



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 28 NOVEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SOCIAL WORK SERVICES
REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

BY: CHIEF OFFICER HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE MORAY

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the budget position for Children and Families Social Work Services as at 30 September 2023.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (A) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the consideration of capital and revenue budgets and long term financial plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee scrutinises and notes the budget position at 30 September 2023.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The report highlights those areas of the budget where there is a significant percentage variance identified at 30 September 2023.

4. BUDGET POSITION

- 4.1 The spend at 30 September 2023 is £9,448,000 against a budget to date of £9,907,000, giving an underspend of £459,000 as shown in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.2 The area teams budget has an overspend of £81,000 which is mainly made up of a £52,000 overspend on self directed support, home to school transport for foster children £14,000 and one-off external legal fees £10,000. Self directed support is currently being reviewed with a paper being presented to this Committee.
- 4.3 The underspend in commissioning is £415,000. The contract for children with disabilities residential care has an underspend of £272,000, this is due to the young people transitioning to adult services but continuing to occupy the residential unit and leaving no beds available. Alternative accommodation

options for young people with disabilities are being looked into. Out of area placements are £46,000 under budget, although this can fluctuate due to the weekly cost of a placement. Savings of £245,000 were approved at Moray Council on 1 March 2023 (para 5 of minute refers) and will be posted in quarter 3. Due to the delay in a new contract starting there is slippage of £20,000. There are currently two contracts which have come to an end and commissioning are looking at merging the funding to create a single contract which will meet the needs of neuro-divergent young people. This will help reduce the pressure on the self directed support budget.

- 4.4 Corporate parenting has an underspend of £126,000 which is mainly due to underspends on adoption allowances and legal fees £23,000, fostering fees and allowances £67,000 and throughcare/aftercare grants £15,000. The balance is made up of various minor underspends.

5. ESTIMATED OUTTURN

- 5.1 The estimated outturn for 2023/24 is £19,363,000 against a budget of £20,086,000 resulting in an estimated underspend for the year of £723,000. The £723,000 underspend is after the £245,000 saving in paragraph 4.3 is taken.
- 5.2 There is an anticipated overspend on the area teams of £105,000. This is made up of self directed support £82,000, home to school transport for foster children £23,000, one-off legal fees £10,000 and section 22 payments £16,000. Since the pandemic there has been an increase in section 22 payments. There are other minor underspends which reduce the overspend.
- 5.3 The anticipated underspend on commissioning is made up of children with disabilities residential contract £300,000, slippage in Restorative Practice contract starting £20,000 and the review of two contracts which have ended £104,000.
- 5.4 The main underspends are adoption allowances and post adoption support £42,000, fostering fees and allowances £143,000, throughcare/aftercare grants £29,000 and one-off income for an adoption placement in Moray of £36,000. The underspends are reduced by an overspend on adoption placements with other local authorities of £23,000. Other minor underspends make up the balance of the underspend.
- 5.5 Staff savings from vacancies and appointment below top of scale are anticipated to exceed the budget by £146,000

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The Children's Services Revenue Budget has particular reference to National Outcome 8 – we have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

- (b) Policy and Legal**
The Council has statutory responsibilities to meet educational needs, the needs of children and young people in need and those it looks after.
- (c) Financial implications**
The resource implications are set out in this report and at **Appendix 1**. The underspend as at 30 September 2023 is £459,000 against a budget to date of £9,907,000. The estimated year end position is expenditure of £19,363,000 against a budget of £20,086,000 resulting in an underspend of £723,000.
- (d) Risk implications**
Budget Managers are aware of their responsibilities for managing budget allocations and approval for any variances will be sought from Committee in line with the Financial Regulations.
- (e) Staffing implications**
There are no staffing implications associated with this report.
- (f) Property**
There are no property implications associated with this report.
- (g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**
An Equality Impact Assessment is not required because the report is to inform the Committee on budget monitoring.
- (h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**
No climate change and biodiversity impacts arise directly from this report.
- (i) Consultations**
Chief Financial Officer and Caroline O'Connor, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report where it relates to their areas of responsibility.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 That Committee scrutinises and notes the budget position as at 30 September 2023.

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Background Papers:
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