



## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMISSION 22 JANUARY 2008

Report of the Corporate Director for Corporate and Adult Services

### Budget 2008/09

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. Members consider the comments/questions when undertaking scrutiny of the Revenue and Capital Budgets .

#### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

##### Revenue Budget

##### 2.1 General Issues

Little is shown in relation to schools and many central services because they fall under the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant. Set out below are a number of comments and suggested questions that are part of the Council-set budget. In addition to those Members may want to establish whether and to what extent any budget proposal may have an impact of the achievement of national and local targets, including Corporate Plan Priorities and the new Local Area Agreement.

##### 2.2 Specific Issues

**Revenue** - selective issues are referred to but follow the order in the tables contained in the document *Detailed Budget Proposals 2008/09 to 2010/2011*.

- **Pressures** Page 13: table 2e

Neighbourhood Nurseries - why is shown as a this saving rather than a pressure? Are the nurseries: reducing their hours/ staff/no of children attending **or** increasing charges **or** closing?

Agency Placements £547k – comment: an increase in the number of LAC in the last 6 months has also produced a large rise in the number placed in expensive IFAs:

1.5.7: 391 LAC of which 47 in IFAs  
23.11.7:413 LAC of which 62 in IFAs

This is because, despite recruitment, the number of in-house foster carers is relatively inelastic. [See also S12]

The Rapid Response team – comment: this promotes school attendance and is being continued after external funding time expires

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Savings</b> Page 23: table 3e</li> </ul>
BSF Manager charge to scheme – can't this charge start this year and so get another year's savings?
Educational Psychology – two entries; will this need to go to the Schools Forum to be agreed?
Care Mgt & Purchasing – is this saving from scrapping the [residual] lease cars scheme or reducing staff mileage or otherwise?
Primary School Improvement Partners Grant – will this reduce support re. KS1 and 2 where the Council is underperforming
Convert IFA to adoptions – has this been achieved to the extent envisaged in the first year 07/08
LAC independent sector placements – hasn't the expected gain from a contract with an IFA had already been factored in? If so, how are efficiencies to be achieved? Is there any change in child placing policy involved? [Relates to D8 above]
Finance post – is this no longer needed, or is it a [relatively] 'less bad' option?
Phase 2 Children Centres – as the promise is that hosting Children Centres won't be a draw on schools' [or others'(?)] budgets – will this have to be found by reducing spend on the users?
Communications (2 headings) – is it correct that the combined effect is reduced spend of £47k? If so, how will income go up if there's less capacity to produce communications?
Personnel - reduce administration post – is this no longer needed or is it a [relatively] 'less bad' option?
Children in Care strategic management time – from a risk management approach, can the Council afford to have less strategic time devoted to LAC?
Common Assessment Framework management – which grant would this be charged to and why only for one year?
Inclusion & Social Development team - will this reduction impact on any Council/DCP policy goals/targets, if so, which? Does it mean job losses?
Charge to grants – Care Matters – as the title relates to the Green Paper, isn't this core business? Which voluntary agency is involved?
Family Support staffing reduction*
Reception and Hospital Service *
Aspire Leaving Care – staffing reduction*
Reduction of residential beds - post 16's*
Assessment and Care Planning Reduction*
Removal of an Independent Reviewing Officer and admin support*
Primary Learning – reduce one School Improvement Officer
* see commentary below

### 2.3 Year 3: 2010/11 - Child Protection and Looked After Children

A suite of six connected services are planned to have significant budget reductions from 2010/11, though none are factored in for 07/08 or 08/09. Totalling £918k per year, these are:

- Assessment and Care Planning Reduction saving £248k *and*
- Reception and Hospital Service saving £108k -  
Social workers who assess families, arrange family support etc,  
conduct joint investigations into alleged abuse, take court proceedings,

make care plans, arrange and monitor foster placements etc for looked after children.

- Family Support staffing reduction saving £134k – work with families to promote parenting skills and other support to reduce pressures and prevent family breakdown and/or the need for the child(ren) to become looked after
- Aspire Leaving Care – staffing reduction £60k – work with older LAC to improve their life chances (catching up with lost education, promoting higher/further education, employment and training) and assisting with the transition to independent living (coping and household management skills).
- Reduction of residential beds - post 16's saving £296k – residential placements in children's' homes are mainly used when a family placement (ie fostering) is not suitable (or available). Young people remain looked after until 18; beyond that there are statutory obligations to advise, assist and befriend until 21 (24 if in higher education). Any reduction in provision would need to be matched by alternative accommodation for all who would reside there either full time (eg 18/19 year old taking 'A' Levels) permanently or intermittently (eg a student during vacation)
- Removal of an Independent Reviewing Officer and admin support saving £72k – conduct statutory reviews of care plans to ensure services are appropriate and are actually delivered.

As background, for almost a decade after Derby's attainment of unitary status in 1997, the relatively high numbers of LAC were partly attributed to the thresholds and practice of Derbyshire County Council, as the previous social services authority. Children who had entered the care system at eight years in 1996 would be likely to remain looked after until 18 years of age. The hope had been that the numbers of new LAC would gradually reduce, especially as family support services became more intense. In fact the snapshots over the last two to three years show rises from a low base in May 2005.

	21.1.5	20.5.5	22.7.5	4.11.5	23.2.6	2.6.6	1.12.6	1.5.7	1.8.7	23.11.7
Total LAC	371	360	370	383	377	389	390	391	410	413

As reported to the Corporate Parenting Sub-Commission, Derby is not unusual: 'The number of Children Looked After as a proportion of total children in Derby was exactly the average within the comparative local authority 'family' group, at 7.7 per 1000' and that 'projections predicted a gradual rise in numbers' locally. Members may wish to explore why the number of families supported and the number of children looked after are expected to fall in two years time.

## Capital Budget

### 2.4 Children and Young People Department Capital Programme – Agenda Item 6 b) i)

This is a detailed free standing report on a range of capital spend; but as paragraph 2.12 says the Single Capital Pot is the only 'significant funding stream where there is discretion on how the capital allocation can be spent'. Para 2.14 invites the Commission to support the proposals listed at Appendix 3. Listed in priority order, Members may wish to explore what was the methodology used that produced the ranking shown.

### 2.5 Corporate Capital Programme – Agenda Item 6 b) ii)

The only reference in the report impacting on this Commission appears under Planned Maintenance - paragraph 2.11. "The allocations for 2009/10 and 2010/11 would need to include provision for programme to improve children's homes". This is an issue addressed by the full Commission during its 2006 topic review *Looked After Children* in its report and pursued subsequently by the Corporate Parenting Sub-Commission. However, the same paragraph makes reference to sums in 2008/9 for Council House refurbishment and the next phase of the accommodation strategy. Members may wish to ensure that any overruns/overspends on those items do not squeeze out improvements to the children's' home stock.

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<b>Background papers:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications
<b>List of appendices:</b>	None

## Appendix 1

### IMPLICATIONS

#### Financial

The purpose of the budget process is to gauge the interaction between policy objectives and financial inputs.

#### Personnel

It is expected that there will be a reduction in paid posts as a result of the City Council's budget. In the revenue budget for this portfolio a number of posts are explicitly listed for deletion and larger sums for budget heads implicitly will result in reduced staffing.

#### Legal

All local authorities are required to set a balanced budget.

#### Equalities impact

Checking the equalities impact of the various proposals may produce useful lines of enquiry. If concerns are established these can then be reported to the Council Cabinet

### **Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities**

The summary document *Budget proposals 2008/09* at page 9 seeks to make clear links with the Council's Corporate Priorities.