

Appendix D

Statement of Investment into the Revenue Budget 2025/26

| Description | £000 | Implications of not Investing |
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| Recruitment & Retention (Invest to Save) | £ 259 | There are risks associated with not addressing the recruitment and retention issues in Adult Social Care: increased pressure on budgets, staff morale, increase in sickness absence. These risks are mitigated and reduced by addressing the issues as outlined. |
| Increased use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) Fuel on waste fleet | £ 25 | This will support us to achieve the desired carbon emission reductions and our priority of Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency. |
| Voluntary Community Sector Support | £ 190 | The Voluntary and Community Sector provide a wide range of diverse services that are complimentary to those statutory and non-statutory services provided by the Council. Through collaboration with our Voluntary and Community Sector we enable residents and communities to thrive. This collaborative relationship has been fostered and developed over a significant period and is valued. Sustaining a proactive relationship with our Voluntary and Community Sector, particularly at a time when the Council may be required to diminish some services, is a sound investment. Withdrawing support for the Voluntary and Community Sector may result in some reputational damage, given the challenges faced currently by many within our community who rely on support from the sector and particularly with key partners in this endeavour, Greenham Trust and the Volunteer Centre West Berkshire. |
| Adolescent Support Team (additional staffing) | £ 161 | Young People experience huge change physically, emotionally and socially as they transition from childhood towards adulthood. For most young people this period of transition and change is supported by family and friends, however there are a proportion of young people who do not benefit from a supportive family or who face additional challenges or obstacles. For those young people without the scaffolding of a supportive network, issues and risks can escalate leading to lifelong consequences, poorer outcomes and increased demands on statutory services in the future. Young people coming into care are often at a point of crisis where parents consider their children are beyond parental control, are exasperated, at breaking point and recognise often that their children are in risky situations for example vulnerable to exploitation, misusing substances, excluded from school with poor mental health etc. Having specialist youth workers able to engage these young people earlier to prevent escalation or deterioration is positive for the family, child and will reduce demands for costly statutory services. |
| Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS) Management Costs | £ 40 | Additional requirement without current budget provision |
| Increased External Audit Fee | £ 150 | Increased cost to the local taxpayer for external audit work (national issue) |
| Fostering Services | £ 232 | Implication of not paying a uplift will result in carers leaving and moving to an Independent Fostering Agencies (many IFAs last year paid 7%) where they will be paid more and such placements will cost the Council considerably more. Foster carers need to feel valued for what they do, and if there is no uplift (minimal uplift), they will feel devalued and may look to leave. |
| Emergency Accommodation | £ 318 | Required funding to meet homelessness presentation for emergency accommodation |
| Direct Payment Officers | £ 62 | Implications of not creating more capacity for Direct Payments, may mean children require high tier and higher cost services which could have been managed by Direct Payments. |
| Safeguarding In Education | £ 78 | The safeguarding of children is a key responsibility of the Council, a failure in this area could have significant implications for children and young people. A failure to be able to demonstrate the commitment of appropriate resource to this area of work, will detrimentally impact on Ofsted outcomes. |
| Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs) Tribunals and Complaints | £ 57 | The number of Tribunals, complaints and appeals has increased in line with the rise in the number of requests for EHCPs. This is a specialist area of work which ensures that the Council responds effectively to these challenges. Failure in this area will lead to increased costs and reputational damage. |
| Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Lawyer | £ 68 | Required increase in internal resource to support increasing volumes of work, to avoid higher cost outsourcing. |
| Joint Legal Team | £ 149 | Legal services will not be funded to meet demand or need, and there will be a consistent overspend. On going work is taking place around reducing the number of children entering care and timeliness of care proceedings - current pressures in the services significantly impacts on this area. |
| Home to School Transport | £ 1,300 | The Home To School Transport policy has been aligned with the statutory minimum requirements, failure to deliver to this level would result in legal challenge. Further efficiencies and savings will continue to be identified; however, this will not result in a balanced budget based on the currently available resources. |
| Digital & Booking Platforms | £ 56 | Unable to support current digital processes and revert to old processes |
| Staff Car and parking consultation | £ 84 | Savings previously identified and not delivered |
| Post Room Postage Budget | £ 50 | Increasing demand on service budget |
| Income pressures | £ 560 | Address pressures on various fees and charges whereby legislative change has reduced ability to levy charges, or disinvestment/reduced contributions from partners. |
| Investments individually £10k or lower. | £ 30 | Minor budget realignments to meet demand |