

CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MONTH 6

Overview

CYP are forecasting on budget. This is after the £219k in year ABG cut and the £200k recruitment freeze.

Overspends are currently forecast in Education Services (£89k) and Children's Services (£132k). Customer Services are now reporting a small over spend of £500.

Youth and Commissioning are reporting £101k of savings as a result of Director and Head of Service review and the bringing forward of cost saving action plans.

The MVF for the Directorate is £688,690 and MVF for all services areas is on track, other than the Director's cost centre where there has been no staff turnover. There has been a clear MVF strategy in place for profiling and monitoring the delivery of the MVF. Managers have been aware of the savings required and all vacancies were scrutinised by the relevant Head of Service before they were filled.

Pressures on the 2010-11 budget

Overspends in Education mainly relate to staffing costs within Disabled Children's Team and Speech and Language Therapy. These overspends have been partly offset by savings on Home to School transport.

The Children's Services overspend relates predominately to Residential Placements and staffing costs. These are reduced by savings in Kinship Carers, Special Guardianship, Adoption Placements and In-house Fostering.

Progress against the recruitment freeze

There is also now a Council wide recruitment freeze, in order to deliver 10/11 in-year savings following central Government's announcements re cuts in funding.

All posts in CYP which fall vacant are scrutinised not only by Head of Service but also SMT, Director and Portfolio Holders as well as BUMP before they can be filled. A number of posts remain vacant as a result of this process. The 200k recruitment freeze target remains a challenge.

Management action taken to address emerging pressures

Heads of Service are looking across all budgets to find savings to meet the overspends in their area. Grants are being reviewed to see whether additional costs could be grant funded. It is difficult to reduce the pressures

on Speech and Language therapy, as this is a statutory requirement and failing to meet these costs could lead to judicial review.

Risks identified

In respect of Children's Services there remains a risk to the year-end budget position regarding the financial impact of increasing numbers of Looked After Children.

The placement budgets within Children's Services overall are coming under increasing pressure due to a lack of vacancy within the in house fostering service. Currently both the Residential care and Independent Fostering Agencies both have an inbuilt factor of 1 placement each.

The Youth Services budgets are coming under increasing pressure due to the current economic climate impacting upon the services ability to achieve income targets.

Capital summary

The 2010/11 financial year is going to be particularly challenging due to the considerable uncertainty around in-year and future funding levels from both government and West Berkshire. The new government strategy on Academies and the uncertainty around take up may also contribute to the challenges faced by the directorate, although initial levels of interest have been low. These factors have already contributed to delays in projects progressing this year, which will impact upon spend.

There are a total of five feasibility studies being carried this year, nine projects are in pre-construction or are about to start and six projects are in construction.