

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

20 SEPTEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S BUDGET ISSUES 2012/13
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR ANN McLACHLAN
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 As part of the 2012/13 Budget Consultation process Cabinet are asking Scrutiny Committees to consider the functions within their portfolio and offer suggestions as to how to close the estimated £25 million budget gap and limit any Council Tax increase in 2012/13.
- 1.2 The responses will be considered along with the responses from the other engagement processes to inform the budget setting process. Further consultation will be undertaken regarding any specific service changes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the views of Scrutiny Committee are requested.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Cabinet has requested the views of Scrutiny Committees to inform the 2012/13 Budget Consultation process.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

Financial projections for the Council

- 4.1 Cabinet is regularly up-dated on the financial position of the Council and the latest Budget Projections report was considered on 21 July 2011. The Director of Finance reported that the shortfall between likely spend and likely resources was £25 million for 2012/13 with shortfalls of £31 million and £30.3 million identified for 2013/14 and 2014/15 respectively.
- 4.2 The Government is presently considering options for the future funding of local authorities and the level of any Government Grant supported is affected by population numbers. Both could result in further reductions in available resources to the Council. The Leader of the Council requested Members and

employees to consider carefully what was included in budgets and let him have any suggestions for making savings.

- 4.3 The key issues and challenges facing the Department are set out in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the priorities of the Department and risks can only be assessed once Members have given their views.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 None as this report is seeking the views of Members.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consideration by the Scrutiny Committee is one of the means which is being used to inform the setting of the 2012/13 Council Budget.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 9.1 None arising directly from this report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None arising directly from this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 None arising directly from this report.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 None arising directly from this report.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 None arising directly from this report.

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APPENDIX 1 – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S BUDGET ISSUES 2012/13
APPENDIX 2 – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BUDGET SIMULATOR
INFORMATION

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None	

APPENDIX 1 : CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BUDGET ISSUES 2012/13

Corporate Plan theme Your Family
Service Area Children in Need / Looked After Children Looked After Children Care Provision School and Learning Support Early Years Development and Children's Centres Children with Disabilities Support for Vulnerable Children and Special Educational Needs Integrated Youth Services Transport
Budget : £71.9m

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- Section 2: Department Budget
- Section 3: Departmental Overview and Organisation of the Department
- Section 4: Service Details
- Section 5: Breakdown of service delivery

1. **CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

1.1 **Introduction**

The primary focus of the Department is to deliver services that ensure all Wirral children are safe, supported and inspired, contributing to the delivery of several Council-wide aims within the Corporate Plan:

Your Family – Children & Young People

- Protect children and young people from harm.
- Support schools and other settings to improve educational provision and attainment.
- Ensure children and young people can participate and achieve their potential.
- Provide early intervention and support for vulnerable children and families.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Your Neighbourhood

- Reduce anti-social behaviour and improve community safety.

Your Economy

- Rebalance Wirral's economy and improve access to employment and skills opportunities and tackle barriers to work.

Your Council

- Reduce the running costs of the Council by improving the efficiency and value for money of Council services whilst reducing bureaucracy.
- A well led, skilled, committed and flexible workforce working on behalf of Wirral residents and businesses.

2.0 DEPARTMENT BUDGET

2.1 The indicative Departmental budget of £71.9m is detailed in Appendix 2 The Capital Programme allocation for the Children and Young People's Department is shown below:

Expenditure	2011/12	2012/13
	£000	£000
Condition / Modernisation	8,470	
Formula capital	4,370	
Family Support Schemes	50	100
Woodchurch Pathfinder	900	
PFI	115	
Birkenhead High Girls Academy	7,489	5,000
Pensby Primary School	2,500	10,350
Primary Programme	250	396
School Meals Uptake	245	
Cathcart St Refurbishment	1,500	
SEN and Disabilities		1,340
Total	25,889	17,186

2.2 Budget Issues

Budget pressures 2011-12

There are significant financial pressures on the department's budget which are estimated to be £3.5m in the current year. The most significant are:

- Residential Care for Looked After Children £0.8m
The forecast of 47 placements this year exceeds the budget provision for 42.
- Fostering and Adoption £1.6m
There are 733 children who we pay allowances for (and 28 agency placements). The budget provision is for about 615.
- Transport £1.2m
There are underlying transport cost pressures for SEN and vulnerable adults.

Key challenges are as follows:

- To reduce expenditure on Looked After Children by £4m over a 3 year period and to safely reduce the number of Looked After Children from current levels.
- To manage the financial implications arising from the transfer of schools to academies.
- To reduce home to school and other transport costs.
- To support the financial plans of schools managing falling rolls.

3.0 DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

- 3.1 We value every child equally and strive for positive outcomes for all of them. This means that we pay attention to the quality of services and to those barriers that prevent some children from thriving.

The Department is a member of Wirral Children's Trust, a partnership of all agencies working with children and young people in the borough. Through the Children and Young People's Plan the partnership focuses on improving the five Every Child Matters outcomes for every Wirral child in all its work. It does this directly with children and young people and also indirectly by supporting families and by supporting adults as learners in their own right. High quality provision is provided via Children's Centres, schools, colleges and other providers. We recognise the key role of parents, carers and of extended families in nurturing children and young people; we work to support them in this task.

We organise our work around children and young people: what they say, where they are and what they need. Wherever possible, we link services to districts and areas, increase cohesion and reduce central management. We value all colleagues from the statutory and voluntary sectors equally as contributors to improved outcomes for children, regardless of their professional background. Children, young people and their families are supported by multi-disciplinary teams of colleagues, drawn from different partners but sharing a common base.

3.2 Organisation of the Department

Planning and Resources Branch

To ensure that resources required for delivery of services whether human, physical or financial are identified, allocated, managed and monitored, with appropriate planning processes in place to facilitate effective performance management.

Social Care Branch

To identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families, including children who need protection, and children who need to be looked after by the Authority. This will be done through integrated assessment and service delivery, in partnership with families and other agencies.

Learning and Achievement Branch

To ensure that the children and young people of Wirral have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, raise their aspirations and improve their life chances, through providing high quality support and challenge to Children's Centres, Early Years settings, schools, colleges and other providers.

To provide and commission high quality professional development for the Children's Services workforce and to deliver a range of opportunities for lifelong learning within the community.

To support all children and young people within the context of school, home and the wider community in accessing regular and appropriate educational opportunities.

Local Safeguarding Children Board

Protecting our children and young people from harm is a key priority for Council and is led by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The LSCB has a clear vision that places safeguarding at the centre of the Council and Wirral Children Trust's overall commitment to supporting children and the families it serves. The Interim Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services have clear roles and responsibilities as champions for children and young people and their families. The Interim Director reports directly to the Council Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

4.0 SERVICE DETAILS

4.1 Children in Need / Looked After Children

Keeping children and young people safe and protecting them from harm is a key priority and is led by Wirral Local Safeguarding Children Board, which promotes high standards in safeguarding work and has the responsibility to hold the Council and other partners to account. An external evaluation in March 2011 by Ofsted assessed Wirral's safeguarding and looked after children services as 'good' and rated partnership working as 'outstanding'. We aim to ensure this standard is maintained and built upon wherever possible.

4.2 School Learning and Support

Wirral is home to almost 76,000 children and young people. It is a good place to grow up and most children and young people will fulfil the aspirations that we, their parents and their carers have for them. However, some children and young people experience real disadvantage, poverty, hardship and failure to achieve the results they should in school. Our work is targeted at seeking to ensure that all of our young people grow up in safety and have the best possible start in life.

Educational standards for students of all ages in Wirral are excellent and improving year on year as proven by a series of impressive Ofsted inspection results for primary, secondary and special schools.

In Wirral, the majority of 16 year olds stay on in school or college or go into employment. However, increasing the number of young people aged 16-18 in education, employment or training is an important priority and we work to ensure that every young person leaving school has access to training or a job.

4.3 Support for Vulnerable Children and Special Educational Needs

We will continue to focus on improving the achievement of vulnerable groups of children such as those with special educational needs and children in care. We will continue to work in partnership with local Higher Education Institutions to promote the benefits of Higher and Further Education amongst young people and their families, particularly in deprived areas as part of the Aim Higher project.

4.4 Early Years SureStart and Children's Centres

We have protected, promoted and are enhancing SureStart and our Children's Centres, enabling our dedicated staff to offer more opportunities for the children and families they serve.

4.5 Looked After Children Care Provision

We seek to recruit more Foster Carers to ensure our most vulnerable children have the best possible start in life. Wirral Council is the parent to around 680 children who are in our care. We give particular support to them to ensure they achieve their full potential. Many of these children receive valuable support and assistance from their peers on the Children in Care Council, and this activity will be increased.

4.6 Integrated Youth Services

We promote an integrated approach to supporting young people by co-ordinating the work of the Youth Offending Service, the Anti-social Behaviour Team and the Youth and Play Services to provide both cost-effective universal and targeted services for Wirral's children and young people. We work with partners such as the Police and Fire and Rescue Services to develop effective targeted early intervention and prevention programmes, which produce better outcomes for children and young people and so reduce future costs. Following the introduction of youth hubs elsewhere in Wirral there are resources to progress the development of the new youth hub facility in Birkenhead with the 'Onside' organisation, local youth partners and the Fire Service.

4.7 Children with Disabilities

We provide services for children with disabilities up to the age of 18. The aim is to enhance disabled children's quality of life, opportunities for participating in community activities and provide respite for parents to support them to care for their children at home.

APPENDIX 2 - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT

BUDGET SIMULATOR INFORMATION

Service Area - Integrated Youth Service

Budget - £6.2m

Brief service description

Youth Services provide universal and targeted support to young people aged 13 to 19. There are 4 youth hubs together with a number of smaller youth centres. Targeted work provides advice and guidance in areas such as drugs and alcohol.

Play services are provided in 6 full time settings for children aged 6 to 14, summer holiday schemes are provided through the Wirral Play Council.

The Youth Offending service aims to prevent offending. With partners the service supervises offenders and works to minimise risks of offending.

The Anti- Social Behaviour Team tackles anti-social behaviour both enforcement and where appropriate support.

The council provides a wide range of services to vulnerable children. Child protection services including social workers and centres for the support of families of vulnerable children. Children who are subject to child protection plans require close monitoring, and there are other vulnerable children whose families need support and assistance to care for their children. Where there are serious concerns about a family's ability to care for their children we apply to the court to ensure they are protected. If the children cannot live with their parents we provide foster care or residential care. Children with disabilities are supported with short breaks and respite services.

Consequences to reduce by 10%

There would be a reduction time spend working with people in Youth Hubs and Youth Centres on the streets and providing diversionary/positive activities. Outreach work on the streets and parks and open spaces would be reduced, with less advice and guidance to help make good decisions. Provision in play settings would also reduce.

Within YOS the ability to provide preventative services would be reduced and within the ASB service there would likely to be an increase in cases waiting to be investigated and limited support for complainants.

Consequences to reduce by 20%

It is likely that some youth centres would be closed and support to some partner organisations and positive activity programmes withdrawn. Outreach would reduce as would the support to the Duke of Edinburgh's programme; some Response would stop. Overall less young people would receive the support they need particularly at times of crisis. Provision of play sessions and schemes would reduce, impacting on those in greatest need.

Within YOS preventative services would cease with a potential impact on youth

crime. The Anti Social Behaviour service would be unlikely to support the multi agency Challenge and Support programme for young people engaged or at risk of engaging in anti social behaviour. Cases dealt with by the team would reduce significantly and anti social behaviour could increase.

Consequences to reduce by 50%

Funding for Youth Centres, hubs, support for partners, positive activities, Outreach and response would all be significantly reduced. The universal services cease and there would be a much greater chance of young people engaged in risk taking behaviour.

The play service would significantly reduce the support and opportunities to marginalised children and families.

Within YOS it is highly likely that the statutory duties under the Crime and Disorder Act would not be met. Within Anti Social behaviour the team would be limited to acting on serious cases and would be unable to coordinate the Challenge and Support Project. There could be serious risks to communities if antisocial behaviour is unchallenged.

Consequences to increase by up to 5%

An increase in funding could broaden the range and type of activities available, providing more intervention and preventative services for young people.

Corporate Plan theme - Your Family Children**Service Area - Transport****Budget - £8.6m****Brief service description**

Transport of children and young people to schools and colleges including children with special educational needs. Transport of vulnerable adults to day centres and colleges. Maintenance of Council owned vehicles including specialised transport vehicles and the gritting fleet.

Consequences of reducing budget by 10%

The LA has a statutory duty in relation to the transport of children with SEN. Therefore it is likely that the consequence of a 10% cut would be that vulnerable adults will not be transported unless they pay the costs.

Discretionary transport to take children and young people to schools and colleges would be withdrawn or service users charged (a public consultation would be required).

Consequences of reducing budget by 20%

In addition to the reductions from a 10% cut, this is likely to mean that all Council owned vehicles would no longer be maintained e.g. specialised transport vehicles, parks and gardens vehicles. This may mean that roads would not be gritted in winter as the gritting fleet could not be maintained.

Consequences of reducing budget by 50%

In addition to the reductions for a 10% and a 20% reduction the Council would fail in its statutory duties to transport children to school.

Consequences of increasing budget by 5%

There would be potential to extend eligibility for children and young people for free travel to schools and colleges.

Service Area - Children with Disabilities**Budget - £3.9m****Brief service description**

This budget funds services for children with disabilities up to age 18. The aim is to enhance disabled children's quality of life; opportunities for participating in community activities and provide respite for parents to support them in continuing to care for their children at home.

The budget funds residential short breaks for children with complex disabilities and challenging behaviours; support at home and in the community for disabled children and children with complex health needs; funds the direct payment scheme for families to employ workers and funds commissioned projects which mostly do not require a social work assessment to access.

Consequence to reduce by 10%

An overall reduction of 10% could impact on the choice, range and quality of services available to children with complex disabilities potentially reducing their quality of life and the capacity of families to cope. This would have the most impact on children with the most complex needs and challenging behaviours and whose families are under the greatest stress.

There would be a reduction in residential and home based services to them based on their assessed levels of need and this could lead to more family breakdown. There would be a decrease in the number of commissioned services impacting on the volume and range of short breaks delivered and significantly less delivery per year to disabled children.

This could lead more requests for support for disabled children via social work assessments and place a higher demand on statutory services.

Consequence to reduce by 20%

An overall reduction of 20% would seriously impact on the choice, range and quality of services available to children with complex disabilities reducing their quality of life and the capacity of families to cope.

The greatest impact would be on children with the most complex needs and challenging behaviours and whose families are already under the greatest stress. This would also impact on siblings who would have less quality time with their parents.

The effects of increased stress on families could have safeguarding implications resulting in more children needing child protection plans or having to come into local authority care and this could lead to an increase in demand for high cost out of borough placements.

There would be a significant decrease in the number of commissioned services impacting on the volume and range of short breaks delivered and significantly less

delivery per year to disabled children. This would impact most on those families who would be able to cope with some easily accessible support and would likely lead to an increase in the demand for services received via a social work assessment.

Consequence to reduce by 50%

An overall reduction of 50% would result in families having hardly any choice in the range and quality of services available to them and would very seriously impact on the quality of life of the most vulnerable children and their siblings.

There would be few commissioned services available to families and we would be unable to meet our statutory requirement to provide short breaks under the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children regulations 2010 as detailed in our Short Breaks Statement.

The greatest impact would be on children with the most complex needs and challenging behaviours and whose families are already under the greatest stress. This would definitely have safeguarding implications; more children would need child protection plans and many more would need local authority care leading to a significant increase in the demand for high cost out of borough placements. There would be a reduction in services for all children and a much higher threshold would need to be set for families to receive any service. We would be unable to meet many of our current commitments under section 17 of the 1989 Children Act where disabled children are defined as children in need.

For a high number of children overnight short breaks would no longer be available to them and no new children would be able to access overnight short breaks. We would be unable to meet our current commitment to jointly fund with the NHS services for children with complex health needs.

Consequences to increase by up to 5%

An increase of 5% in the budget would enhance the range of quality and choice in the services provided to disabled children.

Many more hours of short breaks could be commissioned leading to more easily accessible support to families particularly during school holidays without the need for a social work assessment. This would free up social work time and resources to focus support on where it is most needed. This level of increase would support more families to cope for longer without the need for statutory involvement leading to a reduction in the overall demand for more expensive services.

There would be more capacity to provide additional support when there are family emergencies either through overnight respite provision or increased support in the community.

Corporate Plan theme - Your Family**Service Area - Early Years, Sure Start and Children's Centres
Children's Services****Budget - £10.1m****Brief service description**

The Sure Start Support programme, funded by this budget, has the responsibility for developing and sustaining high quality, inclusive early year's provision for 0-5 year olds and their families. This includes early year's education, childcare and Children's Centre Services which are accessible and meets parent's needs. The remit of the Sure Start Team also includes the Family Information Service, Childcare Sufficiency Audit and 2, 3 & 4 year old funding entitlements.

Consequences of reducing budget by 10%

There could be a reduction in support and training for childcare settings potentially leading to deterioration in quality of provision; there could be a withdrawal of services to parents with early identified which might lead to an increase in the number of children at risk; there could be a reduction in the information available for parents about services that might benefit them; there could be a reduction in emergency childcare for vulnerable families and it would be likely that there would be no further development of new childcare. It would be very difficult to sustain the well-established toy loan resource service for parents and childcare settings. There could be a reduction in support for children with Special Education Needs.

Consequences of reducing budget by 20%

There could be a reduction in support and training for childcare settings potentially leading to deterioration in quality of provision; there could be a withdrawal of services to parents with early identified problems including parenting and mental health which might lead to an increase in the number of children at risk; there could be a reduction in the information available for parents about services that might benefit them; there could be a reduction in emergency childcare for vulnerable families and it would be likely that there would be no further development of new childcare. It would be very difficult to sustain the well-established toy loan resource service for parents and childcare settings. There could be a reduction in support for children with disability. It is unlikely that there would be financial support to Out of School Clubs experiencing financial difficulties leading to possible closures. The Home Safety Scheme would probably cease, leading to potential increase in accidents in the home for children under 2. There could be a reduction in Council-run childcare for the under-5s which might result in less choice of affordable and accessible provision. There could be reduction in support for ethnic minority groups. It is probable that there would be no increase in support for vulnerable 2-year-olds.

Consequences of reducing budget by 50%

In addition to the impact outlined for a 20% reduction, a 50% budget reduction would result in the closure of some Children Centre provision potentially leading to an increase in the number of children at risk of harm and a reduction in services with a

potential unemployment increase. Parenting support for families would be significantly reduced, possibly leading to increase anti social behaviour, children at risk of harm, drug and alcohol misuse. LA support for domestic violence would likely cease. There would be a significant reduction in the support available for children under-5 with SEN. There would be very limited LA support for early year's services to schools, pre-schools and day nurseries which might result in a reduction of children meeting age appropriate expectations. The Family Information Service would probably cease. There would be a reduction of Early Communication support to younger children probably leading to an increased number of children entering school with language delay. It would be difficult to plan to meet targets for statutory provision for disadvantaged 2 year olds.

Consequences of increasing budget by 5%

An increase in the budget of 5% could enable increased parental support, more availability of Home Safety equipment, increased availability of emergency childcare and more 2-year-old funded places available. Ethnic Minority services could be expanded to reach across all of Wirral and there could be further support for children with disabilities and their families.

Service Area - Looked After Children Care Provision**Budget - £15.2m****Brief service description**

This service area provides local authority care placements for looked after children; independent sector care placements where the local authority has no suitable provision, and after care support for children for whom we have a continuing statutory responsibility. Services include local authority recruited and supported foster care placements; social work and the provision of adoptive placements for children who require a permanent new family; externally commissioned children's home placements for children who require specialist residential care; independent fostering placements purchased from the private and voluntary sector, and the provision of semi independent care placements for children leaving care.

Consequence to reduce by 10%

The local authority would be at risk of not providing sufficient suitable, safe placements and adequate placement choice for children in the care of the local authority for whom we have a statutory responsibility. In common with most local authorities Wirral has seen an increase in care proceedings (from 50>100) during the last year, the number of looked after children is now stable but has increased by 50 children over the past year. A reduction in this service area would potentially mean reducing the rate of fostering allowances to below the national minimum, which might affect our capacity to recruit foster carers, who provide the most cost effective care. It could mean a reduction in the capacity to provide post adoption support services, leading to greater potential for adoption placement disruptions, particularly placements for older children who have a particularly poor prognosis and usually require costly placements if their adoption disrupts. To reduce spend on independent residential care would require a more diverse range of foster placements being recruited, and the looked after population reducing.

Consequence to reduce by 20%

It is highly likely that there would be a rise in caseloads prohibiting staff from meeting statutory requirements, so that children are not as safe as they should be. Adherence to the tight statutory requirements regarding the recruitment of foster carers and adoptive parents would be placed in jeopardy. In addition there is a potential for placements to be unsafe due to poor matching, due to limited placement choice. Thresholds for children to become looked after may be raised, so that children remain in unsuitable and potentially unsafe home circumstances to avoid placing them in fostering or residential placements. This could result in the Local Authority failing to provide adequate care placements for a number of children and young people; resulting in reduced Ofsted ratings, challenge by the Children in Care Council, increased complaints and reputational costs brought about through Judicial Review/Ombudsman findings and Court Ordered costs against the Council.

Consequence to reduce by 50%

The Council will fail to meet minimum statutory requirements. Foster placements would be overcrowded, foster carers would not be supported and children would not

have their needs adequately met. Fewer children would achieve permanence through adoption, and those adopted would have a greater likelihood of their placements disrupting due to a significant reduction in post adoption support. With the increased responsibility to support care leavers for longer, a reduction in lodging costs would have a significant impact, potentially leading to more homelessness, increased crime and custodial sentences and a reduction in the number of care leavers sustaining employment or training. For young care leavers with children, this could potentially increase the likelihood of more children of young care leavers becoming looked after. The LA service would be judged inadequate by Ofsted

Consequences to increase by up to 5%

An increase by 5% in this service area would support the development of a more diverse range of foster care placements, and post adoption and special guardianship support. It would also allow greater flexibility to develop a more diverse range of leaving care placements and in particular a fully developed "Staying Put Scheme" for young people aged 18 plus to remain in care placements until they were sufficiently mature to move on.

Corporate Plan theme - Children's Services Your Family

Service Area - School and Learning Support

Budget - £6.1m

Brief service description

Support for Children (0-19) in Schools and Educational Settings

This area includes services whose responsibility it is to improve the quality of education, raise the attainment of children and meet the LA statutory duties through the borough's schools and educational settings. We monitor and support underperforming schools and intervene in schools causing concern. We co-ordinate school-to-school support and training at the Professional Excellence Centre. Teams statutorily secure suitable quality education and training opportunities for young people 16-19 and promote participation up to age 18. We support leadership and management including school governance, pupil assessment, behaviour and attendance, health and safety, facilities management, NQTs, outdoor education, SACRE and the apprenticeships.

Consequences of reducing budget by 10%

The Local Authority would be at risk of not fulfilling all of its education duties. We would no longer be able to provide support for literacy and numeracy in schools which might increase the risk of a school failing to deliver an acceptable level of education and risk being judged as a failing school by Ofsted. We would no longer be able to support school-to-school partnerships to develop capacity and sustain improvement. Council support for outdoor education would be reduced. Support for health and safety and facilities management would be diminished. There would be a reduction in the support for apprenticeships. Central coordination of support for children with English as a second language would be withdrawn.

Consequences of reducing budget by 20%

A reduction of 20% could result in the Local Authority not fulfilling its statutory duties in terms of intervention for with underperforming and failing schools, pupil assessment, governor support and securing suitable quality education and training opportunities for all young people 16-19. Support for Narrowing the Gap and the development of apprenticeships would be greatly reduced. This could result in an increase in failing schools and educational settings, poorer outcomes for children and young people where poverty and disadvantage affect their achievement. We would no longer be able to support school-to-school partnerships to develop capacity and sustain improvement. Council support for outdoor education would cease. Support for health and safety and facilities management would be limited. Central coordination of support for children with English as a second language would be withdrawn. Schools could become more isolated from each other and from the Council. The Professional Excellence Centre, which provides support for professionals across the education sector, council and its partners would be at risk.

Consequences of reducing budget by 50%

There is a significant danger that the Local Authority would be in breach of many of its statutory duties in relation to schools and educational settings. There would be no school improvement support. This would result in an increase in failing schools and educational settings, poorer outcomes for children and young people where poverty and disadvantage affect their achievement. The development of apprenticeships would be significantly reduced. Council support for outdoor education would cease. Support for health and safety and facilities management would be significantly limited.

Consequences of increasing budget by 5%

This would enable the service to secure additional literacy, numeracy and curriculum support, and use other early intervention and prevention strategies, for our schools that require this the most. This would also support the sharing of good practice between educational establishments and to develop capacity and sustain improvement. More support for Narrowing the Gap would be possible to improve outcomes for children and young people where poverty and disadvantage affect their achievement. It would enable even further development of the Wirral Apprenticeship programme.

Service Area - Children in Need/Looked After Children**Budget - £17.1m****Brief service description**

The service provides statutory social work to children in need of protection. The service encompasses areas from targeted early intervention through to multi disciplinary area teams providing a statutory social work service meeting the needs of children who are looked after, subject to child protection plans, executing statutory roles within the court process and obtaining legal orders to ensure children's needs are met by becoming a corporate parent. The services supports young people through the pathway team. Staff members are required to be appropriately trained to fulfil their statutory duties and meet GSCC registration where required.

Consequences to reduce by 10%

This would impact on a range of services to support and make sure children are safe. Family support would be reduced and provided to only the most vulnerable children at the expense of Children in Need and early intervention. It would be unlikely that the full range of Social Work services could be delivered effectively, training would be reduced and fewer fieldwork managers would result in inadequate levels of supervision to staff and oversight of cases.

There may be a reduction in the level of early intervention services for vulnerable children and their families. This may result in an increase in children becoming looked after and subject to child protection plans and an increase in the pressure on front line social work teams.

Consequences to reduce by 20%

Social workers caseloads would most likely increase to unsafe levels, which would make children less safe and increase the likelihood of social worker absence through stress related sickness; staff turnover would impact on the quality of outcomes for children. There would be a focus on working statutorily with children, and children in need, for example, on the edge of care would receive a significantly reduced service, which in turn could result in more children receiving statutory interventions, due to their needs not being met earlier. Family support may only be provided to children subject to a child protection plan; children in need would be particularly vulnerable without this intervention. A significant reduction in commissioned early intervention services would most likely result in a net increase in children requiring statutory intervention, where earlier involvement may have supported the child and family more effectively. The activity of Area Teams would be severely reduced resulting in a lack of early joined up intervention to support children and families in their localities. Children leaving care could be affected through statutory responsibilities not being adhered to, and more care leavers may not make a safe transition through to adult life. Training for social workers would be reduced which could compromise social workers professional development. A reduction in management would reduce management grip and capacity to provide safe levels of supervision. A reduction in capacity to deliver safeguarding responsibilities would mean that multiagency plans for the most vulnerable children would not be safely co-ordinated or governed.

Corporate Plan theme - Children's Services**Your Family****Service Area - Support for Vulnerable Children and Special Educational Needs****Budget - £4.7m****Brief service description**

The LA has legal responsibilities to ensure that children attend schools and that child employment regulations are followed. LA teams intervene and support children, families and schools about attendance and child welfare. For children with Special Educational Needs, the LA has legal responsibilities which include assessing and meeting their needs by arranging specialist provision based on specialist advice as well as supporting early intervention work for vulnerable children in all settings. We have a legal responsibility to have a virtual school head teacher to monitor and champion the educational performance of children in care and provide training for designated teachers.

Consequences of reducing budget by 10%

A budget reduction by 10% could mean that the department's statutory responsibilities in relation to school attendance, missing pupils and children employment may not be met. We would be at risk of being unable to fulfil the statutory responsibilities in relation to children with special educational needs. There would be a significant reduction in the careers education, information and guidance offered to young people and could lead to more young people becoming unemployed and less support for them to find education, employment or training. Our ability to deliver a robust monitoring and tracking service for children in care would be seriously diminished and support for designated teachers would be significantly reduced. The result could be fewer children in care achieving their educational targets and suffering further disadvantage in adulthood. The central service that provides an initial assessment for children from minority ethnic backgrounds who have English as an additional language and ongoing support to schools will not be in place.

Consequences of reducing budget by 20%

A budget reduction by 20% is highly likely to mean that the department's statutory responsibilities in relation to school attendance, missing pupils and children employment may not be met. We would be highly unlikely to fulfil the statutory responsibilities in relation to children with special educational needs. Certain services related to careers education, information, advice and guidance would likely cease. The LA will be at serious risk of failing to meet its statutory duties to ensure that all young people are engaged in education, employment or training by age 18. The level of education service provided to children in care would be negligible and there would be no training programme for designated teachers.

Consequences of reducing budget by 50%

A reduction of 50% would mean that the LA's statutory responsibilities in relation to school attendance, missing pupils and children employment would not be met. We would be unable to fulfil the statutory responsibilities in relation to children with special educational needs. The LA would be in breach of its statutory duties to provide a targeted careers education, information, and advice and guidance service to vulnerable young people and will be unable to deliver its duties to ensure that all young people are in education, employment and training at 18. The Looked after Children Education Service would not meet statutory duties and there would be a significant risk of a failed OFSTED inspection.

Consequences of increasing budget by 5%

More targeted support would be possible for children families and schools in relation to improving school attendance and there would be further improved early intervention work for children with special educational needs in all settings. We would be able to retain and enhance services for careers education, information, advice and guidance and develop new services targeted at vulnerable and disadvantaged young people so that they can receive appropriate support to secure better futures.