

**Minutes Extract - Performance, Budget Monitoring and MTF5 item
Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel
22 November 2023**

The Chair invited Alison Hinds, Director of Children's Services, to introduce the report.

The Director advised the panel the presentation would cover include budget and performance information specifically in relation to children services. The Director invited James Barlow, Finance Business Partner, to present the draft budget 2024-2025 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

A copy of the presentation is attached.

The panel were invited to comment on the draft budget presentation.

A panel member asked whether budget efficiencies referred to in the presentation totalling £6.8 million had been identified.

Amanda Sherrard, Corporate Analytics Manager, advised the panel that in year efficiencies of £6.2 million (2023-2024) have been identified of which £4.2 million are one-off savings. The efficiency savings for children services related to internal residential home as there are plans to open new residential homes. As a result of delay in the opening date this has provided savings. In addition, there is generally staffing underspend in children services due to the natural turnover which has led to a delay before new people start and this has contribute to further efficiency savings.

The Corporate Analytics Manager presented the performance data.

A copy of the presentation is attached.

The panel were invited to comment and ask questions on the budget and performance report.

A panel member queried the reasons for the decrease in number of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice Service linked to the changes in the national reporting methodology and asked for further details.

The Corporate Analytics Manager advised the panel that the numbers of first-time entrants have remained static, but it is reported differently which suggest that there has been increase percentage wise, but the actual numbers are similar.

A panel member congratulated the service on the improved performance in getting Education, Health Care Plans issued within 20 weeks and queried the reasons for this.

Brenda Wile, Deputy Director of Education, commented that the improvements are due to the focus on making systems and processes work better to support children and their families with SEND. The Deputy Director highlighted the recruitment of a new team, including a service manager as key to the improvements in performance.

The Deputy Director advised the panel that the Council had the final monitoring meeting with Ofsted to discuss the actions in the SEND WSOA and the verbal feedback was very positive about the progress made.

The final written report has not been published. The Deputy Director thanked colleagues for their hard work.

A panel member queried if missing updates on statistical data referred in the presentation could be shared at a future date when available. The Corporate Analytics Manager advised the panel that there was a recent release of statistical data and when the analysis has been done the updated information will be shared as requested.

Resolved:

1. The Director of Children's Services to note the panel comments on Draft Budget 2024-2025 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
2. The panel comments on the Draft Budget 2024-2025 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to be included in the response to Scrutiny Board for consolidation and onward response to Cabinet.
3. The Corporate Analytics Manager to share updated performance data when available with the panel.