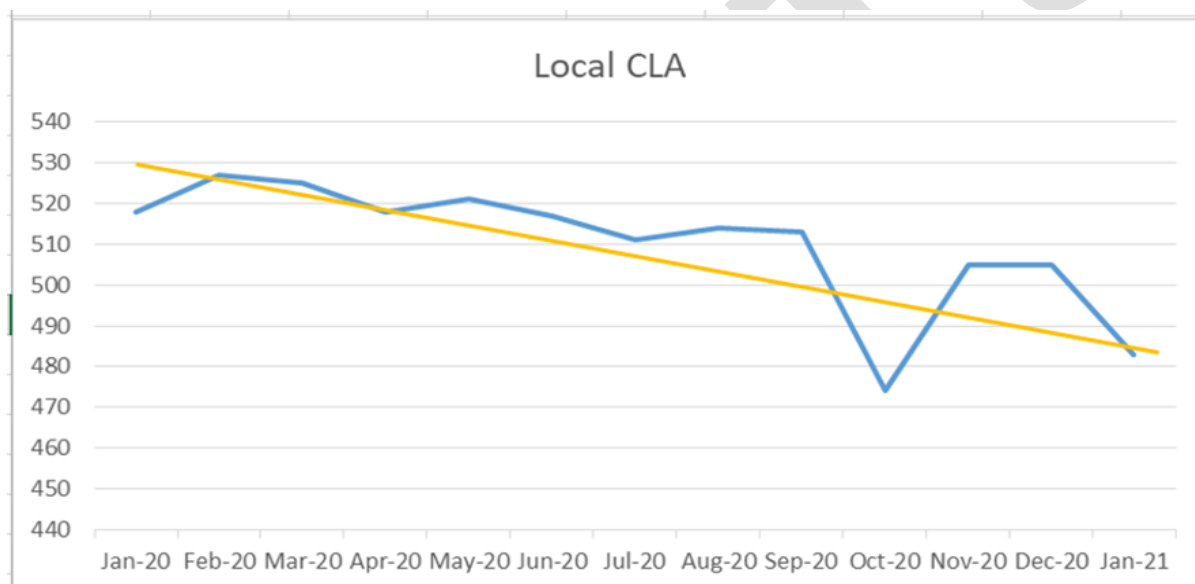
6.3. As detailed above, the numbers of UASC are not controllable under the current arrangements. The negotiations with central government will consider what controls Croydon can put in place to make a step change in the disproportionate financial burden placed on the council. A major focus for the delivery plan is therefore on reducing spend on children in care and those with disabilities.

Children in Care

6.4. Following the inadequate Ofsted judgement in 2017 whole service transformation focused on reducing the demand for statutory services. Actions focused on reducing the number of children in care include:

- Rapidly improved day to day social work practice to reduce the need for statutory interventions across the journey of the child – more cases in early help, fewer cases open to children’s social care, fewer children on child protection plans and a reduction in court proceedings;
- Gatekeeping entry to care through a weekly care panel chaired by the Director to challenge and plan actions to divert children from care;
- A bi-weekly care review panel systematically reviewing children in high cost placements and those with a plan to return home to return children home where safe to do so, and ensure placements continue to meet needs.

6.5. The reduction can be seen in the graph below:



Source: MHCLG Demand Modelling Toolkit V2.0 Oct 2020; CRS Data
Graph 2

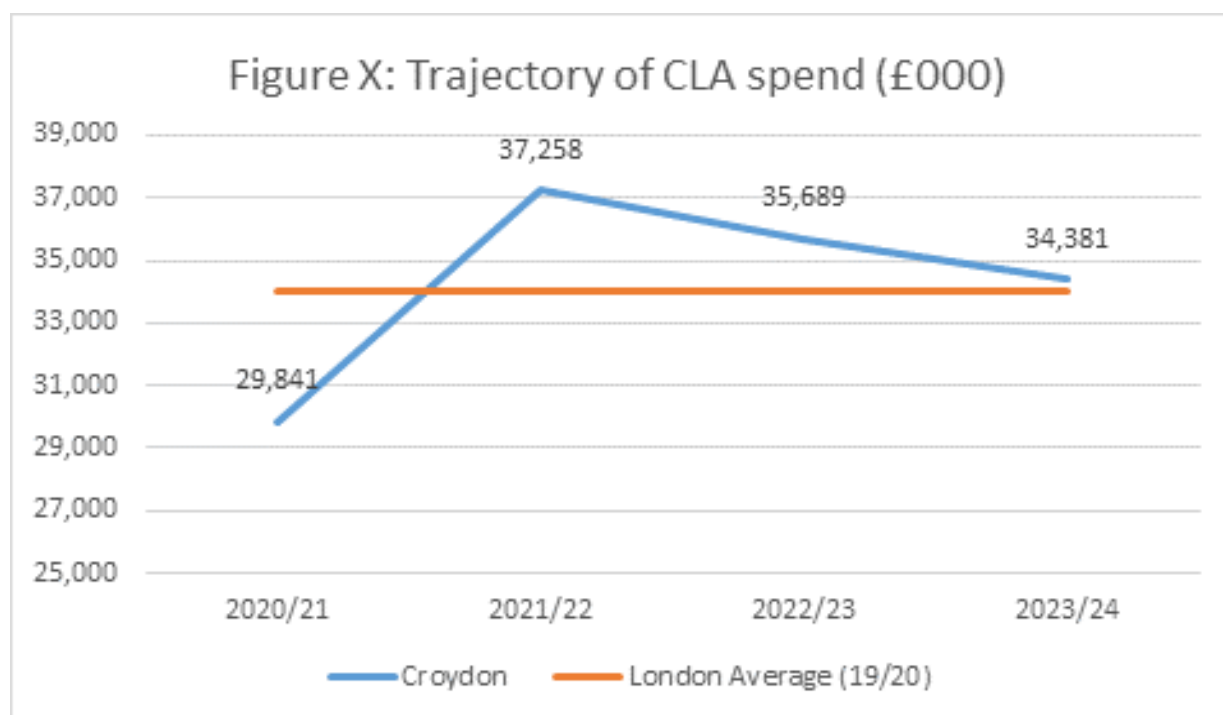
6.6. National and regional benchmarking uses the rate of children in care per 10,000 population. Whilst Croydon’s rate for local children has reduced since 2018 it is still higher statistical neighbours and London averages:

| Local children ex. UASC | 18/19 per 10K | 19/20 per 10K |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Croydon | 58 | 55 |
| Stat neighbours | 54 | 50 |
| London | 43 | 41 |

Table 9

6.7. As at January 2021 the number of local children was 484, the equivalent of 52 per 10,000. The target is to reduce to 430 by 2024, or 46 per 10,000 which whilst slightly above the 2019-20 London average is lower than Croydon has ever been.

6.8. The trajectory of one-off growth and year on year savings set out in the MTFS indicates that the gap to the current London average spend is closable:



Graph 3

- 6.9. To close the gap in the above trajectory the children in care project will have three key areas of focus:
- To continue to reduce the number of children in care by gatekeeping entry to care, diverting from care, and reviewing and reuniting with families where safe to do so;
 - Smarter commissioning and procurement underpinned by a detailed sufficiency benchmarking and financial modelling based on the cohort and population analyses;
 - Overhauled and improved end-to-end business processes and payments including integrated case recording and finance system, and oversight of payments processes.

Strategic Commissioning Plans in relation to Children Looked After

6.10. We are developing an accommodation strategy for children looked after and care leavers, linked to our statutory responsibility to have a Sufficiency Plan. The accommodation strategy, sets out the vision for accommodation for CLA and care leavers in the borough and the financial model on which investment and return for each category of placement is based. The strategy presents a number of commissioning options for foster care, semi-independent accommodation and residential placements for CLA and supported housing options for care leavers.

6.11. For both independent foster care and residential placements, a new regional approved provider panel has been procured on behalf of south London boroughs. This approach has the benefit of creating a much larger pool of approved providers ensuring both high quality and a greater value for money.

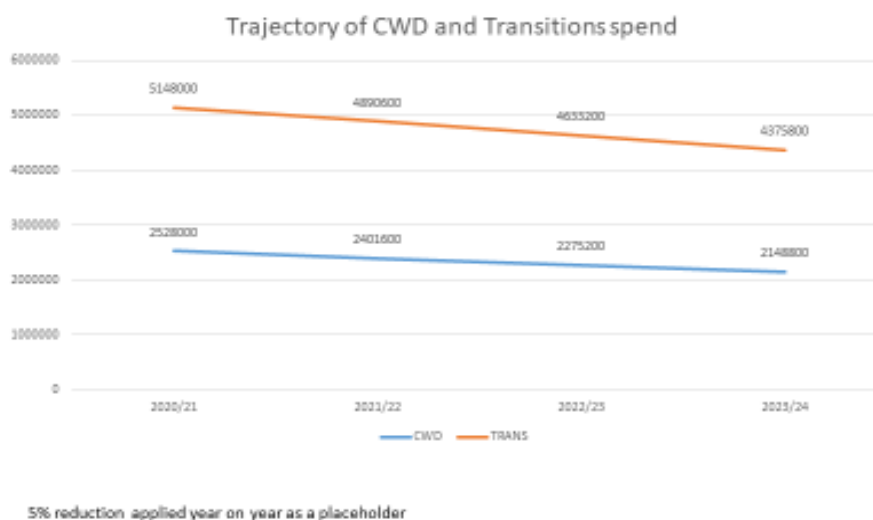
Further work to renegotiate rates with individual fostering agencies has meant that prices secured are in line with the London Care Services framework which is used by most neighbouring boroughs. For residential placements, the approved provider panel has seen average placements costs reduced by 11%. To increase our leverage with the residential market further, plans are in train to commission a 4 bed residential home as a block booking so that we have provision we are working more closely with in terms of accommodating our most complex adolescents, as well as achieving an even more competitive rate.

- 6.12. A new Dynamic Purchasing System for both semi-independent accommodation and supported housing for both our over 16 and care leavers population is underway. This will ensure we are more closely managing this unregulated market and driving down costs. Longer term a new smaller bespoke model for supported housing for care leavers is envisaged to better meet need along with an integrated housing pathway. Longer term a Council-wide focus on sustainable housing solutions for care leavers will need to be taken.

Children with Disabilities and Transitions

- 6.13. The service for children and young people 0-25 has moved departments and had a number of senior managers over the past 2 years. It has historically overspent and in 2019-20 half of the significant outturn variance at year end not forecast in Q3 was attributable to children with disabilities and transitions at around £3.5m. A detailed review revealed a number of systemic issues in recording and reporting spend by the service.
- 6.14. The current Head of Service took over the service in August 2020. Recent analysis has identified a number of key issues that need to be tackled to understand and develop a robust plan to reduce spend and secure better value for money for children and young people, and the council, including:
- Case and financial recording for the transitions service held across three IT systems;
 - Poor systems recording and clunky interfaces across children's and adults systems and services leading to no 'single version of the truth' on commitments and spend;
 - Forensic review of care packages revealed delayed care reviews with children and young people's needs not updated and matched to provision. Significant numbers of over specified packages were identified;
 - Spot purchase of packages and residential placements by social workers with limited management oversight resulting in poor value for money, lack of adherence to financial governance and providers not being paid on time.
- 6.15. The savings trajectory for CWD and transitions is a placeholder based on 5% year on year reduction in the 2019-20 spend for 0-18 and 18-25 services. Reviews of all open cases will provide an accurate picture of the actual spend and potential for savings. The trajectory of saving will be readjusted, supported by DFE finance adviser (see 7.4).

Savings trajectory CWD and transitions



Graph 4

6.16. To address the challenges identified, the key areas of focus include:

- Establishment of a rapid review team led by the Head of Service with a senior finance lead and social workers to scrutinise all open cases by 31 March 2021, and to ensure recording is accurate and included in forecasting for 2020/21;
- Completion of the case review programme, prioritising the highest cost/longest standing packages;
- Working jointly with adult social care to develop and implement a new service model for transitions when it transfers to ASC on 01 April 2021;
- Develop and implement commissioning frameworks for services including short breaks and family support in the pipeline;
- Improved transition planning at 14+ to support the transition to young adulthood, embedded in new 18-25 transitions service model.

Strategic Commissioning Plans in relation to Children with Disabilities

6.17. In line with the CFE Commissioning Plan, a number of commissioning work streams have commenced since August 2020. These include a re-procurement of family support services which act as early intervention services for families where the child or young person has a registered disability. The services are currently being re-procured with a reduced budget.

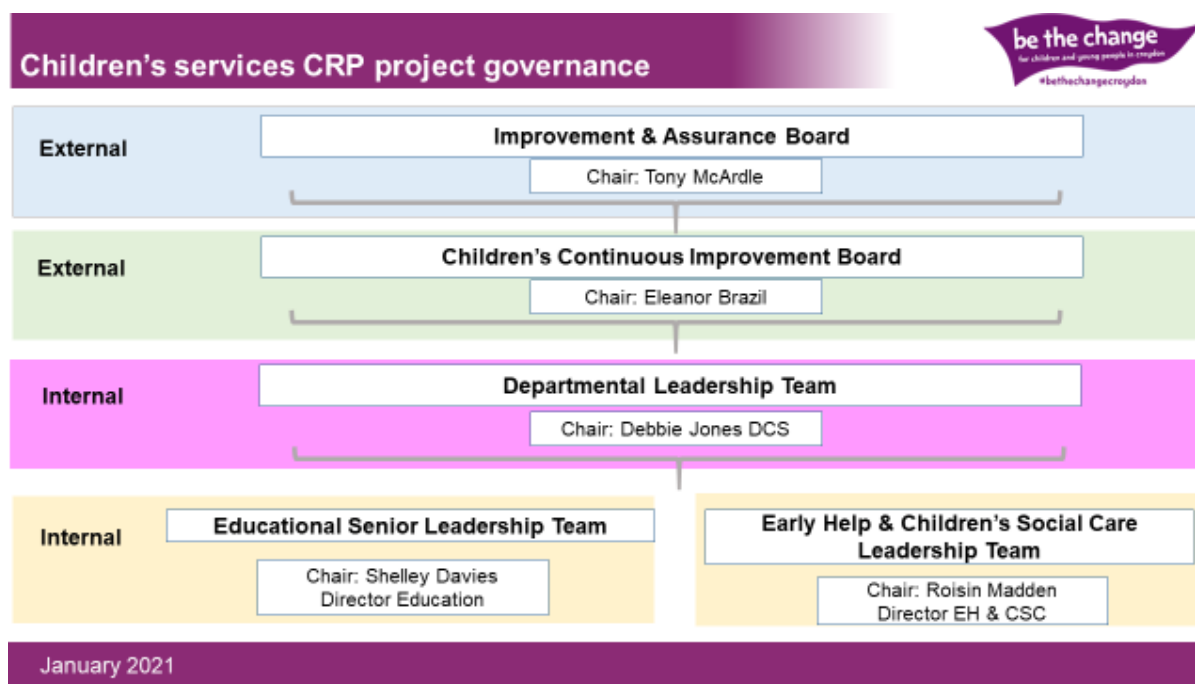
6.18. A review of existing short breaks provision including the Council owned respite home Calleydown is underway to inform future commissioning options and to recommend a more cost effective service model where provision either remains in-house or is procured from the market.

6.19. A new personal care and support framework will be procured from the market in 2021. This will remove the need to spot purchase packages of need and will ensure we are safely commissioning cost effective high quality providers.

Ahead of this framework being launched, negotiation meetings with individual providers have been undertaken since December 2020 to reduce spot purchased hourly rates for support and to ensure that compliance checks are completed on providers. Savings in the region of 10-25% have been achieved to date.

7. ASSURANCE AND GOVERNANCE

- 7.1. The overall governance for this delivery plan includes external and internal challenge and assurance on progress against the MTFS, the impact on outcomes for children and families, and a range of established checks and challenges to spend decisions that are embedded in day to day practice.



- 7.2. The Children, Families and Education Divisional Leadership Team and Children's Continuous Improvement Board will report through the Corporate PMO and to the Croydon Improvement Board.

External Assurance

Children's Continuous Improvement Board (CCIB)

- 7.3. The CCIB was re-established in November 2020 when the scale of the financial challenge for the council became clear. Chaired independently, the board meets monthly to:
- Ensure that the substantial improvements made since 2017 are consolidated and progress is made in areas that still require improvement;
 - Support the implementation of the MTFS and oversee the development of new, more cost effective, ways to ensure effective help and protection is provided for vulnerable children and families, for children in Croydon's care and for care leavers;

- Receive assurance that throughout the service changes risks to outcomes for children and young people are identified and mitigated;
- Receive assurance that front-line practitioners, children and families and partners are being appropriately engaged in progressing the plans for change.

Independent Financial Adviser

7.4. The DfE has agreed to commission an independent children's social care finance specialist to support and challenge the detailed financial analyses and forecasting needed to deliver the MTFs savings, with a specific focus on the main cost drivers of children in care and children with disabilities. The procurement closes on 09 February with an anticipated start date of 22 February 2021 with the following brief:

- Review and challenge the department's savings plan and its underlying assumptions;
- Ensure that the basis for correcting children's social care budgets is robust, evidenced and takes into account population pressures, the MTFs savings and London average spend as the target;
- Support and challenge to ensure financial planning for Children's Services is evidenced and robust and that children remain at the heart of Croydon's improvement journey;
- Support the development of future financial planning to mitigate service risks and support the development of service improvement.

Internal Assurance

7.5. A number of internal checks and challenges on spend are embedded in business as usual, as part of the service transformation. New internal assurance has been added to ensure delivery of the overall Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan.

Existing:

- ✓ Children's Commissioning Pipeline Plan
- ✓ Monthly placement reconciliation included in DLT budget monitoring
- ✓ Care Panel
- ✓ Care Review Panel
- ✓ SEND panel
- ✓ Placements savings tracker
- ✓ Access to resources panels for CWD and transitions, social work with families

New:

- ✓ Dedicated Dept. PMO delivery team
- ✓ Corporate Spend Control Panel
- ✓ Corporate Delivery Tracker

Performance Management

7.6. Service performance and quality is reviewed and challenged through the cycle of meetings set out in the Windows into Practice social care quality assurance framework. The cycle of meetings is underpinned by heads of service weekly performance meetings, and weekly and monthly performance dashboards that monitor performance across the whole child's journey through care services.

Children’s social care performance framework



| MEETING | PURPOSE | ATTENDEES |
|--|--|--|
| Children’s Continuous Improvement Board: Chair: Eleanor Brazil monthly | Corporate assurance and monitoring the performance in Children’s to ensure the improvement journey continues | Independent Chair, CEO, Executive Director, Director and partners |
| Practice Improvement Board Chair: Debbie Jones, ED monthly | Executive Director’s assurance that Children’s Services in Croydon are high performing practice by scrutinising the performance, quality, and effectiveness of children’s services | Executive Director (chair), Director, Heads of Service, Children’s Performance Lead, Quality Assurance Lead |
| Service plan check and challenge Chair: Roisin Madden, Director monthly | Director review of service development plans to ensure these are on track and agree actions as required to meet children’s services ambitions | Executive Director (chair), Director, Heads of Service, Children’s Performance Lead, Quality Assurance Lead. |
| Performance and Practice Clinic Chair: Roisin Madden, Director 6 weekly | Director’s assurance on the performance and quality of front-line practice and actions | Director (chair), Head of Service, Service Managers, Head of Quality Assurance, Children’s Performance Lead, QA Business Support Officer |

January 2021

7.7. The departmental performance management will be fully aligned with the new performance reporting arrangements for the Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan.

8. KEY STRATEGIC RISKS

COVID-19

- 8.1. Covid 19 has heightened the challenges many families already face, with an adverse impact on mental health, poverty and barriers around access to learning at home. Many children will be living in families which have reached or will shortly reach tipping point, with increased numbers now experiencing financial hardship, neglect and domestic violence. Due to the current lockdown and closure of schools and other settings, it is likely that these children are not yet being referred to children’s services for assessment and support.
- 8.2. When schools re-open it is expected that there will be post-Covid ‘spike’ in referrals of children and young people identified as needing support. In addition, due to the length of the pandemic and the cumulative effects on families, children coming into the system are likely to require more intensive support than had they been identified and referred as soon as they needed help.
- 8.3. This risk is consistent with all local authorities, and may well impact on achieving some of the savings or reductions in numbers depending on who comes through to the system.

Council's Overall Financial Position

- 8.4. The Council's financial challenge will require further savings in future years. These reductions will need to be carefully planned to mitigate the risk to outcomes for children and young people in Croydon.

Workforce

- 8.5. Higher caseloads and less opportunity to progress through management grades due to a flattened structure may impact on recruitment and retention, although the timing will ensure that the increase in caseloads is carefully supported and managed at the front line.
- 8.6. In addition it is key to recognise the impact of leadership changes and restructures on staff morale and to monitor this carefully. It is also acknowledged that there is work to do, alongside the Race Review Board, to support a change in culture to address historic tensions within the service in relation to race.

Capacity to deliver

- 8.7. The proposals set out in this delivery plan are ambitious and wide-reaching. Significant capacity with the right capability will be required to ensure projects proceed at pace and the learning informs sustained improvement in the systems, processes and procedures that underpin effective essential frontline services.

9. PROJECT OVERVIEWS

- 9.1. The following projects have been identified as savings for the CFE Delivery Plan. It must be noted that these projects differ in scale with varying impact, risk timescales and savings attached. Therefore a proportional approach has been taken. Those projects requiring more long term management and monitoring are outlined in more detail than savings which are able to be made quickly and with minimal resource attached.

| Reconfiguration of Early Help Services | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Project Manager: Iain Low | | Ref CFE SAV02 | |
| Description | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the Early Help offer to a targeted service that continues to provide step down from statutory CSC and contribute with our partners towards early intervention where this will prevent, delay or reduce the need for statutory services, and where not to do so would lead to a direct increase in cost. Reconfigure as a centralised integrated offer operating with a local footprint, retaining current functions on a reduced footprint e.g. family key worker interventions, parenting workers, domestic abuse and substance misuse specialists. Take a targeted approach, offering step down from social care/work with families on the edge of step up, to divert and protect statutory services. Working with partners to identify opportunities to enhance service delivery through multi-agency working, use of partners' settings and building on locality services | | | |
| Finance - £000s | | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | |
| 424 | 185 | 0 | |
| Performance metrics | | | |
| To include cases stepped down/up; re-referral rates; throughput measures TBD | | | |
| High level milestones | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove vacant posts Iain Low Develop a revised offer Iain Low Launch reorganisation options Iain Low Implement new structure Iain Low | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in progress in progress not started not started | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 01/04/21 31/10/21 01/12/21 01/04/22 | |
| Key Risks | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less preventative early intervention work Increase in caseloads in SPOC, CSF and social work with families requiring more social workers; costs shunt across into statutory services Increase in children subject to pre-proceedings, proceedings, child protection plans, children coming into care Negative impact on staff confidence and morale as the changes will require the loss of permanent staff | | | |

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| Equality Detailed EQIA to be prepared to inform restructure options |
| Impact on residents more families supported outside of the early help service as thresholds for the service change |
| Consultations/communications partner engagement in developing the restructure proposals; |

draft

| Reconfiguration of Adolescent Service | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Project Manager: Nana Bonsu | | Ref CFE SAV03 |
| Description | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure the adolescent service to establish one team providing the expertise across the practice system in addition to statutory case holders • Strip out duplication across services to sustain the expertise and reduce service costs • Deploy the service alongside the contextual safeguarding framework for assessment, screening and changing the plans for this cohort in keeping with best evidence-based practice • The proposals will ensure that specialisms built up will continue whilst delivering in a smarter more streamlined manner | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 1,608 | 0 | 0 |
| Performance metrics | | |
| Performance scorecard for adolescents to include the missing and child exploitation datasets, statutory interventions and rates of adolescents entering/leaving care | | |
| High level milestones | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch consultation on restructure • Management response & revised proposals • Launch new structure | Nana Bonsu Nana Bonsu Nana Bonsu | completed in progress 01/04/21 |
| Key Risks | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced adolescent focus leads to less effective risk management for vulnerable young people • Increased number of young people coming into care and being both perpetrators and victims of serious youth violence • Increased caseloads in SWwF and CLA • Reduced outreach presence for young people at risk | | |
| Equality EQIA completed to inform restructure | | |
| Impact on residents reduced direct service to families of vulnerable adolescents | | |
| Consultations/communications ongoing with partners in the Complex Adolescent Panel and MARAC - police, VCS providers, VRN, schools | | |

| Review of Children with Disabilities Care Packages | | |
|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Review of children with disabilities care packages | | |
| Project Manager: Rashida Baig | | Ref CFE SAV04 |
| Description | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent analysis has identified areas for improvement in social care for children with disabilities and their transition to adult social care A new service for children with disabilities is being developed alongside a dedicated transition service for 18-25 year olds within adults' service. This will require a new way of working with shared accountability for these budgets and services across Children's and Adults social care, education and health New commissioning frameworks to be introduced focused on frequently used provision e.g. home care, family support and removing spot purchasing of care as a practice New governance arrangements to be introduced for the recording of provider costs and enforcement of disciplines for accurate forecasting and financial management | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 384 | 384 | 384 |
| Performance metrics | | |
| To be developed, including robust benchmarking spend with best practice LAs | | |
| High level milestones: | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch structure proposals for 0-18 and 18-25 services Rashida Baig completed Establish a review team led by a Head of Service to systematically and rapidly review all open cases 0-25 (now until 31 March 2021) which includes as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review team to include qualified finance lead and business support alongside social workers to ensure case recording and finance systems are updated and accurate in real time ➤ review care packages for all children with disabilities, around 200 children ➤ review family support packages, around 336 children and families ➤ review transition cases, around 300 young people ➤ Identify opportunities to make savings, prioritising/segmenting reviews | | |
| Rashida Baig- by 31/03/21 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work collaboratively with the ASC lead to design the new transitions service, including effective 14+ transition planning Rashida Baig/Annette McPartland - in progress Implement new staffing structure- in progress 01/04/21 Rodica Cobarzan, new HoS Review end- to end business processes using the outcomes from the review team DfE Financial Adviser not started 20/06/21 | | |

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update policy and procedure library Azuka Agba Head of Service Transitions/ Head of Service and Rodica Cobrzan for CWD by 30th May, 2012. • Strengthen tri-partite funding panels with improved relationships with Health and Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Detailed action plan being developed which sets out key actions by 30th May 2021.</i> • Commissioning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Procurement of a Framework for home/personal care provision being developed, aiming for implementation by end of calendar year. Currently undertaking in year discussions with providers to negotiate reduced rates until the new framework is in place – successful to date with an average of between 10-25% reductions agreed. ➤ Procurement of Family Support contracts, due for implementation by April 2021 with a reduced budget to achieve savings. Pasquale Brammer, Head of Commissioning in progress |
| <p>Key Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal challenge and Judicial Reviews at cost to the council • Children’s needs no longer being managed within the home, leading to children coming into residential care at increased cost • Possible challenges through the SEN tribunal process; additional legal costs and potential adverse rulings • Ofsted scrutiny following increased tribunal activity • Reputational damage to the council • Delay in procurement timetable due to decision making or capacity/lack of resource |
| <p>Equality EQIA completed</p> |
| <p>Impact on residents some packages are long-standing and have not been reviewed. Changes will need to be carefully managed with families</p> |
| <p>Consultations/communications -If eligibility criteria are reviewed it will require consultation with stakeholders including families</p> |

| Reduce the Numbers of Children in Care | | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|
| Project Manager: Hannah Doughty | | Ref CFE SAV05 |
| Description | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the numbers of children in care by systematically reviewing cases, looking at where children currently in care may be able to be safely placed at home or with wider family with the right support mechanisms in place. • Reducing placement costs in order to ensure best value, with a new accommodation strategy to underpin this • Undertaking a thorough review of our payments systems and processes to ensure that providers are paid on time to maximise value for money to foster strong relationships with providers and maximise choice and buying power in the market • In addition, a one-off investment to right size the budget in 2021/22 | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 794 | 1,654 | 1,385 |
| Performance metrics | | |
| To include overall entry/exit from care, cohort profiles, placement cost tracker | | |
| High level milestones | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to reduce the numbers by gatekeeping entry to care, diverting from care and reviewing and reuniting where safe to do so <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Weekly Care Panel to gate keep entry to care, with multiple approval points to reduce expenditure ➢ Fortnightly Care Review Panel to review high cost placements, and agree targeted support to return children home from care ➢ Children's Continuous Improvement Board, independently chaired providing assurance on sustained service quality | | |
| Hannah Doughty, ongoing | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smarter commissioning and procurement underpinned by benchmarking and financial modelling based on the cohort and population analyses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ <i>Financial modelling to underpin accommodation strategy (31/03/21)</i> ➢ <i>Accommodation strategy, commissioning plan and procurement timetable agreed, including cross-Council (30/06/21)</i> ➢ <i>Procurement plan commences (30/09/21)</i> | | |
| Pasquale Brammer | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems, business processes and payments including integrated case recording and finance system, oversight of payments processes, improved end-to-end across dept. and council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Review interoperability between case recording system, the contrOCC payments system, to improve efficiency and effectiveness across Health, Wellbeing & Adults and Children, Families & Education (31/03/21) ➢ Review and challenge children social care payments processes to identify and tackle barriers to efficient and compliant working (30/04/21) ➢ Review roles and responsibilities of business support embedded in services, children's payments hub, and divisional finance leads to mobilise capacity to improve business processes that underpin payments (30/05/21) | | |

| |
|---|
| Lead TBC |
| <p>Key Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk that thresholds for entry to care are too high, leaving children vulnerable to harm • As more children are diverted or returned from care those that are accommodated may have higher needs with higher unit costs, reducing per capita savings |
| Equality EQIA completed to inform plans |
| Impact on residents none |
| Consultations/communications engagement with partners to reinforce the ambition to keep children safely at home wherever possible |

draft

| Review Support for Young People Where Appeal Rights Exhausted | | |
|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Project Manager: James Moore | | Ref CFE SAV06 |
| Description | | |
| <p>Appeal Rights Exhausted (ARE) describes a person whose request for asylum or immigration application has been refused, and who has made all of the appeals that they are allowed to make without any success.</p> <p>As at 31/10/20 60 young people were being supported by children's services with no grant income. A needs-based approach to withdrawing services to young people who are ARE is proposed, alongside earlier, robust triple planning with unaccompanied minors as part of the pathway plan completed for all children looked after aged 16+.</p> | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 295 | 560 | 142 |
| Performance metrics | | |
| Tracking of numbers of young people ARE spend tracker | | |
| High level milestones | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRA Training for staff- Training for staff to complete Human Rights Assessments to provide assurance that support can be safely removed • Complete HRAs for existing children- starting once training of staff is complete • For all new young people conduct triple planning if they are at risk of ARE | | |
| Key Risks | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people 'go underground' before they turn 18 or before the assessment is completed if the outcome looks likely that all legal routes to remain in the UK are exhausted. • Legal action/ increased number of judicial reviews challenging LBC's long-standing position – although this process is well established across LA's. • Insufficient expert legal advice and representation • Reputational risk to the council as seen as withdrawing services to young people who have been declared by the immigration courts as having no legal right to remain in the UK. • Covid 19 impact if unable to meet with children and young people remotely. Guidance is being sought | | |
| Equality EQIA completed to inform approach | | |
| Impact on residents none | | |
| Consultations/communications none required | | |

| Improve Practice System Efficiency | | |
|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Project Manager: Roisin Madden | | Ref CFE SAV07 |
| Description | | |
| <p>To tackle the legacy of poor practice additional staff were recruited to reduce social workers' caseloads, taking these to below both London and national averages. Focused work to improve the quality of day to day practice has been effective, as noted in the 2020 inspection. Caseloads will now be gradually increased over 2021-23 to an average of 17. Heads of service will manage and monitor the increase closely to balance continuity of care for children and their families and manageable workloads for individual staff with the need to address the financial challenge for the service.</p> <p>Alongside increased staffing to reduce caseloads in 2019 assistant team managers were appointed to larger teams of social workers to increase management direction and grip on casework and support the introduction of the systemic practice model across the whole service. The additional management tier provided capacity to rapidly improve the quality of practice, providing effective management oversight and supervision. However as the service moves into an improved steady state this cohort will be reconfigured over 2022-24. The timing will ensure that the increase in caseloads is carefully supported and managed at the front line, and that risks are appropriately identified and held. With the natural turnover of staff in children's social care, phasing the change and using planned restructures will provide opportunities for existing staff to secure permanent roles within the wider service</p> | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 1,065 | 1,450 | 385 |
| Performance metrics | | |
| TBC | | |
| High level milestones | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tbc | | |
| Key Risks | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher case loads and less opportunity to progress through management grades due to a flattened management structure may impact on recruitment and retention. Higher case loads and less management oversight could put children and young people in need at risk Improved practice is 'recent' and therefore not fully embedded and not fully achieved in CLA / Leaving Care area therefore rapid changes in structure combined with reduced retention may undermine practice improvement Covid 19 means that there is a likelihood that CSC will see an increase in referrals once schools return. These referrals are more likely to be at a higher level of need where children and families have been in need of support for some time but have not been known to CSC. In addition there will be more likelihood of children coming into care due to family breakdown and poverty | | |

- Reduction in management oversight at the first stages of the child's journey may increase duration of interventions raising demand levels in the system, slowing down impact of SW intervention.

Equality EQIA to inform plans with a focus on the impact on staff

Impact on residents no direct impact

Consultations/communications N/A

draft

| | | |
|---|----------------|-----------------------|
| Reducing Systemic Practice | | |
| Project Manager: Nana Bonsu | | Ref CFE SAV 08 |
| Description | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is proposed to restructure to remove four vacant posts. • Fully embedding the practice model and ensuring new staff are trained and supported to work systemically will ensure that practice continues to focus on making sustained change with families, reducing the need for repeated interventions. | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| £272,000 | | |
| Performance metrics | | |
| High level milestones | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce staffing establishment by removing four vacant posts- in progress, completion by 31/3/21 • Put plans in place to ensure social workers are trained and supported to use systemic practice (tbc) | | |
| Key Risks | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of losing systemic practice focus, to be mitigated by embedding within practice | | |
| Equality | | |
| Impact on residents | | |
| Consultations/communications | | |

| Review Children's Centres Delivery Model | | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|
| Project Manager: Debbie McCormack | | Ref CFE SAV09 |
| Description | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-commission Best Start services and redesign the children's centre delivery model and contracts from 1 September 2021, realising savings of £534,000 with in-year (20/21) savings of £480,000 achieved through a 20% reduction of the commissioning contract with children's centres for the remainder of this financial year. • Reduce the parenting programmes contacts by £60,000 • The proposed delivery model from September 2021 consists of 3 designated Children's Centre Hubs and Spokes covering the North, South and Central localities. Services would be available to families across the borough with delivery prioritised in areas where there is the most need. • Shirley Children's Centre and staff transferred over to the council on 1st April 2020. The cost of running the provision in-house is in excess of the funding allocation, the centre is not identified as a delivery "spoke" therefore alternative use of the building or closure is to be decided. | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 660 | 240 | 0 |
| Performance metrics | | |
| To be confirmed | | |
| High level milestones | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree in-year savings with CC headteachers completed • Review and identify delivery options to reconfigure children's centres to hub & spoke model based on a locality footprint In progress • Launch public consultation 1st March 2021, Early Help Service Manager, Head of Commissioning CFE • Full Cabinet to agree children's centres strategy June 2021, Early Help Service Manager, Head of Commissioning CFE • Procurement of new provision completed November 2021, Head of Commissioning CFE • Implement new delivery model April 2022, Early Help Service Manager, Head of Commissioning CFE | | |
| Key Risks | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to services are politically sensitive – delayed decision-making will impact on delivering the savings required. • Council commissioning processes and sign off timescales have been delayed due to the council's public consultation. This may lead to a gap in service provision along with a reduction in funding and change in commissioned provider. • Reduction in Children's centre service delivery impacts early identification, intervention and prevention support within the community for vulnerable children and families, particularly delivery of universal service through centres. | | |

- Reduced funding will require a whole staffing review and restructure with current children's centre employees having TUPE rights.

Equality EQIA completed to inform plans

Impact on residents Expectant and new parents could be adversely affected due to the reduction of centre based Midwife and Health Visitor support.

Consultations/communications Resident and stakeholder consultation is required when children's centre services are significantly changed,

draft

| Reduce Non-Statutory education functions | | |
|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Project Manager: Julie Ralphs | | Ref CFE SAV10 |
| <p>Description</p> <p>The majority of the budget within education come from the Dedicated Schools Grant which is made up of the main blocks – High Needs, Schools and Early Years which fund schools places, high needs and early years. The general fund Education budget has a controllable amount of £2.5m.</p> <p>The proposal is to save an additional £808K from this through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction at HOS level and reduction/cessation of non-statutory education functions from 2021/22 to be achieved via service restructure to reduce FTEs. • Reduction in business support across Children’s Social Care & Education achieved via de-centralisation of business support (partly achieved by reduction of 6FTE management posts as of Oct-20) and deletion of vacancies. • Moving of functions and related costs to be covered by traded & grant income including some increased trading activity in relation to schools services. | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 587 | 221 | 0 |
| <p>Performance metrics</p> <p>A suite of performance measures for each CFE project is being developed with the corporate centre and will be presented alongside the delivery plans</p> | | |
| <p>High level milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-centralise business support- reducing management structure and deletion of vacant posts - saving £400,000 in 2021/22 Julie Ralphs, completed • Reduction in Head of Service (0.8FTE) – saving £95k in 2021/22 Shelley Davies, in progress for 31/03/21 (Subject to outcome of current consultation) • Reduction in School Client Team (1FTE) – saving £62k in 2021/22 Denise Bushay, in progress for 31/3/21 (Subject to outcome of current consultation) • Reduction in commissioning costs arising from insourced services – saving £30k in 2021/22 • Staff consultation to increase commercial income – saving £115k in 2022/23 Julie Ralphs, 30/07/21 (Subject to outcome of current voluntary severance scheme) • Review of grants with view to cease/find alternative funding – saving £106k in 2022/23 Julie Ralphs, for completion by end of 2021/22 | | |
| Key Risks | | |

| |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced business support capacity to undertake key functions, including statutory and financial, with implications for budget management, response times (e.g. SARS, FOI, referrals etc.) and client system updates. • Increased management responsibilities for team managers and loss of Business Support management skills and expertise. Reduced opportunities for career progression. • Risk that schools do not have the capacity to deliver their own school improvement or funding availability and/or willingness to pay for school improvement services – the pandemic and S114 requirements have reduced trading levels due to challenges in delivering a flexible, responsive traded service to schools, so widening of the traded offer may be problematic. Possible negative impact on LA relationships with some schools, pupil outcomes and Ofsted grades. • Sustainability of service offer – full reliance in some areas on on-going receipt of grants and/or traded income. • Grants and contingency funding savings (£106k) need further exploration to determine risks. Potential risks could include: reduction or cessation of services. |
| <p>Equality EQIA completed to inform staff reductions</p> |
| <p>Impact on residents Residents may be impacted by reduced pupil outcomes</p> |
| <p>Consultations/communications staffing reductions included in management reorganisation consultation with staff; communication with schools on any changes to the support offer</p> |

| Early Learning Collaboration Contract | | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|
| Project Manager Denise Bushay | | Ref CFE SAV12 |
| Description | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End the Service Level Agreement with the Best Start Early Learning Collaboration (led by Crossfield Nursery School and Children's Centre) to reduce in year costs. Funding is provided through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DGS) • Termination notice issued in Nov • Develop a new delivery model, capitalising on expertise in the service in order to deliver in-house | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| £82,000 | | |
| Performance metrics | | |
| High level milestones | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-month contract termination letter issued to provider and authority to end contract from Executive Director and lead member- (completed Nov 2020) • New delivery model to be developed and agreed (1/4/21-30/04/21) • New delivery model implemented within reduced funding envelope (1/5/21-30/06/21) | | |
| Key Risks | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction and/or cessation of some non-statutory services may reduce some services to children. • Corporate staff review currently underway which means that there is not a management structure in place. • Not sufficient time to consult and engage with staff and trade unions and service users. • The transition from outsourced to insourced may, itself, detrimentally impact service and costs | | |
| Equality EQIA completed tbc As the service will continue to be delivered in-house there is unlikely to be any negative impact on protected groups. | | |
| Impact on residents Impact on residents young children and their families may be adversely impacted due a reduction of cessation of services. As above. | | |
| Consultations/communications Change to in-house delivery communicated via email to providers/stakeholders. Meeting to be arranged. | | |

| | | |
|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Croydon Music & Arts (CMA) | | |
| Project Manager Graeme Smith | | Ref CFE SAV13 |
| Description | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croydon Music and Arts Service to move to a full cost recovery model, with the ending of funding from the Council General Fund including the council match funding for the Arts Council Grant | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 126,000 | | |
| Performance metrics | | |
| A suite of performance measures is being developed corporately. In addition Croydon Music and the Arts report key information to the Arts Council | | |
| High level milestones | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ending of funding from the Council General Fund Negotiate final instalment match funding (£34k) waiver for 2021/22 (completed January 2021 and agreed with Arts Council that CMA can use other grant funding as match for future) | | |
| Key Risks | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future challenges with regards to successfully bidding for grants where match funding is a requirement. | | |
| Equality | | |
| Impact on residents if unable to bid for grants due to lack of match funding, the service may be able to offer less to children and young people | | |
| Consultations/communications | | |

| | | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|
| Cease Family Group Conference Service | | |
| Project Manager Brian Amos | | Ref CFE SAV14 |
| Description | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is proposed to delete the Family Group Conference Service • The expectation going forward is that teams will deliver Family Group Conference work as an embedded part of their service models | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| £203,000 | | |
| Performance metrics | | |
| High level milestones | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Service to develop reorganisation plans with HR and finance support; Corporate consultation process started (Completed January 2021) • Implement outcomes from consultation (Completion due 28/2/21) • Redeploy Staff (Completion due 31/05/21) • Train social workers in convening and facilitating family group decision making, possibly in partnership with Family Rights Group | | |
| Key Risks | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceasing Family Group Conference will impact on the ability to provide wider opportunities in the family network to provide support in order to reduce the need for intervention. • Increased volume of work for Social Workers absorbing this activity • Escalation of risk could lead to increased referrals and activity within the system | | |
| Equality EQIA completed | | |
| Impact on residents May be adversely affected by weakened systemic practice | | |
| Consultations/communications | | |

10. GROWTH PROJECTS

10.1. In addition to the savings, there are a number of growth requests as outlined below.

| Children Looked After Placements - fund Demographic and Cost Pressures | | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|
| Project Manager: Hannah Doughty | | Ref CFE GRO01 |
| Description | | |
| The CLA placements budget has overspent for a number of years. CFE SAV05 sets out how savings will be made from the overall placements budget by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to reduce the number of children in care Smarter commissioning against the Sufficiency Strategy Improvement business processes and payments The budget allocation available for the current cohort of Croydon's looked after children (excluding UASC) is insufficient to fund the accommodation required year on year. This growth will right-size the budget alongside year on year savings | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 8,341 | 85 | 77 |
| Performance metrics | | |
| N/A | | |
| High level milestones | | |
| The growth will be applied to the budgets at the start of each financial year | | |
| Key Risks The savings profiled in CFE SAV05 are not delivered on schedule | | |
| Equality N/A | | |
| Impact on residents N/A | | |
| Consultations/communications N/A | | |

| Leaving Care - fund Demographic and Cost Pressures | | |
|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Project Manager: Hannah Doughty | | Ref CFE GRO02 |
| Description The budget allocation available for the current cohort of Croydon's care leavers (excluding Asylum Seekers) is insufficient to fund the accommodation required year on year. More work needs to be completed in respect of the sufficiency of the necessary accommodation alongside the support from the Council's housing service in accessing affordable housing for this cohort of previously looked after children. | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 2,031 | 0 | 0 |
| Performance metrics N/A | | |
| High level milestones Growth will be applied at the start of the financial year | | |
| Key Risks The savings profiled in CFE SAV05 are not delivered on schedule | | |
| Equality N/A | | |
| Impact on residents N/A | | |
| Consultations/communications N/A | | |

| Children with Disabilities - fund Demographic and Cost Pressures | | |
|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Project Manager: Rashida Baig | | Ref CFE GRO03 |
| Description The budget allocation available for the current cohort of Croydon's children with disabilities is insufficient to fund the number and level of packages required year on year. More work needs to be completed in respect of reviewing the packages and then rightsizing for the agreed cohort. We know from benchmarking that our CLA unit costs are about right and we just don't have enough budget for the number of CLA/CL in the system whereas with CWD, the packages are probably excessive, we provide support for YP in transition that do not meet thresholds of care and we get insufficient education and health contributions. As part of CFE SAV04 the rapid review of all open cases will provide a baseline from which more accurate forecasting based on assessed need will enable the savings to be profiled year on year | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 6,447 | 0 | 0 |
| Performance metrics N/A | | |
| High level milestones Analyse needs and agree growth allocation for 0-18 and 18-25 services 01/03/21 Allocate growth to relevant budgets 01/04/21 | | |
| Key Risks The savings profiled in CFE SAV04 are not delivered on schedule | | |
| Equality N/A | | |
| Impact on residents N/A | | |
| Consultations/communications N/A | | |

| SEND Strategy - support inclusion and access to local provision | | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|
| Project Manager: Kathy Roberts | | Ref CFE GRO04 |
| Description | | |
| <p>A five year Dedicated School Grant (DSG) Deficit Recovery Plan has been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE), outlining our plans for managing the overspend. This one-off investment is in line with the DSG Deficit Recovery Plan, but aims to inject pace to how quickly the deficit can be recovered.</p> <p>A further DSG management plan is being developed for submission to the DfE</p> <p>Inclusion support for schools and early intervention will ensure the Council is meeting its statutory duties and the needs of our pupils through the delivery of the 0 – 25 SEND strategy, efficiently and effectively and with a continued focus on securing the best outcome for children and their families.</p> | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 866 | 0 | 0 |
| Performance metrics | | |
| <p>Under development at SEND strategic Board; to focus on increase in children attending in-borough mainstream schools</p> <p>Oversight of DSG High needs deficit at newly formed SEND Finance Board.</p> | | |
| High level milestones | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit additional locality-based 0-25 SEN staff to increase capacity to complete EHCP annual reviews April 2021, Kathy Roberts Recruit Local Offer website content and communication manager to ensure up to date advice and signposting to parents and carers April 2021, Kathy Roberts Recruit locality-based SEN Support in Mainstream Schools (Inclusion project) Teachers May 2021, Kathy Roberts | | |
| Key Risks | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment lag impacts on ability to clear backlog and improve performance on EHCP annual reviews Capacity to engage with schools to further develop inclusive practice is limited | | |
| Equality N/A | | |
| Impact on residents Parents of children with SEND experience more local choice of school; children are able to attend school closer to home, friends, community; reduced travel time for children and young people. | | |
| Consultations/communications engagement with parents' forum through SEND strategic board | | |

| | | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|
| Undelivered savings 2020-21 | | |
| Project Manager: Debbie Jones | | Ref CFE GRO07 |
| Description Undelivered savings 2020-21: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Duty Team • Gateway Link savings apportioned across CFE and HWA • Youth Fund • Young people where appeal rights exhausted • Management savings following reorganisation | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 909 | 0 | 0 |
| Performance metrics N/A | | |
| High level milestones Growth applied to the budgets 01/04/21 | | |
| Key Risks N/A | | |
| Equality N/A | | |
| Impact on residents N/A | | |
| Consultations/communications N/A | | |

| | | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|
| Realignment of Budgets where other funding sources have ceased | | |
| Project Manager: Debbie Jones | | Ref CFE GRO08 |
| Description Removal of grant income and transformation funding in previous years | | |
| Finance - £000s | | |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| 1.719 | 0 | 0 |
| Performance metrics N/A | | |
| High level milestones Growth applied to the budgets 01/04/21 | | |
| Key Risks N/A | | |
| Equality N/A | | |
| Impact on residents N/A | | |
| Consultations/communications N/A | | |

ACTION PLAN

Download table from PMO tracker or whatever initial document ASC project managers use to create their tracker entries.
The tracker needs to be the single version of the truth.

draft