

Update on In-Year (2017/18) MTFP Savings for Children's Services

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1. Summary

- 1.1. During the months of September 2016 through to February 2017 there were a number of MTFP savings developed under a themed approach. For Children's Services most of the savings that applied to their budgets were under the umbrella of the service redesign theme, with one under the transport theme.
- 1.2. The main thrust of the redesign was around reducing some of the service expenditure for high cost services closer to the national benchmark cost. The main area this applies to is in Children's Placements.
- 1.3. The other savings were part of the overall target to reduce building running costs across the Council and there was a saving aimed at reducing high cost SEN routes. Progress is reported below.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

2.1. Placement Cost Savings

The target saving in the MTFP for this work is £1.046m and to date there has been good progress to date that provides confidence this saving will be achieved in full although overall placements spend is increasing. In the Members' information sheet issued in July this saving was described as Service redesign of Children's placements spend, reviewing process, increasing capacity in the market for SCC use so that there is choice in allocation of cases and therefore many will cost less than before without affecting quality in an adverse way.

2.2. Activities included in this work include:

- A SWAP Audit was conducted to assist target process improvements.
- Recommendations were then taken forward and placement processes were reviewed and altered.
- Provider meetings and events were held to highlight Somerset's children's needs
- Exploration of regional commissioning opportunities
- An Edge of care service has been scoped
- Review of residential Individual Placement Agreements underway.
- Communication and roll-out of processes and procedures to staff.

A SWAP follow up audit will then be commissioned to assess progress and

improvements and to assess controls to ensure future compliance with processes.

2.3. Reduced Building Running Costs

This saving is part of a bigger target of £1.091m described in the Members' information sheet issued in July as Savings aimed at reducing our building running costs across the council portfolio of assets. This will require consultation with service users in children's centres, libraries and in our mental health accommodation. Savings will come from reduced running costs rather than service activity.

- 2.4. The element of the target that is currently assigned to Children's services budgets is approximately £600,000. This must remain a provisional target until the work has been carried out to review which building running costs can be reduced. This is all wrapped up into the work redesigning getset services and creating family hubs. A paper explaining the work proposed was brought to the committee in July and presented by Philippa Granthier. There has been some slippage in the timeline. It remains to be seen whether we can recover lost ground across the whole target saving. The total value of the saving is not at this stage in question but it is unlikely to be delivered in full in 17/18.

2.5. Transport Savings

The savings in transport will come from a review of high cost SEN routes aimed at saving around £1.45m in total from the current cost. This is going to require a considerable piece of work looking at existing policies, compliance with them and options on how to design the service differently. Work is under way but due to the intensive work required it is unlikely to deliver significant savings in this financial year given the lead in time in consultation work and for the implementation notice required to be ready for term starts. So far, work has concentrated upon incentivising parents for single occupancy journeys and reviewing high cost multi occupancy journeys including use of in-house fleet. Around £150,000 is assured as a saving but it is difficult to see how the remainder can be achieved without policy changes.

2.6. Summary Table

Saving	Target	Probable
Placement cost reductions	£1.046m	£1.046m
Building running costs reductions	£0.600m	£0.600m
Transport costs reductions	£1.450m	£0.150m

3. Background

3.1. Covered in update and summary sections.

4. Consultations undertaken

4.1. N/A

5. Implications

5.1. Any shortfall in delivery of MTFP savings will increase overspends for Children's Services.

6. Background papers

- 6.1. Link to Theme Documents from February Cabinet: [Click Here](#)
- Service Redesign (page 191)
 - Transport (page 205)

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author