

Annual Governance Statement: Progress on 2017/18 Actions

Issue	2017/18 Issue/Actions to be taken	Responsible officer(s)	Half Year Update – November 2018
<p>1. Children's Services Financial Position <i>(Brought forward from 2016/17)</i></p>	<p>The Children's Services budget position continues to face demand pressures in 2018/19 due to the volumes of social work being managed, the nature of cases being received (including higher dependency needs) and increasing costs of placements associated with these. This has led to a need for an increase in social workers to manage demand.</p> <p>Arrangements will continue to maintain awareness and ensure effective budget and case management continues at all levels within the service to monitor and manage demand and budget pressures relating to intervention, prevention and permanence planning to ensure that services and resources are not diverted from elsewhere within the Council.</p> <p>Half year Issue Update: The Children's Services budget position continues to face demand pressures in 2018/19. There are 2 main reasons for this an increase in the volume of work being referred into the Social Work Service and secondly sustained pressure on our out of borough budget as a result of the number and complexity of children placed.</p>	<p>Director of Children's Services</p>	<p>The Children's Services budget position is closely monitored and reported regularly. Action plans are developed and reviews of services provided are ongoing to mitigate against any demand and financial cost pressures, as far as possible. However, the financial pressures on Children's services are reflective of the national picture and pressures experienced by the majority of Local Authorities across the country.</p> <p>During 18/19 and into 19/20 the Council will invest additional resources in social work capacity to manage caseloads, improve Social Work and the recruitment and retention of Social Workers. The department also continues to develop services to manage demand and reduce the numbers of children entering the care system eg. Family Group Conferences. Our requirement to set a balanced budget for 19/20 includes detailed consideration of the ongoing pressures on Social Care.</p>

APPENDIX 1

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	<p>An additional area of concern is the number of social workers within Children’s Services who have a higher than recommended caseload. This was an issue identified in the SIF inspection in 2017 and has been an area that has been highlighted in the recent focussed visit by Ofsted in November 2018.</p> <p>Effective budget and case management continues at all levels within the service to monitor and manage demand and budget pressures relating to intervention, prevention and permanence planning. To ensure that statutory services to children in need of help and protection and cared for children are prioritised.</p>		
<p>2. Highways Inspection Arrangements</p>	<p>Ensure an effective inspection regime is in place in respect of the Highway Network (including in relation to bridges and structures) in accordance with the frequency and standards set out in the Well-maintained Highways Code of Practice (since updated and replaced by the "Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A code of practice").</p>	<p>Director of Growth & Development</p>	<p>Discussions have taken place during this year with the Council’s partner and action plans have been agreed and are underway with regular performance monitoring and quality checks to ensure inspections are up to date and in accordance with the Code of Practice by 31st March 2019.</p>