

Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee

Agenda

Monday 29 January 2024 at 7.00 pm

145 King Street (Ground Floor), Hammersmith, W6 9XY

Watch live on YouTube: [youtube.com/hammersmithandfulham](https://www.youtube.com/hammersmithandfulham)

MEMBERSHIP

Administration	Opposition
Councillor Helen Rowbottom (Chair) Councillor Daryl Brown Councillor Mercy Umeh Councillor Lucy Richardson	Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan
Co-optees	
Eleanor Allen, London Diocesan Board for Schools Nandini Ganesh, Parentsactive Representative Nadia Taylor, Parent Governor Representative	

CONTACT OFFICER: Debbie Yau
Committee Coordinator
Corporate Services
E-mail: debbie.yau@lbhf.gov.uk

This meeting is open to members of the public and the building has disabled access.
If you'd like to attend, please contact debbie.yau@lbhf.gov.uk

Date Issued: 19 January 2024
Date Updated: 23 January 2024

Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee Agenda

29 January 2024

<u>Item</u>		<u>Pages</u>
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE		
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST		
	<p>If a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest in a particular item, whether or not it is entered in the Authority's register of interests, or any other significant interest which they consider should be declared in the public interest, they should declare the existence and, unless it is a sensitive interest as defined in the Member Code of Conduct, the nature of the interest at the commencement of the consideration of that item or as soon as it becomes apparent.</p> <p>At meetings where members of the public are allowed to be in attendance and speak, any Councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest or other significant interest may also make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter. The Councillor must then withdraw immediately from the meeting before the matter is discussed and any vote taken.</p> <p>Where Members of the public are not allowed to be in attendance and speak, then the Councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest should withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is under consideration. Councillors who have declared other significant interests should also withdraw from the meeting if they consider their continued participation in the matter would not be reasonable in the circumstances and may give rise to a perception of a conflict of interest.</p> <p>Councillors are not obliged to withdraw from the meeting where a dispensation to that effect has been obtained from the Standards Committee.</p>	
3. MINUTES		4 - 11
	<p>To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record and note any outstanding actions.</p>	
4. 2024 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY		12 - 34
	<p>This report provides an update on the overall preparation and proposals for the 2024/25 revenue budget, risks, financial resilience, and the impact of those proposals.</p> <p>This report also sets out the budget proposals for the services covered by this Policy and Accountability Committee. An update is also provided on any proposed changes in fees and charges in the budget.</p>	

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of next meeting on 25 Mar 2024.

Agenda Item 3

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham



Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Monday 13 November 2023

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Helen Rowbottom (Chair), Daryl Brown, Mercy Umeh, Lucy Richardson and Aliya Afzal-Khan

Co-opted members: Nandini Ganesh (Parentsactive Representative) and Nadia Taylor (Parent Governor Representative)

Other Councillors: Councillor Alex Sanderson (Cabinet Member for Children and Education)

Officers:

Jacqui McShannon (Strategic Director of Children's Services)

Amana Gordon (Operational Director, Children and Young People Services)

Amelia Steele (Virtual School Head)

Peter Haylock (Operational Director for Education and SEND)

Sarah Sanderson (Head of Service (Looked After Children), Children and Young People Service)

Debbie Yau (Committee Coordinator)

Harriet Bour (Assistant Committee Coordinator)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Eleanor Allen, co-opted member.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Amelia Steele (Head of Virtual School) presented the summary version of the Virtual School Annual Report 2022/23, outlining the main achievements that had been created to share with young people. She also presented videos and slides which included the feedback, performances and experiences of the young people. In some cases, an animation had been used as a visual representation, but the voices were all H&F's children and young people.

Councillor Mercy Umeh appreciated the great presentation and thanked Virtual School's efforts in bringing wonderful experience for the children and young people.

Echoing the sentiment, Nadia Taylor noted the powerful message coming from young people's own voices and gave credits to the education service providers, local authority, mentors and teachers.

In response to Nandini Ganesh's enquiry about the Hub, Amelia Steele advised that it was a Care Leavers Hub which provided the space for care leavers to engage in networking while transforming to independent living.

Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan considered it wonderful to hear the positive impacts of the Virtual School's work. She asked about the "Attachment Aware Schools' programme". Amelia Steele advised that a pilot "Attachment Aware Schools' programme" in partnership with the Educational Psychology team was launched with 10 schools last year. It had included centralised training on emotional coaching and relational practice, and individual school support through a link practitioner. This programme had enabled the building of stronger relationship with schools and the provision of a clear bridge between education and social care.

On the Chair's concern about the nature of collaboration with the University College London (UCL) and the source of funding, Amelia Steele noted that H&F had participated in the Promoting the Achievement of Care Leavers knowledge exchange programme run by UCL. While the work of this programme had raised the profile of H&F's care experienced young people, it aimed at creating an infrastructure to support young people across the borough into education and employment. It was led by the Virtual School, People and Talent and the Economy, which worked together to enable young people to access opportunities made available by local businesses matched by the Economy. She added that H&F's participation did not require additional funding.

Councillor Lucy Richardson appreciated the work of the Virtual School in delivering compassionate services and meeting the needs of young people. Regarding her question on the number of children and young people being served and the Council's capacity for expansion, Jacqui McShannon (Strategic Director of Children's Services) said that there were currently 213 children who would be cared for until the

age of 25. Amelia Steele added that as of September 2021, the Department for Education had extended the duty of the Virtual School Head to include promoting the education of children who had currently or previously had a social worker within the last 6 years. The Virtual School had successfully recruited an Advisory Teacher for Children with a Social Worker to provide support and guidance for the schools and parents of this cohort.

In reply to the Chair's further question, Amelia Steele explained that the Personal Education Plan was statutory and needed to be reviewed three times a year. Although the Enrichment Programme was not statutory, the Virtual School considered it a right thing to do and hence was committed to providing enrichment opportunities enabling children and young people to participate in extra-curricular activities which had given them informal ways to learn and achieve.

Amana Gordon (Operational Director, Children and Young People Services) remarked that the Virtual School focused on supporting young people to be successful in education and training enabling them to go on to be successful adults. She also highlighted the impacts of the enrichment activities held in the summer, including organising residentials, weeklong projects and encouraging young people to join after school clubs. They had enabled young people to share different levels of experience.

Concluding the discussion, the Chair appreciated the work of the Virtual School and considered the stretched efforts should be articulated into sustainable values to shape future service delivery.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted and commented on the item.

5. HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM LOCAL AREA OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Peter Haylock (Operational Director for Education and SEND) presented the item and highlighted that H&F Local Area Outcomes Framework had been co-produced by children and young people (CYP) in H&F schools and was supported by the Council for Disabled Children. He then outlined the 5 key outcomes identified, what each meant for CYP, the key priority areas of work, and performance measurement.

On the Chair's concern as to how the 5 key outcomes had been developed, Peter Haylock said that the first phase of the development had involved some detailed in person focus groups with CYP with SEND in primary, secondary, and special schools across H&F. These stakeholders co-produced an annual survey which met different needs expressed in the focus groups for schools and parents as well as other young people to provide a response. The Framework was developed and then refined based on the survey outcomes. Peter added that his office would work with the stakeholders over the following weeks to prepare for the next survey to be held among the schools and families with CYP with SEND in January 2024.

Replying to the Chair's further question about partner organisations' involvement, Jacqui McShannon (Strategic Director of Children's Services) remarked that the

Children's Health, Education and Social Care Board was a joint-governance body working together for a range of joint projects/programmes for Children agenda, including support to CYP with SEND and the Local Area Outcomes Framework.

As regards the title of the initiative, Jacqui McShannon highlighted the long data summary presented in the strategic documents considered by the Cabinet, and the Health and Wellbeing Board. The explicit expression was made so that CYP could see their views reflected in the surveys were acted upon. Peter Haylock added that the Framework was specifically focused on H&F's CYP with SEND rather than just generic outcomes.

Peter Haylock informed members that the performance for the outcomes (page 41) contained both qualitative and quantitative measures driven by hard data and survey feedbacks. On how these would impact on the educational outcomes as asked by the Chair, Peter said that the performance of the CYP with SEND in the last four years were captured in the school cards. He undertook to provide a sample SEND scorecard to the Committee.

ACTION: Peter Haylock

Given the performance under the Framework had been measured and tracked as outlined on page 41, Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan considered it helpful to provide data sets already available as baseline measures to assess how the Framework had been developing over time. Councillor Alex Sanderson (Cabinet Member for Children and Education) explained that after setting up the Framework, the local authority would gain a clear understanding of the picture from the data gathered and share them. Jacqui McShannon stressed that they would continue to monitor and measure success against the outcomes framework for analysing and reporting. The Chair advised that it would be useful at this stage to comment on the performance measures and for them to be more closely aligned with the outcomes.

Nandini Ganesh asked about the profile of CYP with SEND being included in the focus groups and held discussions with the local authority. She was concerned whether they could articulate their views well on complex subjects relating to employment and education. Peter Haylock noted that the CYP with SEND came from a wide mix of mainstream and different special schools. Before moving to the phase of survey and collecting data, the local authority had made sure there was a clear understanding of the questions. As this was a Framework for CYP, the authority had worked in conjunction with the schools and not parents to capture their views. On performance measures involving schools and families, these were reflected in the surveys which were co-produced with the young people.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted and commented on the report.

6. IMPLEMENTING THE INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY IN EDUCATION

Peter Haylock (Operational Director for Education and SEND) updated members on the progress of delivering the Industrial Strategy in Education, which was a lifetime

approach to STEMMM skills under a cradle to adulthood offer. He then shared the progress made so far.

Referring to the conference with teachers co-hosted by Imperial College in July, the Chair said she was looking forward to seeing practical actions, like mentoring schemes and apprenticeship offer, which would be delivered through the Industrial Strategy in Education. Peter Haylock highlighted that after the conference, a number of events had been held in White City for young people to have had interviews with businesses. Moreover, 20 businesses and 20 schools were being matched to work on curriculum mapping and delivery. They had mapped out pilot activities which would be promoted and spread to similar schools. Lastly there was an explanation of the way in which the development of inclusive employment through the Economy Team had been devised through tracking all apprenticeship opportunities within the borough.

Peter Haylock briefed that the Economy Team was meeting with Education, and the People and Talent teams regularly to review existing opportunities and gaps that needed to be filled and then developed. In response to the Chair's suggestion of inviting external people to provide inputs, Peter said that the Industrial Strategy Board had been bringing the right people together. Jacqui McShannon (Strategic Director of Children's Services) advised that more information on the oversight of the Industrial Strategy in Education would be available to this Committee when it considered the Annual Education Report.

ACTION: Peter Haylock

To foster partnerships between the Virtual School and local businesses, the Chair suggested holding a forum on future industries in the borough such that the Virtual School could go beyond learning, training and enrichment to include apprenticeship opportunities offered by local businesses for care experienced young people. Jacqui McShannon highlighted that events had been held to help schools build a curriculum that got ahead of the national agenda and standards so that H&F's CYP were able to envision a future that might be quite different from now.

Councillor Lucy Richardson was concerned about access, signposting and inclusivity of the activities and opportunities under the Industrial Strategy in Education. Specifically, she asked whether these activities would be available online and still accessible to care experienced young people beyond the age of 25, and whether they would be promoted by social workers and HCP workers.

Peter Haylock remarked that once ascertaining the positive impacts of the pilot programmes, dedicated websites that showed all industrial strategy in education activities would come on board. In terms of employment, he assured that it was truly inclusive. While an annual review for opportunities to be provided for young people had already started for Year 9, it would continue to develop further moving forward, including signposting any employment opportunities for HCP as early as possible.

Councillor Alex Sanderson (Cabinet Member for Children and Education) informed the meeting that Imperial College had a lot of information for people with Autism, from providing advice to employment opportunities. She and the Chair exchanged

views on inclusion related to online science and global innovation districts, and industrial partners in Barcelona and Milan.

In reply to Councillor Richardson's further question, Peter Haylock said that it was up to the individual Academy whether and how to track their students' careers education, by tracking and listing achievements against the benchmark and recording encounters with local businesses.

Noting that work experience opportunities were usually offered for young people leaving care or secondary school, Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan was keen to link Industrial Strategy in Education with secondary school students. She was concerned how STEMMM employer accredited teacher training could enhance teachers' career guidance such that the students could be in touch with employers early. Peter Haylock remarked that it was in the plan to grow and develop the accredited teacher training. They also intended to start industrial education for students at Key Stage 2/3 and develop bespoke curriculum involving new internship and work experience opportunities. On offering computer science in all secondary schools in response to digital economy, Peter explained that the local authority could not mandate the subjects to be offered and the lack of computer science teachers was a real challenge to schools. The purpose of bringing in businesses to schools was a means to support STEMMM education. That was why at Key Stage 3, a pilot programme would be developed to enhance the subjects of computer science as well as design & technology through working with the business experts.

Nandini Ganesh asked if people supported internship as part of Industrial Strategy in Education as they might not necessarily lead to employment. Reiterating that annual reviews in Year 9 would start to prepare the children, Peter Haylock said internship was a big part of the initiative and would be developed further with the increasing number of participating businesses. He noted that about 72% of such opportunities had turned to employment.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted and commented on the report.

7. SUMMER IN THE CITY 2023

Peter Haylock (Operational Director of Education and SEND) provided an overview of the delivery of the Summer in the City programme this summer. The programme aimed to deliver enriching activities and food across the school holidays.

Jacqui McShannon, (Director of Children's Services) commended the Summer in the City programme, the staff invited, and all 28 providers involved for their amazing work over the summer this year. She highlighted that the programme was fantastic and enriching. However, they did encounter some difficulties with ghost bookings, the bad weather and uniformed services having new age restrictions.

Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan emphasised that Summer in the City was a great programme with the number of participants and providers kept going up in the past three years. She asked for the definition of the term 'unique children and young

people'. Jacqui McShannon noted that the term distinguished itself from total headcount as some of the participants took part in more than one event. That was why 3,435 unique children and young people had resulted in 18,998 total attendances. As to why the number of unique participants was lowest among the three years in 2023, Peter Haylock said it might be due to bad weather and more people travelled out of London after the lifting of the COVID restrictions. The new age restrictions imposed by the uniformed services might also contribute to the low attendance.

On Councillor Afzal-Khan's concern about enlisting the breakdown in attendance and how did it guide future planning, Jacqui McShannon explained that although the Summer in the City programme was targeted at all children, the aim was to reach children that might not benefit from summer vacations. The breakdown helped the Children's Service gain a better understanding of the uptake interest for forward planning purpose. She added that the same set of data was not listed for the past two years because of the special circumstances back then when the country was still under COVID restrictions. Jacqui also noted that the demographic data compared well with the overall data of the borough, and the programme was reaching children as intended reflecting good accessibility. She hoped the enhanced promotion of the programme through social media and schools had improved its visibility. Councillor Afzal-Khan said she saw a lot of promotion of the programme in social media and noted that a couple of headmasters had received the information leaflets. She considered it might be helpful to encourage the schools to distribute the leaflets to the parents early to help boost the attendance.

Nandini Ganesh commented that to assure the parents about programme safety and quality, it might be useful to state the programme was suitable for children and list the providers involved.

Councillor Mercy Umeh congratulated officers on their work in the success of this programme. She highlighted the positive feedback received from The Nourish Hub, one of the providers at this year's Summer in the City programme.

Jacqui McShannon undertook to take on board members' comments to make the event more appealing among children and young people. She took the opportunity to send a special compliment to the Mayor who did a lot of promotion in the social media to motivate young people to join the programme.

The Chair remarked that it had been amazing to see the love and care that had gone into a number of activities in the event.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted and commented on the report.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted that the next two meetings would be held on 29 January and 25 March 2024.

Meeting started: 7.04 pm
Meeting ended: 8.30 pm

Chair

Contact officer Debbie Yau
Committee Coordinator
Corporate Services
E-mail: Debbie.yau@lbhf.gov.uk

Agenda Item 4

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Report to: Children and Education Policy & Accountability Committee

Date: 29/01/2024

Subject: 2024 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Report author: Andre Mark, Head of finance (Strategic planning and investment)
Tony Burton, Head of finance (Children's Services)

Responsible Director: Sukvinder Kalsi, Strategic Director of Finance
Jacqui McShannon Strategic Director of Children's Services

SUMMARY

Cabinet will present their revenue budget and Council Tax proposals to Budget Council on 28 February 2024. This report provides an update on the overall preparation and proposals for the 2024/25 revenue budget, risks, financial resilience, and the impact of those proposals. This report also sets out the budget proposals for the services covered by this Policy and Accountability Committee (PAC). An update is also provided on any proposed changes in fees and charges in the budget.

The strategic operating environment continues to be challenging (inflation, interest rates, economic stagnation, unemployment, real terms reduction in household incomes) and this will have an impact on the overall national and public finances. After the Chancellor's Autumn Statement in November 2023, analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies has estimated that considering current spending commitments across the public sector, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (which includes local government) may face a 3.4 per cent real terms cut each year from 2025/26 to 2028/29.¹

The budget proposals for 2024/25 are intended to protect our statutory services, deliver services valued by residents/businesses/visitors, promote the prosperity of the Borough, and support the poorest and most vulnerable in society. All our services have been funded at a time of continued austerity within local government since 2010.

Hammersmith & Fulham is unique in many ways. In recent years the Council has been able to abolish home care charges, provide free breakfasts for school children, create a new Law Enforcement Team to keep our street safe and clean, maintain weekly bin collections across the borough, and end the use of bailiffs to collect Council Tax debt.

Despite the financial pressures on the council, our ruthlessly financially efficient approach (by generating more than £118m of efficiencies since 2014/15), securing more than £100m in contributions from developing the Borough and generating more than £60m in annual income). Few organisations would be able to deliver the same

¹ [What does the Autumn Statement mean for local government and public service spending? | Institute for Fiscal Studies \(ifs.org.uk\)](https://www.ifs.org.uk)

services they delivered over a decade ago with less than half of the resources available. In Hammersmith & Fulham we have not just maintained front line services that residents rely on, but we have gone further, providing new services like the local Law Enforcement Teams and free breakfasts in primary schools. We have also eased financial burdens that residents face by residents by abolishing home care costs and providing one of the country's most comprehensive Council Tax Support Schemes.

This has only been possible because of the ruthlessly financially efficient approach that we have taken to managing residents' money. We will continue to reform the council to ensure that we provide the best value for their money possible. This budget does this through innovative use of new technology and data, and council-wide efficiency programmes to streamline operations and ensure the best use of resources.

Despite the financial pressures on the council, our ruthlessly financially efficient approach has allowed us to keep Council Tax levels low. There is no better place to be a Council Taxpayer than right here in Hammersmith & Fulham. Not only do we have the third lowest council tax rates in the country, with this administration cutting or freezing Council Tax five times in the last nine years, but our Council Tax Support Scheme provides a discount to 42% of residents, with 11% of the most vulnerable paying nothing at all. This administration took the decision to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax entirely, and this year, for the first time, we will also exempt in-house foster carers and special guardians so that they do not pay a penny of Council Tax.

The objectives of the General Fund revenue budget proposals for 2024/25 set out in the report:

- Protect the delivery of our core statutory services.
- Continue to deliver services valued by residents/businesses/visitors.
- Ensure the safety of our residents/businesses/visitors.
- Promote the prosperity of the borough.
- Embeds an agile, modern and innovative approach within the Council.
- Maintains strong financial governance and resilience across the Council.

The proposals include investment of £10.7m across many services and will allow the continued delivery of the best services to our residents/businesses and visitors. This includes an extra £4.2m for Home Care, £1.3m to support school transport services for children, £1.5m for people affected by homelessness and £1.7m to support our housing services.

The Council will continue to manage its financial resources effectively to financial resilience and sustainability (including a good level of reserves and in year contingencies).

The Local Government Finance Act 1992 obliges the Council to set a balanced budget, and the detailed proposals contained in this report will put the Council in a strong position to be able to do so for the next financial year. Cabinet in February will need to consider these alongside the outcome of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement and any other funding statements that may follow.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Policy and Accountability Committee (PAC) considers the budget proposals and makes recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

Wards Affected: All

Our values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F values
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The council has a proud record of maintaining low Council Tax to its residents. The revenue budget for 2024/25 proposes savings and efficiencies across services and corporate functions that rationalise its estate and reduce its operating costs, whilst also delivering value for money from external contractors
Creating a compassionate council	The proposals in the revenue budget for 24/25 supports the ongoing investment in services that directly support residents in living, healthy and independent lives. This includes continuing to provide free homecare for older residents, providing Council Tax support to foster carers and increasing investment to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.
Building shared prosperity	A significant proportion of services are delivered in partnership with local and national companies, and this will continue to promote all business sectors to the benefit of residents.
Doing things with residents, not to them	The budget for 24/25 will invest in our Family Hubs, ensuring that every child, young person, and family is able to access the right support at the right time. The Hubs will also be developed by collaborating with children and young people and their families, family groups, the local third sector, the NHS and the council's children's services in genuine partnership.
Taking pride in H&F	The council's revenue budget will invest over £50m in public realm services. These services will provide access to safe clean, green spaces for all to enjoy, visit and live in. It will deliver improvements to highways,

	whilst continuing to invest in the Law Enforcement Team and regulatory services to crack down on anti-social behaviour and rogue traders.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The council has an ambitious target to become a net zero borough. To help achieve this, the budget will invest in the roll out of food waste caddies for more than 50,000 households, continue to keep our streets and parks clean, and take a tough stance against anyone dropping litter, creating graffiti, or dumping rubbish.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

Not Applicable

DETAILED ANALYSIS

The Budget Requirement and Gap

- The gross General Fund budget² rolled forward from 2023/24 to 2024/25 is £642.0m of which a **net budget requirement of £198.0m** is funded from council resources (such as Council Tax and business rates) and general government grant.

Table 1 – Budget rolled forward from 2023/24

2023/24 Budgeted Expenditure	£m
Housing benefit payments	91.2
Departmental budgets	550.8
Gross budgeted expenditure	642.0
Gross revenue income budget requirement (specific government grants, fees and charges and other contributions)	(444.0)
Net revenue budget requirement	198.0
To be met from:	
General grants	(56.7)
Locally retained business rates	(62.5)
2024/25 Council Tax requirement (including the adult social care precept)	(78.8)

Budget assumptions

² Figures exclude capital charges and internal service level agreements. These have a net nil impact on the budget.

Investment and growth pressures

- Additional investment and growth of £10.7m is being provided following the budget setting and review process. The proposed investment and growth items are summarised in Table 3 and for those relevant to this PAC in Table 4. The detailed investment proposals for this PAC are set out from paragraph 45 and in Appendix 1 to this report.

Table 3: 2024/25 Investment Proposals

Department	£m
Adult Social Care	4.8
Children Services	1.6
Environment	0.5
Corporate Services	0.2
Economy	1.5
Other Services	2.1
Total	10.7

Table 4: Investment and growth proposals relevant to this PAC

Proposal	£m
Travelcare and Support	1.271
Development of Family Hubs	0.260
Total	1.531

Savings and Income Generation

- After more than a decade of austerity, it is increasingly difficult to identify and deliver substantive savings. However, further savings are necessary if the financial challenge of real terms government funding cuts, unfunded burdens, inflation, and demand and growth pressures is to be met and the council has been able to find these. In the future, the Council must consider all available options to operate within the funding available to it.
- The proposed savings (including additional income) for 2024/25 are set out in Table 5. The savings proposals for this PAC are outlined in detail from paragraph 45 and in Appendix 1 to this report.

Table 5: 2024/25 firm savings and additional income

Department	£m
Adult Social Care and Public Health	(2.1)
Children Services	(1.6)
Environment	(1.5)
Corporate Services	(0.3)
Economy	(1.4)
Finance	(0.4)
Other Services	(0.8)
Total	(8.1)

5. The savings relevant to this PAC are summarised in table 6 below.

Table 6: Summary of savings relevant to this PAC

Proposal	£m
Placement service income generation	(0.325)
Client related non-placement spend	(0.100)
Post 19 Housing Pathways	(0.100)
Early Intervention Commissioning	(0.137)
Holiday food provision	(0.900)
Total savings	(1.562)

Inflation

6. Inflation has been consistently high over the past two years (reaching 10.5% in December 2022, and the highest level for 40 years). The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September 2023 is 6.7%. The Office of Budget Responsibility is forecasting inflation of 2.8% by Q4 of 2024/25 and the proposed budget for 2024/25 includes provision for both pay and price inflation in line with those assumptions: This budget allows for:

- Contract and external services inflation of £9.2m.
- £4.5m provision for a 2024/25 pay award (this equates to a 3.0% pay award)

Fees and Charges

7. Charges governed by statute are set in accordance with those requirements and not varied in accordance with inflation. For non-statutory **fees and charges** levied by the council, it is recommended that:
 - They are frozen for Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Housing in line with administration policy.
 - Commercial services that are charged on a for-profit basis, will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in response to market conditions and changed as appropriate, with due authorisations according to the Council constitution.
 - Parking charges and fines are to be set in line with transport policy objectives and not considered as part of the budget process.
 - A standard uplift of 6.7% is applied for other non-commercial and non-parking fees, as per September 2023 CPI.

There are no exceptions to these assumptions for this committee.

Local Government Finance Settlement and Core Spending Power

8. The provisional 2024/25 Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) was published by DHLUC on the 18th of December 2023. This statement outlines provisional funding allocations for local authorities for 2024/25 alongside the Core Spending Power for each authority. For the sixth year in a row, this was a single year funding settlement. There was not a great deal of new funding included, as much of the funding announced in the statement had already been declared in the 2023/24 LGFS, particularly funding ringfenced for Adult Social Care and Council Tax referendum limits.
9. Core Spending Power estimates total revenue funding available to authorities and includes Government assumptions on a maximum increase in Council Tax (4.99%) and business rates income (including compensation for under indexing the multiplier) as well as growth in the Council Tax base. The Statement provided an increase in Core Spending Power of 6.7% (the level of CPI inflation in September) if the council increases Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept to the maximum extent without triggering a local referendum. It also includes compensation for the decision to freeze the small business rates multiplier, which has resulted in lower council revenues in other areas, meaning that the actual increase in spending power is below inflation.
10. A summary of the Council's funding settlement and Core Spending Power in comparison to 2023/24 is set out in **Appendix 4**.
11. The 2024/25 Settlement continues the recent trend of single year funding settlements with no grant allocations confirmed beyond next year. The lack of future certainty continues to undermine effective medium-term financial planning and resource allocation. The planned review (Fair Funding Review) to explore changing how central grants are distributed between local authorities and with the potential for resetting the baselines for determining each local authority's need has been pushed back to April 2025 at the earliest after first being announced in 2016.

12. It should be noted that whilst the overall Core Spending Power for the Council has increased by £13.78m, only £5.75m (42%) of this relates to grant funding distributed directly to local authorities as part of the LGFS, as both Council Tax and business rates income are locally generated sources of income.

An explanation of the key funding streams is outlined below:

13. **Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)** – The SFA is made up of two elements: The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and the Baseline Funding Level (BFL). RSG is given to local authorities and can be used to finance revenue expenditure on any service. This grant has increased by £1.35m. This increase from 2023/24 is in line with the September CPI increase of 6.7%.
14. The BFL is the estimated retained Business Rates as calculated by the Government, usually uprated in line with the small business rates multiplier. The actual business rates estimated by the Council is set out in the business rates section below.
15. **Social Care funding** – There are four separate grants as part of the Core Spending Power which relate to Social Care funding. Except for the Social Care Support grant (which can be used for matters relating to Childrens and Adults social care), all the others are ringfenced and passported to the Social Care budget. The grants are as follows:
 - Social Care Support grant
 - Improved Better Care Fund
 - Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (now includes the MSIF Workforce Fund)
 - ASC Discharge Fund
16. A two-year funding package for social care was outlined in last year's LGFS and the funding this year represents the second year of this. Beyond 2024/25, it is unclear and uncertain the sustainability and level of funding which will be available to local authorities for social care.
17. **Compensation for the under-indexing of the business rates multiplier** – this is funding to compensate local authorities for lost business rates income arising from the decision to freeze the small business rates multiplier.
18. **New Homes Bonus** - There will be new rounds of New Homes Bonus (NHB) payments in 2024/25. In line with last year, these payments will not attract new legacy payments. It is unlikely that the New Homes Bonus will continue beyond 2024/25, and whether any alternative funding will be provided should this be the case.
19. **Services Grant** – The services grant has reduced by over 84% in 2024/25. The Government have made significant cuts to this funding (from £822m in 22/23 to £77m in 24/25) as it has been top sliced to offset the rising cost of other grants in the settlement. Although the local government finance policy statement on the 5th of December stated that this grant would reduce, the scale of reduction was not anticipated or communicated to local authorities earlier in the budget setting process.

20. Other Funding

21. **Household Support Fund (HSF)** - In 2021, the Department for Work and Pensions announced that vulnerable households across the country would be able to access a new support fund to help them with essentials over the winter. The total HSF allocated to Hammersmith and Fulham during 2023/24 was £2.8m, all of which is planned to be spent as part of the council's Cost of Living response.
22. However, after the Autumn Statement, it was confirmed by DHLUC that the HSF will not continue beyond 31 March 2024. At time of writing, it is not known if this funding will be replaced with another scheme or will be folded into existing funding, but the ending of this funding stream will place a significant additional financial burden on the Council and those most vulnerable and affected by the Cost-of-Living crisis.
23. There are other specific grants which sit outside the main LGFS and for which allocations have been announced. The Council will receive £24.3m for the Public Health Grant, £3.89m for the Homelessness Prevention Grant (a further £120m has been announced nationally but allocations are not known at the time of writing), plus £177.3m for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). These grants are ringfenced and are assumed will have a neutral impact in the current budget proposals.

Other Measures

24. It is estimated that £5.0m relating to income from investing cash balances will be available as favourable interest rates is assumed as per the Bank of England's economic forecast assumptions. This income will be used to balance the budget in 2024/25 and our cash balances and base rate assumptions will be reviewed throughout the financial year in line with our treasury management strategy.
25. A comprehensive review has been carried out across both front and back-office functions within parking services. This has resulted in a programme of measures that has delivered more effective and efficient systems and processes, particularly in permit and suspension management, together with the introduction of more streamlined delivery and operational models. Front line services benefit from the introduction of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technologies in on-street enforcement, and the continued roll out of automated cameras in moving traffic, capturing alerts and contraventions. This outcome of this review is reflected in the budget for 2024/25.
26. In addition, there are budget measures by reducing budgeted reserve contributions, realigning corporate charges between the HRA and General Fund and short-term contributions arising from lower than budgeted contributions to the concessionary fares (freedom pass) scheme. This is due to the impact of passenger usage on public transport in response to the pandemic and changes to ways of working. This is not expected to continue beyond 2024/25 as demand is forecast to return to pre pandemic levels and fares increase.

Council Tax

27. The Council is proud to have the third lowest Council Tax in England, and to have cut or frozen Council Tax in 5 of the last 9 years. LBHF also has one of the most progressive Council Tax support schemes in the country, with almost half of residents not paying the full amount, and those least able to pay facing no charge at all.
28. The national economic conditions of high inflation and interest rates made a Council Tax increase in 2023/24 unavoidable and a 2.99% increase in the Hammersmith & Fulham element of Council Tax was required to achieve a sustainable budget. As the current level of Council Tax is so low, even an increase of 2.99% keeps the overall level well below other local authorities.
29. The budget proposals assume Council Tax will be increased by the maximum modelled in the Government's Core Spending Power calculations, including the ringfenced Adult Social Care precept. The level of Council Tax increase reflects the assumption that has been outlined by Central Government in the Autumn Statement made on the 17 November by the Chancellor and assumed in the funding settlement for local government. The additional income will fund rising costs, protect, and support investment in key services for residents, and strengthen future financial resilience. The increase is equivalent to £26 per annum, or 50p per week, for 2024/25 (at Band D).
For the Adult Social Care precept, this is the equivalent to £17.44 per annum, or less than 35p per week (at Band D).
30. For 2024/25, despite the financial pressures on the council, our ruthlessly financially efficient approach has allowed us to keep Council Tax levels low. There is no better place to be a Council Taxpayer than here in Hammersmith & Fulham. Not only do we have the third lowest council tax rates in the country, but our Council Tax Support Scheme provides discounts and exemptions to many residents, with the most vulnerable paying nothing at all.
31. This administration took the decision to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax entirely, and this year, for the first time, we will also exempt in-house foster carers and special guardians so that they do not pay a penny of Council Tax.
32. As set out in table 7 below, it is estimated that 42% of residents will not be required to pay the full increase (as they will be supported through the single person household discounts, Council Tax Support, and exemptions).

Table 7: Liability for Council Tax at November 2023

Total dwellings in the borough	94,117
Reductions:	
Exemptions (mainly students, includes care leavers and vacant properties)	(3,415)
Council Tax support claimants (elderly & working age on low income)	(10,087)
Single person discount (25% discount)	(26,143)
Dwellings liable for 100% of Council Tax	54,472
	58%

Business Rates

33. The recent change in legislation has meant that the business rates multiplier has been 'decoupled' and ministers now have the power to set different levels of rates for the elements of the multiplier (small and standard multipliers). The Autumn Statement confirmed that the standard multiplier rate would increase in line with September's CPI inflation (6.7%).
34. There will be a freeze in 2024/25 for the small business rate multiplier for the fourth year in a row. The 75% Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief will be also extended for 2024-25. Local authorities will be compensated by the government for the resultant loss of income from these measures.
35. The forecast assumes that Hammersmith & Fulham will receive and retain the minimum amount guaranteed, the safety net threshold, by Government. This is £62.5m for 2024/25.

Risk and financial resilience

36. Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Strategic Director of Finance is required to include, in the budget report, a view of the robustness of the 2024/25 estimates and also views of the adequacy of the balances and reserves the budget provides for in light of the medium-term risks facing the authority.
37. An updated reserves strategy and forecast will be included within the suite of finance reports presented to Cabinet and Full Council.
38. The current reserves forecast is set out in Table 8 and models a fall in overall general fund reserves and balances to £91.6m by 2027/28. This assumes a balanced budget is set each year with no further call on reserves.

Table 8: Reserves and general balances - cash flow forecast to 2027/28

	April 2023 £m	April 2024 £m	April 2025 £m	April 2026 £m	April 2027 £m
General balances (recommended range £19m - £23m)	21.3	21.3	21.3	21.3	21.3
Earmarked reserves	98.3	72.0	62.0	68.7	70.2
Sub Total	119.6	93.3	83.4	90.0	91.6
Developer contributions (Subject to separate monitoring and approval)	48.9				

39. The Council's general balance for 2023/24 is £21.3m. This equates to 3.8% (14 days spend) of the Council's gross budget of £550.8m. The Strategic Director of Finance

has recommended that the optimal range for the general balance is between £19m and £23m.

40. Reserves play a crucial role in good public financial management. They enable investment in service transformation and provide resilience against unexpected events or emergent needs.
41. Hammersmith & Fulham holds reserves for two main purposes:
 - As a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies – this forms part of general balances.
 - To build up funds for known or predicted requirements; these specific reserves are known as earmarked reserves.
42. Reserves are also a key enabler for future service transformation. The financial challenge facing the council will require investment to deliver future efficiencies to enable the council to balance the budget in future years.
43. The lack of an appropriate safety net has resulted in several councils running into financial difficulties. Over the last two years, nine local authorities have produced a section 114 notice (this is a notice from the s151 officer in their view that a Council's resources are not sufficient to fund its forecasted expenditure for a financial year) and one in five local authorities have reported that they "think it is very or fairly likely that their chief finance officer will need to issue a Section 114 notice this year or next due to a lack of funding to keep key services running".³

Key Risks

44. The key financial risks that face the Council have been identified and are set out below:
 - The continuing economic conditions relating to inflation, interest rates, unemployment, real household incomes (these may all increase our service delivery costs, recovery of income and viability of major projects).
 - The increasing national legislative requirements (e.g., Environment Act 2021, Social Regulation 2023) will add additional pressures on our service delivery.
 - The increasing regulation from national government (e.g., OfLog, Housing Ombudsman, CQC) will increase our cost burdens.
 - The demographic pressures especially on Adult Services, Childrens Services (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), homelessness (temporary accommodation) and people from abroad will continue (as is the case nationally for many other local authorities). This is a combination of a number of factors including the Covid-19 recovery, addressing pent-up demand and supply issues post Brexit.
 - Higher pay inflation particularly given current labour shortages.
 - The stabilisation and restoration of Hammersmith Bridge, with the council incurring revenue and capital costs at risk until government funding is confirmed.
 - The future impact on London of the government's 'levelling-up' agenda and wider local government finance reform (such as business rates)

³ [Section 114 fear for almost 1 in 5 council leaders and chief executives after cashless Autumn Statement | Local Government Association](#)

- The impact of the wider economy on major council development projects and future contributions from developers
- The impact of, and costs of, tackling climate change
- The challenge of identifying further significant future savings that balance the budget over the longer-term.

Departmental risks for the services covered by this PAC are set out in Appendix 2.

Comments of the Strategic Director for Children’s Services on the 2024/25 Budget Proposals

45. Children’s Services in Hammersmith and Fulham are passionate about delivering excellent services to our children and families. Our 2023 refreshed vision for Children’s Services is:

Building a better future for children and young people.

We are committed to making Hammersmith and Fulham a place where every child and young person has the best possible start to lead happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives, and are equipped with the skills to achieve and realise their full potential. We want our children to feel confident, safe, and experience a sense of belonging.

We commit to listen and respond to the voice of our children, young people, and staff, and empower them to lead the development of our future services.

Our highly skilled teams will nurture collaborative partnerships to ensure services remain efficient, responsive and support the building of resilience and prosperity for all children and young people.

46. The directorate is driven by strong and stable leadership which drives unwavering pace, focus and commitment to delivering whole system continuous improvements, the coherence of which are manifested in key cross cutting strategies including the Early Intervention Strategy, SEND Strategy and Youth Crime Prevention Strategy.
47. Our staff are our most important asset, and our frontline practitioners exemplify care, compassion, and a child centred and systemic approach. We are proud to have a dedicated, capable, and confident workforce that has the skills, expertise, and perseverance to deliver high quality services to our children, young people, and families. That said, recruitment and retention of experienced children’s practitioners remains a priority in a challenging market.
48. Our focus on continuously reinvigorating our practice and enhancing our service synergy is complimented by our dynamic partnerships with Health and our community and third-sector partners. Our internal and external partners support and encourage us to evolve and grow our offer. A hallmark has been our willingness to lead and influence practice initiatives sub regionally, pan London and nationally.

49. We drive and equally benefit from high stakeholder engagement and expectations particularly with our children, young people, parents, and carers whose voice and views are reflected in the design, development, and delivery of services. The profile of children's voices is championed and valued consistently throughout the council.
50. Children's Social Care has an Ofsted rating of Good overall. The Youth Justice Service is rated Outstanding by HMIP in 2022. 100% of our schools are also rated Good or Outstanding; children and young people consistently attend and achieve better in Hammersmith and Fulham than their peers nationally. A monitoring visit of the Front Door services in January 2022 recognised "exemplary practices" and in September 2023 we had a positive Annual Engagement Meeting with Ofsted for both Children's Social Care and Education and Schools which further recognised our continued strong performance.
51. There have been many achievements across the directorate in 2023/24. These include:
- Selection by the Department for Education as the only London borough to participate in a national pilot which will test the impact of innovative approaches to help keep families together and children out of care where appropriate.
 - Care Experienced has been recognised as a protected characteristic in H&F, demonstrating the Council's commitment as a Corporate Parent to ending the disparity and inequality faced by care experienced young people.
 - The opening of the Care Leavers HUB - (Hope, Unity and Belong) which provides a homely in borough space with access to a life skills centre with kitchen, a relaxed space for relationship building, group workspace and music and creative arts room. The HUB was a cross partnership project which includes Keir, Housing, Commissioning and Childrens Services.
 - Continued focus on local capacity of semi-independent living accommodation for young people in care, at risk of homelessness and care leavers 16+ securing 27 bed spaces through the purchase of three properties in H&F and the recent reopening of a high specification 13 bed unit refurbished by Notting Hill Genesis in collaboration with Centrepont.
 - The launch of our coproduced Early Intervention Strategy which is driving the development of Family Hubs to make it simpler for families to access a wide range of council services.
 - Extended our youth offer and holiday activities programme through strong partnerships with the third sector.
 - Enhanced our support to young carers with an engaging programme of activities and opportunities.

- Implementation of the Industrial Strategy in education through inclusive apprenticeships and a diverse offer of support to meet the individual needs of our care experienced young people.
 - Whole system transformation of SEND services with our new coproduced Local Area SEND Strategy, development of our outcomes framework with children, young people, and their families and increased capacity to support the offer to children and young people.
 - The Education Learning Partnership has been embedded with excellent feedback from school partners.
 - Delivery of an extensive Inclusive Youth Council programme of activities to ensure that children and young people are involved in what's going on in the borough and their voices are heard, valued, and acted upon.
 - The launch of our inclusive and nurturing schools programme in 10 LA schools through grant funding from the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) promoting attachment and trauma awareness and positive relationships.
52. These achievements have been delivered in the context of rising need for services, market fragility, the cost-of-living crisis and the national economic position which have all posed as significant risks to the service in meeting need within the financial constraints. We have continued to respond dynamically to these risks and have well developed systems to monitor and manage them.
53. Our aspiration and ambition to ensure consistent and compassionate care and improved outcomes is underpinned by a continuing commitment to protect the quality of services to the most vulnerable members of the community within the statutory framework required of the directorate. Equally strong is the central commitment to work with children, young people and their families in the design and development of services that affect them. Our priorities for the year ahead include:
- Continuing to build on our partnership arrangements both internally and externally including a focus on transition planning for young people preparing for adulthood.
 - Fully implementing our enhanced Housing offer and pathways for care leavers.
 - Adopting the Pan London Care Leavers Compact proposals to maximise consistency and quality in the 'local offers' of support to care leavers.
 - Implementing the pilot to help keep families together and children out of care where appropriate.
 - Launching our Family Hubs – one specialist hub, and hubs in both the North and South of the borough.

- Implementing our ambitious SEND Sufficiency and capital programme.
- Continued focus on workforce recruitment and retention to retain and attract experienced social workers.
- Leading the West London pilot programme to recruit and retain local foster carers and provide them with high quality wrap around support and care.
- Embedding our new Attendance Alliance and enhanced Outreach Offer which underpin our vision and values for the high attainment, positive wellbeing, and wider outcomes for all children.
- Working with local business and schools as part of The Industrial Strategy to ensure that local children have the best possible chance to benefit from local job opportunities.
- Consolidating schools' climate networks and expanding the climate education training for governors. We will be implementing the new DfE guidance on climate education.

54. Investment in 2024/25 has been prioritised in key area to address sustained demand led pressures whilst investing in key areas to improve the quality and accessibility of services for children, young people, and their families. These include:

- The creation of Family Hubs which represents a whole system reform programme to bring together multiple organisations to make it easier for families to get the help and support they need when they need it. Building on our strong services, this partnership programme is a key component of our Early Intervention Strategy, increasing and expanding integration across a range of services.
- The investment in our home to school travel care service reflects the increasing demand and complexity of need, against a backdrop of considerable market fragility. H&F experienced provider failure in 2022, which a fast-paced mobilisation to recommission an alternative provider which ensured the continued high-quality delivery of this statutory service at almost no additional cost.
- Significant growth into Adult Social Care to create a new Integrated Transitions Team, underpins our joint commitment to ensuring children and young people receive continuity of high-quality services and, are actively involved in decision making about their future.

55. The savings proposals are consistent with our vision and high aspirations for our children, young people, and their families as we review services against the need to ensure they are as responsive and efficient as they can be and offer the right outcomes for children and young people.

Budget 2024/25

56. Children's Services proposed net budget for 2024/25 is £62.127m. Within this sum are areas over which the service has little direct control, these are defined as non-

controllable and include contributions to Corporate Services and capital charges. In total these add up to £9.581m. This means that the net direct expenditure that the directorate is in control of is £52.456m. Table 10 below sets out how controllable expenditure is budgeted across the various departments within the directorate showing that the greatest share of net general fund expenditure is on Children and Young People's Services, £30.158m (57%) of net controllable expenditure.

Table 9. CHS Full Net Budget 2024-25

Directorate	Controllable	Support Services and Depreciation	Total
Children's Commissioning	4,958,300	777,400	5,735,700
Education	15,252,200	2,241,500	17,493,700
Children and Young People's Services	30,158,200	4,227,700	34,385,900
School Funding	0	0	0
CHS Departmental Budgets	49,200	1,904,500	1,953,700
Children's Performance & Improvement	2,127,900	430,200	2,558,100
Total	52,545,800	9,581,300	62,127,100

Table 10. CHS 2024-25 Controllable Budget

Directorate	2024-25 Expenditure £'s	2024-25 Income £'s	Total Net £'s	% share
Education	106,281,600	-91,029,400	15,252,200	29%
Children and Young People's Services	40,769,500	-10,611,300	30,158,200	57%
Children's Commissioning	6,453,700	-1,495,400	4,958,300	9%
CHS Departmental Budgets	719,200	-670,000	49,200	0%
Children's Performance & Improvement	2,527,300	-399,400	2,127,900	4%
Total	156,751,300	-104,205,500	52,545,800	100%
School Funding	10,623,000	-10,623,000	0	0%

Equality Implications

A draft Equality Impact Analysis (EIA), which assesses the impacts on equality of the main items in the budget proposals relevant to this PAC, is attached as Appendix 3. A final EIA will be reported to Budget Council in February 2024.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT

No.	Description of Background Papers	Name/Ext. of holder of file/copy	Department/ Location
1.	None		

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Savings and investment proposals

Appendix 2 – Risks

Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessments

Appendix 4 – Spending Power Calculation

Children's Services and Education

Change and Savings Proposals				Budget Change			
Ref Nos	Service	Title & Theme	Summary	2024-25 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2025-26 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2026-27 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2027-28 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)
Firm Change and Savings Proposals							
1	Children and Young Peoples Services	Placement service income generation	This proposal aligns the budget to the current profile of placements where there is joint health funding. There will be no impact on children and young people.	(325)	(325)	(325)	(325)
2	Children and Young Peoples Services	Client related non-placement spend	Reform care support via a targeted line by line review to identify efficiency opportunities to secure high quality packages at optimal cost, including capitalising on opportunities for external funding to invest in creating our own provision	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
3	Children and Young Peoples Services	Post 19 Housing Pathways	Through collaboration with Housing, to enable care leavers to transition into the Housing Pathway earlier, with increased floating support to ensure the transition is successful.	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
4	Children's Commissioning	Early Intervention Commissioning	It is proposed to align the budgets to current expenditure following the recommission. There is no proposed change to delivery	(137)	(137)	(137)	(137)
5	Food Poverty	Holiday food provision	Embedding long-term holiday food provision offer using the council's bulk purchasing power to more effectively procure long-term holiday food	(900)	(900)	(900)	(900)
Total Firm Change and Savings Proposals				(1,562)	(1,562)	(1,562)	(1,562)
Investment, Demand and Demographic Growth				Budget Change			
Ref Nos	Service	Title & Theme	Summary	2024-25 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2025-26 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2026-27 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2027-28 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)
Firm Investment, Demand and Demographic Growth							
1	Education Special Educational Needs	Travelcare and Support - Education and Health Care Plan Demand Led Growth	Investment reflects the increased demand of children and young people accessing travel care and support services, whilst maintaining the same high-level quality of provision.	1,271	1,769	2,326	2,884
2	Children and Young Peoples Services	Development of Family Hubs - Full Year effect Investment 2024-25	Investment in launching Family Hubs which will act as a single point of access to help families navigate and receive the support they need when they need it.	260	260	260	260
Total Firm Investment, Demand and Demographic Growth Proposals				1,531	2,029	2,586	3,144

Children's Services Risk/Challenges

Department & Division	Short Description of Risk	Mitigation
Children's Services		
Education and SEND	Sustained travel care growth across all client groups (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Children Looked After) in excess of current growth.	Robust assurance processes, route optimisations and transport sharing opportunities.
Children and Young Peoples Services	Increased presentation of need / cost, and subsequent growth in referrals and staff capacity to meet need.	Current additional fourth Contact and Assessment Team to support managing throughput of need, undertaking risk assessments, close monitoring of need.

Children's Services Growth Proposals

1. £1,271,000 - Travelcare and Support demand led pressure

Officers have assessed that the proposed budget growth will have a positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics and in particular age and disability, allowing the Council to continue to respond to growing demands and meet its obligations under published travel care policies.

2. £260,000 - Development of Family Hubs

Officers have assessed that the proposed budget growth will have a positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics, making it simpler for families to access a wide range of council services. The hubs will allow the council and its partners to support all children and young people from pre-birth to adulthood, and their families, through earlier intervention. Family Hubs act as a single point of access to help families navigate and receive the support they need when they need it.

Childrens Services Savings Proposals

1. £325,000 - Children and Young Peoples Services Placement Income Generation

It is expected that these proposals will have a neutral impact on groups that share with protected characteristics as there will be no impact/change to placements for children and young people as a result of this increased income target.

2. £100,000 - Client Related Non-Placement Spend

It is expected that there will be a neutral impact for groups that share protected characteristics. Those children and young people who continue to require non-placement packages of support will continue to receive these. Efficiencies and step-down opportunities will be accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment to identify any potential impact. They will only be implemented where it is deemed appropriate and not expected to have a detrimental impact on children and young people and their families.

3. £100,000 - Post 19 Housing Pathway

It is expected that this proposal will have a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics. There is a clear pathway to independence, providing young people with substantial support including key worker, social care and housing support. Young people will only be moved on when deemed appropriate and will require approval at Housing Panel which considers young people's individual needs. This is because additional floating support will be

provided to post 19 care leavers to ensure that their transition into the Housing pathway is successful and to encourage independence.

4. £900,000 - Redesign of holiday food provision

It is expected that the proposals will have a positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics. Residents will be supported through alternative holiday food provision alongside the existing Holiday Activities and Food Scheme. Residents will also be able to access the council's cost of living services as well as support through council supported third sector partners offering food support.

5. £137,000 - Early Intervention Commissioning

It is proposed to align the budget to the current contracted arrangements following the procurement of Early Intervention Services in 2022/23.

It is furthermore proposed to change a funding stream for Virtual Reality Workforce Development training to release General Fund savings.

Neither proposal will impact on groups with shared protected characteristics.

Funding within Core Spending Power	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	Change £m	Change %
<i>Government grant funding</i>				
Revenue Support Grant (part of Settlement Funding Assessment)	20.19	21.54	1.35	7%
New Homes Bonus grant	1.19	1.60	0.41	34%
Social Care Support grant	17.28	20.59	3.31	19%
Multiplier cap compensation	10.93	12.32	1.39	13%
Services grant	2.50	0.39	(2.11)	(84%)
General Grants (excludes cap compensation tariff and housing benefit admin grant)	52.09	56.44	4.35	
<i>Ringfenced Social Care grants</i>				
Improved better care fund	10.02	10.02	0	0%
ASC Discharge Fund	1.41	2.34	0.93	66%
Market sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF) [now includes the MSIF workforce fund]	2.15	4.02	1.87	87%
MSIF Workforce Fund ¹	1.40	0	(1.40)	(100%)
<i>Sub-total grant funding</i>	67.07	72.82	5.75	
<i>Locally generated sources</i>				
Baseline Funding Level (part of Settlement Funding Assessment)	64.17	67.58	3.41	5%
Government assumed Council Tax yield (increase of 4.99% including 2% adult social care precept)	73.18	77.95	4.18	7%
Total	204.11	217.89	13.78	6.7%

¹ This grant was not included in the Core Spending Power for 23/24 but is now rolled into the 24/25 calculations