

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE**Wednesday, 21st June 2023**

REPORT TITLE:	2023/24 BUDGET AND BUDGET MONITORING PROCESSES
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out how the 2023/24 budget will be monitored through the Committee system, which will facilitate the Policy and Services Committees (the Committees) to take ownership of their specific budgets and present appropriate challenge and scrutiny of Officers on the management and performance of those budgets.

This matter relates to all Wards within the Borough and is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Children, Young People and Education Committee:

1. Note the process for in-year monitoring of the 2023/24 budget.
2. Agree to establish and appoint a Budget Monitoring Panel to comprise of the Committee Chair and Spokespersons, with sessions to be led by the relevant Director/Assistant Director.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The 2023/24 Council budget was agreed at Full Council on 27 February 2023. This budget was made up of savings proposals, pressures/growth items and funding that were based on actual known figures or best estimates available at the time. At any point during the year, these estimated figures could change and need to be monitored closely to ensure, if adverse, mitigating actions can be taken immediately to ensure a balanced budget can be reported to the end of the year.
- 1.2 The Council has a legal responsibility to set an annual balanced budget, which sets out how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. In order to successfully do so, engagement with members, staff and residents is undertaken. The recommendations in this report inform that approach.
- 1.3 Managing and setting a budget will require difficult decisions to ensure that a balanced position can be presented. Regular Member engagement, which this report forms part of, is considered essential in delivering effective governance and financial oversight.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The proposals set out in this report are presented to allow for efficient and effective budget monitoring activity that can be conducted in a timely manner. As such, it is considered that to meet the business needs and address the challenges that the Council faces that no alternative options are viable or appropriate at this time.
- 2.2 Not engaging with the Committee at this time, on the matters set out, was an option that was available, however it is considered that involvement of Committees as soon as practical after the agreement of the 2023/24 budget will best assist in delivering the benefits detailed in paragraph 2.1.
- 2.3 In the event of the Section 151 Officer determining that a balanced financial position could not be presented, the Section 151 Officer would be required to issue a section 114 notice and report this to all Members of Full Council. The outcome of which could result in intervention by the Government.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Budget Monitoring Process

- 3.1 On 27 February 2023 Full Council approved the 2023/24 budget, which included significant budget savings/efficiencies (details provided at Appendix A) in order to present a balanced position for the year.
- 3.2 The calculation of the 2023/24 budget was prepared using known figures or best estimates available at the time. At any point during the year, internal or external factors may influence a change in these estimates which could either have a

favourable or adverse impact on the ability to deliver a balanced position at financial year-end.

- 3.3 In order to ensure that a balanced position can be achieved, it is imperative that a robust process for monitoring and managing the budget is in place.
- 3.4 An internal officer governance process is in place, in line with past activity, to scrutinise and challenge budget performance in advance of financial forecasts being presented to the Committees. This process includes:
 - Budget holders routinely reviewing budget reports and transactions for accuracy and completeness.
 - Regular meetings between budget holders and finance business partners (FBP) to review income and expenditure positions to date and to determine future commitments in order to present reliable forecasts.
 - Directorate Management Team (DMT) review of the outcomes of the budget holder/FBP meetings.
 - Scrutiny and challenge by DMTs as to the robustness of the figures and forecast presented in the context of Directorate-wide activity.
 - DMT agreement on appropriate remedial action where necessary.
 - Corporate Management Team review and challenge of the forecast position via the Operational Performance Group (OPG).
 - Referral and/or escalation to Investment and Change Board for organisational oversight in conjunction with other corporate initiatives. (Strategic Leadership and Corporate Management Team members).
 - Progress on savings items monitored through ICB.
 - Referral to quarterly Strategic Leadership Team performance meeting for Senior Officer scrutiny and agreement.
 - Presentation to Committees.
- 3.5 For the first meetings in the new municipal year, the Committees will receive confirmation of their budget position, detailed by function, to facilitate an understanding of income and expenditure monitoring against activity (see Appendix B).
- 3.6 The Committees will be responsible for ensuring that the budget is utilised effectively and responsibly and remains within the relevant budget envelope, identifying savings where appropriate to mitigate any adverse positions that may transpire in-year. Once the Annual Budget and related policy framework is approved it becomes the Council's decision and is effective immediately in respect of the relevant financial year in scope. The Council's Constitution provides that Policy and Service Committees and Officers are required to implement the Council's budget and policy framework as set out at Budget Council. In normal operating conditions, Policy and Service Committee may only take decisions which are fully consistent with the Council approved budget and policy framework. It is expected that Committee budgets will be effectively managed in-year within the agreed cash limited budget and value for money will be secured. Chief Officers must ensure that no commitments are made that would result in an approved budget being exceeded.
- 3.7 Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for ensuring that the entire budget will be in balance, including providing mitigating actions to bring the budget back in line from any adverse variance position that may be forecast, which may take

the form of providing direction to other Service Committees. Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for advising Full Council on organisation-wide financial activity.

- 3.8 To enable the Committees to manage and monitor budgets effectively in-year, a suite of detailed information will be provided on a quarterly basis, comprising:
- A revenue budget monitoring report for the preceding quarter that will include a full-year forecast.
 - Full list of budget savings proposals and the progress for their achievement.
 - Full list of reserves allocated to the Committee for future one-off commitments.
 - A capital budget monitoring report for the preceding quarter that will include a full-year forecast.
 - Other specific financial information relevant to the individual committee's decision-making process
- 3.9 This information will be made available at the earliest committee meeting, following the quarter end and completion of the internal governance process, detailed in paragraph 3.4. The anticipated timetable for reporting quarterly financial information to committee is:
- Quarter 1 (1 Apr – 30 Jun): July 23
 - Quarter 2 (1 Jul – 30 Sep): November 23
 - Quarter 3 (1 Oct – 31 Dec): February 24
 - Quarter 4 (1 Jan – 31 Mar): June 24
- 3.10 Each Committee is requested to establish a Budget monitoring panel to facilitate regular space to review the budget position in between scheduled committee meetings during stages of the financial year.
- 3.11 The Budget Monitoring Panel will comprise of the Committee Chair and Spokespersons, the relevant Director and Assistant Directors (as required), a Finance and Democratic Service representative.
- 3.12 The purpose of this group is to: -
- Ensure that Members are receiving the most current financial data and are monitoring the budget throughout the year.
 - Question the Director on the financial data before they are available to the wider committee membership and ahead of the scheduled Committee meeting.
 - Seek further explanatory information from the Director/Assistant Director where necessary.
 - Request that certain additional information is provided to the group.
 - Make suggestions as to how the information is presented.
 - Make links between financial performance and activity, to inform decision making of the Committee.
 - Inform the process of efficiency target setting and monitor performance against delivery of efficiency targets agreed.
- 3.13 The Committees have the autonomy (subject to delegation levels) to enact budget virements (transfers) from one function to another within their overall committee

budget envelope. Virements will also need to be agreed by the Section 151 Officer as there are certain conditions where budgets are not allowed to be transferred for the purposes of gaining a specific benefit e.g., where budgets from supplies budget headings are transferred to employee budget headings to take advantage of an uplift for pay inflation.

- 3.14 The Committees will be responsible for containing net expenditure within their overall budget envelope and not overspending. Where an adverse variance is forecast, each committee will be required to take remedial action, with detailed plans and timeframes, to bring the budget back in line and ensure that overspends are mitigated.
- 3.15 Where a committee has taken all possible steps for remedial action and is unable to fully mitigate an overspend, this must be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee who will then take an organisational-wide view of how this adverse variance will be managed. There must be immediate action agreed to ensure a deliverable, balanced forecast position can be reported, and this will be monitored on a monthly basis by the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 3.16 Whilst each committee is required to remain within its annual budget envelope, situations may transpire that demonstrate an in-year favourable forecast variance being reported to a Committee. Committees wishing to use any forecast underspend, must have approval from the P&R Committee.
- 3.17 The Council must not be in a situation where one Committee is forecasting an overspend, unable to mitigate it, and another Committee is forecasting an underspend and takes a decision to utilise this for unplanned growth purposes. The Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for ensuring that operating in silos does not occur and that resources are aligned to Council objectives at all times.
- 3.18 The Policy and Resources Committee has ultimate responsibility for taking any necessary steps required to ensure a whole Council budget can report a balanced position throughout the year. The Section 151 Officer will be responsible for ensuring that any budget actions, proposals, and mitigations are achievable and legal.
- 3.19 In addition to the standard budget monitoring process, as outlined above, which will include reviews of savings related activity, in 2023/24 additional scrutiny will be provided to ensure that agreed savings are delivered in a timely manner, in line with the original proposal. Two specific review routes will exist to support financial oversight and the delivery of savings:
 - Finance Sub-Committee,
 - Chief Executive led savings delivery board (Star Chamber) and
- 3.20 The Finance Sub-Committee will meet to support the Policy and Resources Committee in its aims of providing strategic direction to the operation of the Council, to maintain a strategic overview of budgets and to provide a coordinating role across all other service committees through a 'whole council view' of budget monitoring.
- 3.21 A savings delivery board (Star Chamber) will be convened with the aim of facilitating regular, in-depth senior officer and member engagement on savings progress in

order to review and challenge activity to date, as well as plans to be subsequently actioned, in order to deliver on the savings proposals agreed by Full Council.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report sets out the 2023/24 budget monitoring process and has no direct financial implications. The outcome of the process will, if not adhered to or a suitable alternative process agreed, will have significant financial implications. However, the proposals set out control environments and a timeline of activity deemed necessary as part of sound financial management regime.
- 4.2 If the 2023/24 budget cannot be balanced, this may result in a Section 114 report being issued by the Section 151 Officer - once issued there are immediate constraints on spending whereby no new expenditure is permitted, with the exception of that funding statutory services, including safeguarding vulnerable people, however existing commitments and contracts can continue to be honoured.
- 4.3 The Council delivers both statutory and non-statutory services at present – the requirement to eliminate subsidies provided to non-statutory services is considered to be a key requirement in delivering value for money and ensuring that finite resources are targeted on beneficial outcomes.
- 4.4 The FM Code requires the Council to demonstrate that the processes they have in place satisfy the principles of good financial management, based on the following six principles:
- Organisational Leadership – demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into organisation culture.
 - Accountability – based on Medium-Term Financial Planning, that derives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs.
 - Financial management - undertaken with transparency at its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently with evidence of periodic officer actions and elected member decision making.
 - Professional standards - Adherence to professional standards is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.
 - Assurance - sources of assurance are recognised as an effective tool mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, internal audit and inspection.
 - Sustainability - The long-term sustainability of local services is at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, has been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council.

- 5.2 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 5.3 Once a budget is in place, Council has delegated responsibility to the Policy and Services Committees to implement it. The Committees **may not within, normal business operating conditions**, act contrary to the Budget without consent of Council other than in accordance with the Procedure Rules set out at Part 4(3) of the Constitution.
- 5.4 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that agreed savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 At this time, there are no additional resource implications. There may be resource requirements of any action resulting in remedial or mitigating tasks if an adverse forecast is reported with regards the 2023/24 budget in year, however these will be reported at the appropriate time.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget is dependent on a proactive approach due to estimated figures being provided in the calculation for the budget, albeit the best estimates available at the time, plus any amount of internal and external factors that could impact on the budget position in year. Examples of which are new legislation, increased demand, loss of income, increased funding, decreased funding, inability to recruit to posts, etc.
- 7.2 A robust monitoring and management process for the budget is in place. If at any time during the year an adverse position is forecast, remedial action must be agreed and implemented immediately to ensure the budget can be brought back to balanced position.
- 7.3 The risk of this not being able to be achieved could mean that the Council does not have enough funding to offset its expenditure commitments for the year and therefore not be able report a balanced budget at the end of the year. This could result in the Section 151 Officer issuing a Section 114 notice.

- 7.4 A key risk to the Council's financial plans is that funding and demand assumptions in particular can change as more information becomes available. As such, the MTFP is regularly reviewed and updated as part of routine financial management.
- 7.5 Under the system of retained Business Rates, Authorities benefit from a share of any increased revenues but are liable for at least a share of any falls in income (subject to safety net triggers) and any non-collection. This includes reductions arising from appeals relating to past years which partially fall on the Authority. These risks are mitigated through a combination of the operation of the Collection Fund, General Fund Balances, and a Business Rates Equalisation Reserve.
- 7.6 Assumptions have been made in the current budget outlook for income and funding from business rates and council tax and social care grants as the main sources of funding. If there is an adverse change to these assumptions as a result of government announcements, additional savings proposals or reduced expenditure would need to be identified as soon as possible to ensure a balanced five-year MTFP can be achieved. Committees will be kept updated with any announcements regarding the local government finance settlement through the year.
- 7.7 Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Senior Leadership Team in arriving at the governance process for the 2023/24 budget monitoring process.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.
- 9.2 There are no specific equality implications of this report regarding processes, however, it is recognised that some of the developing proposals for 2023/24 budget and beyond could have equality implications. Any implications will be considered, and any negative impacts will be mitigated where possible.
- 9.3 Equality implications will be assessed during planning, decision and implementation stages and will be recognised as an ongoing responsibility. Any equality implications will be reported to the Committees. Equality issues will be a conscious consideration and an integral part of the process.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 At this time, there are no additional environmental and climate implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there may be environment and climate implications associated with these that will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report has no direct community wealth implications however any budget proposals to be developed should take account of related matters across headings such as the following:

- **Progressive Procurement and Social Value**
How we commission and procure goods and services. Encouraging contractors to deliver more benefits for the local area, such as good jobs, apprenticeship, training & skills opportunities, real living wage, minimising their environmental impact, and greater wellbeing.
- **More local & community ownership of the economy**
Supporting more cooperatives and community businesses.
Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses.
Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during the pandemic to further develop this sector.
- **Decent and Fair Employment**
Paying all employees, a fair and reasonable wage.
- **Making wealth work for local places**

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Savings agreed at full Council for 2023/24
Appendix B Committee Budget Book details

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Pressure and Growth Proposals
Savings and Income Proposals
CIPFA's Financial Management Code

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	14 March 2023
Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee	9 March 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	8 March 2023
Economy Regeneration & Development Committee	7 March 2023
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	6 March 2023
Full Council	27 February 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	14 February 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	18 January 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	9 November 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	5 October 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	7 September 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	13 July 2022

Appendix A – Savings agreed at full Council for 2023/24

Committee	23/24 Budget Saving (£m)
Adult Social Care and Public Health	
Adult Care & Health	
Review of all-age disability transition planning	-1.000
Review of services to support Independent Living	-4.935
Adult Social Care and Public Health Total	-5.935
Children, Young People & Education	
Children, Families & Education	
Increase the number of children looked after placed in family settings as opposed to higher cost residential settings	-1.100
Redesign and restructure of the Assessment and Intervention Service	-0.655
Reduction in contributions to the Regional Adoption Agency in line with the average number of referrals	-0.100
Reduction in financial support to Kingsway High School	-0.134
Reduction in Teacher's pension liabilities to the council	-0.190
Reduction in Wirral's Looked After Children numbers	-0.410
Review of contracts within Children's Services	-0.250
Review of council's contribution towards European Funded Send Inclusion Programme	-0.220
Review of Supporting Families funding and Early Help budgets	-1.121
Children, Young People & Education TOTAL	-4.180
Economy Regeneration & Housing	
Regeneration & Place	
Capitalisation of salaries (Re-direction of qualifying salaries away from the council's central budget	-0.085
Decommissioning of the Solar Campus site and relocation of teams currently working from the facility.	-0.005
Increase eligible rechargeable costs for Building Control services	-0.080
Lease income from rental of floors 4 & 5 at Marris House	-0.136
One off rental income for partial leasing of Cheshire Lines office space	-0.146
Recharging of costs where eligible grant and fee income is rechargeable within Supported Housing services	-0.060
Recharging of staff costs where eligible grant funding is in place for Economic Growth projects	-0.072
Recharging of staff costs where eligible grant funding is in place for Homes for Ukraine Resettlement Programme	-0.593
Redesign and review of contract commissioning for Economic Growth	-0.065
Re-provision of homeless accommodation and review of community alarm grant	-0.137
Review of Housing Support service and Fuel Poverty contract	-0.088
Review of Merseytravel levy budget	-0.122
Stand down and disposal of a number of council owned buildings	-0.672
Standing down of Wallasey Town Hall for a 12-month period	-0.400
Economy Regeneration & Housing TOTAL	-2.660

Appendix A – Savings agreed at full Council for 2023/24

Committee	23/24 Budget Saving (£m)
Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport	
Neighbourhood Services	
Capitalise Staff costs on infrastructure projects	-0.060
Expansion of the camping offer at Wirral Country Park	-0.010
Introduction of an environmental enforcement scheme	-0.150
Introduction of catering facilities at football playing fields	-0.020
Introduction of Electric Vehicle charging pilot scheme tariffs	-0.010
Introduction of large format digital screen advertising opportunities	-0.020
Introduction of Pet Memorial Garden	-0.010
Reintroduction of Christmas Markets at Birkenhead Park	-0.010
Restructure of the transport fleet	-0.030
Review of Cemeteries and Crematoria service income	-0.100
Review of Pest Control service income	-0.010
Review of Tree Management service	-0.050
Review of vehicle crossing provision	-0.015
Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport TOTAL	-0.495
Policy & Resources	
Chief Executive Office	
Corporate Office Restructure	-0.070
<u>Corporate</u>	
Apply vacancy factor to pay budgets	-2.300
Council wide budget adjustment	-0.340
Reprice pay budgets at Mid-point	-2.800
Review of enabling (back office) services across the council	-2.300
Review of senior management structure	-0.800
<u>Finance/ Resources</u>	
DSG Contribution to statutory functions	-1.200
Insurance reserve - one off	-1.000
Review of current payroll functions	-0.060
Review of digital systems within the Revenue and Benefits service	-0.100
Use of NNDR reserve - one off	-3.000
Policy & Resources TOTAL	-13.970
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure	
Neighbourhood Services	
Development of the events programme at Williamson Art Gallery	-0.070
Leisure Centre service review	-0.500
Review of current Neighbourhood Directorate assets/ buildings	-0.050
Review of Neighbourhoods Staffing Structure	-0.425
Various underspends across Neighbourhoods	-0.060
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure TOTAL	-1.105
GRAND TOTAL	-28.345

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REVENUE BUDGETS

Revenue Budgets are the monies the Council allocates for its day-to-day expenditure. It is the amount of money the Council requires to provide its services during the year.

Table 1 below, highlights how the revenue budgets are allocated across the Council Directorates.

TABLE 1 2023/24 Children, Young People & Education

Service Area	Budget £000
Children & Families	56,502
Early Help & Prevention	10,942
Modernisation & Support	2,782
Schools – Core	15,371
Total Committee Budget	85,597

Service area summary narratives

Children & Families

Assistant Director - Children and Families

This includes the salary cost for the Heads of Service for each service area.

Assessment & Intervention Service

Made up of various teams which include:

- 7 Social work assessment and intervention teams
- 5 Child Protection Court Teams
- Integrated Front Door (IFD)
- Emergency Duty Team

IFD is a service that investigates referrals of a child or young person at risk of harm or abuse.

The principal responsibility of the Emergency Duty Team is to respond to out of hours referrals where intervention from the local authority is required to safeguard a vulnerable child or adult, and where it would not be safe, appropriate, or lawful to delay that intervention to the next working day.

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Also includes Section 17 costs which provide support for children and families at times of crisis.

Fostering, Adoption & Placement Commissioning

This includes the Fostering Teams which administer the fostering process and also the payment of fostering allowances to Foster-carers.

Special Guardianship allowance payments for children placed under special guardianship orders.

The Adoption in Merseyside scheme is administered under this area and looks after the costs of setting up new adopters, this scheme is in participation with other Local authorities in the city region.

This will also include the costs of any children who are adopted out of area.

Adoption allowances are also paid out from this area.

The biggest budget area is Placements and Placement commissioning, which includes placement of children with independent care providers, independent foster carers and independent placements within Wirral.

The Willow-tree In House Residential provision is also included within this service area.

The Staying Put allowances also come under this service area. They allow children who are leaving care to remain with their Foster-carers post the age of 18.

Permanence Service

The looked after children permanence service is made up of 6 teams who look to establish children in permanent homes in order to reduce high-cost independent care provider placements.

Also includes Section 17 costs for children and families in crisis and Post 16 Children's accommodation and administers the Leaving Care Government grant scheme.

Safeguarding QA & Practice Improvement

This area covers the Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance unit and the Practice improvement team.

The Local Safeguarding Children's is also managed under this service area.

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Early Help & Prevention

Early Childhood

Early Childhood consists of Children's centres around Wirral that bring together a range of services for families and children from pre-birth to five. Children's centres are designed to give children a fun and safe environment to learn, develop, make friends and play. They give parents the chance to meet other parents from the local area and establish friendships.

Family Matters

Family Matters support children and young people and their families in partnership with other agencies. The support provided includes:

- Positive relationships/friendships
- Self-esteem and confidence building
- Encourage engagement in positive activities as part of the whole family
- Safety in and out of the family home
- Internet Safety
- Support accessing other services (youth, school, health, early childhood services)
- Online safety
- Parenting and boundaries
- Mediation
- Employment
- Housing
- Debt management support

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse consists of 4 teams,

- Drive Project
- We can talk about domestic abuse program
- Family Safety Unit
- Early Intervention Team

The Drive Project is a 30-month project that started in February 2021, which challenges and supports high-harm, high-risk perpetrators to change whilst working closely with partner agencies – like the police and social services – to manage risk and disrupt abuse. 40% of this project is funded by the National Lottery.

We can talk about Domestic Abuse program started in November 2020. The program is about improving the experience of social care processes for those parents and children affected by domestic abuse so that they feel believed, supported, and empowered, whilst being appropriately safeguarded.

Family Safety Unit (FSU) is a team of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates. The FSU provides independent and impartial advice to any high-risk victim / survivor of domestic abuse.

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Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Offending

Safeguarding and Youth Offending consists of 4 teams,

- Contextual safeguarding
- Wirral Youth Justice Service
- Outreach Team
- Compass Team

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. Traditional approaches to protecting children/young people from harm have focussed on the risk of violence and abuse from inside the home, usually from a parent/carer or other trusted adult and do not always address the time that children/young people spend outside the home and the influence of peers on young people's development and safety. Contextual safeguarding recognises the impact of the public/social context on young people's lives, and consequently their safety. Contextual safeguarding seeks to identify and respond to harm and abuse posed to young people outside their home, either from adults or other young people. It is an approach that looks at how interventions can change the processes and environments, to make them safer for all young people, as opposed to focussing on an individual.

Wirral Youth Justice Service provides a service for young people aged 10 to 17 who have been involved in offending behaviour. It is a multi-agency service, made up of social workers, youth justice workers and staff from education, police, probation, and health. The service includes:

- Supervision of young people who have been referred by the police for out of court disposal and those sentenced by the Court.
- Support to parents and carers.
- Out of Court Disposal (O OCD) service for young people who have been arrested for less serious offences, admitted their guilt and it is agreed that diversion from the Criminal Justice Serve is a more appropriate option.
- Prevention work.

Youth Outreach teams provide early help across Wirral borough engaging with young people who are often vulnerable to exploitation and criminality. The team engage and build positive relationships with young people to ensure they get the right support to help build skills and promote resilience.

The Compass Team Child is a dedicated resource to tackle child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. The team is multi-agency and takes a problem-solving approach to improving the lives of children and young people in Wirral. The Compass Team will provide expert advice and guidance to colleagues and practitioners, as well as working directly on cases with higher levels of need.

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Team around the School

Team around school is a partnership between schools and other agencies. Services can involve school nurses, social workers and after school activities.

Modernisation & Support

Modernisation & Support consists of 3 sections,

- Business Management Support
- Modernisation
- Performance Improvement

Each section provides support to all the other services within Children's services including admin, partner contracts, service improvements and system support.

Schools – Core

School Improvement

The school improvement service provides professional development and support to help schools develop their leadership, staff, and curriculum, so they can improve their results and performance.

The statutory functions of a LA in relation to school improvement are:

- moderating the teacher assessments carried out at the end of key stage 1 by schools (in reading, writing and mathematics) in at least 25% of maintained so appointing a person to complete the assessment moderations who has recent experience of provision of the National Curriculum in primary schools each school year and ensure that every school will be subject to moderation at least once every four years.
- appointing a person to complete the assessment moderations who has recent experience of provision of the National Curriculum in primary schools.
- having equivalent duties in respect of key stage 2.

In addition, there is the duty to:

- set up and carry out moderation arrangements in the Early Years in accordance with 2022 Early years foundation stage assessment and reporting arrangements.
- monitor the administration of the phonics screening check in accordance with Key stage 2 tests and phonics screening check: monitoring visits - GOV.UK.

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Educational Psychologists

Educational Psychologists use their training in psychology and knowledge of child development to assess difficulties children may be having with their learning. They provide advice and training on how schools might help children to learn and develop. They recommend methods, or develop strategies in partnership with schools, to help a child learn more effectively. Strategies may include teaching approaches, improvements to learning environments, advice on curriculum materials and behaviour support.

Educational psychologists also keep up to date with best practice, policy and research relating to how children learn and make sure this informs local policy and practice.

SEN Assessments

This SEN Assessments team deliver the process that supports young people aged up to 25 with special education needs. The key element of this service is the education, health, and care (EHC) plan process. EHC plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

A young person can request an assessment themselves if they are aged 16 to 25. A request can also be made by anyone else who thinks an assessment may be necessary, including doctors, health visitors, teachers, parents, and family friends.

Education for looked after children

This service is responsible for promoting educational achievement of looked-after children. This includes:

- children currently looked after.
- children previously looked after.
- care leavers.

In delivering this service, Wirral appoints a 'virtual headteacher' who works at a strategic level, but not in a physical school building.

Childrens Assisted Travel

This reflects the direct transportation costs resulting from the application of Wirral Council's Home to School Transport Policy. The policy reflects the statutory requirements placed on Local Authorities to provide financial assistance with home to school transport for 5–16-year-olds including those that have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) where eligibility criteria is met.

Careers Education Information and Guidance

Appendix B Children Young People and Education Committee Budget Details

This service is for eligible young people not in employment, education, or training. It aims to raise the aspirations of young people and support you into employment or learning. Career Connect delivers the service, providing face to face guidance as well as telephone support and online access to services.

Lifelong Learning & Apprenticeships for Care leavers

The Lifelong Learning service offers courses for adults (19+). The primary aim of the service is to help adults with few, low or no qualifications into the job market. The service offers a range of high quality and affordable qualification based and community learning courses, and shorter workshop sessions (2-3hours) as an introduction to our longer courses. The operational activities of this service are wholly grant funded.

Contractual obligations

In addition to service delivery budgets, contractual costs are also included in the schools – core overall budget as follows:

- Private Financing Initiative (PFI) – there are 9 PFI funded schools in Wirral. This budget funds the affordability gap which is the difference between the cost of PFI and the funding from PFI Grant and school contributions.

Teacher retirement Costs - the Council is responsible for the costs of the additional benefits awarded upon early retirement outside of the terms of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

Appendix B Children Young People and Education Committee Budget Details

Table 2 below, provides a detailed breakdown of the service budgets.

TABLE 2: 2022/23 Children, Young People & Education – Service budgets (Objective and Subjective combined)

Service Area	Income £000	Employee £000	Non-Pay £000	Cost of care £000	Total Committee Budget £000
Children & Families	-1,375	21,567	7,328	28,982	56,502
Assessment & Intervention Service	-722	9296	658	0	9,232
Assistant Director - Children and Families	-103	903	141	0	941
Fostering, Adoption & Placement Commissioning	-340	4,757	5,620	28,982	39,019
Permanence Service	-39	4,073	777	0	4,811
Safeguarding QA & Practice Improvement	-171	2,538	132	0	2,499
Early Help & Prevention	-3,421	12,155	2,208	0	10,942
Early Childhood	-401	2,468	568	0	2,635
Family Matters	-1,155	3,599	128	0	2,572
Domestic Abuse	-548	1221	7	0	680
Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Offending	-816	2,332	219	0	1,735
Team around the School	-501	2,535	1,286	0	3,320
Modernisation & Support	-618	1789	1611	0	2782
Business Management Support	-449	1,242	1,300	0	2,093
Modernisation	0	965	265	0	1,230
Performance Improvement	-162	633	19	0	490
Childrens Management	-7	-1051	27	0	-1,031

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Service Area	Income £000	Employee £000	Non-Pay £000	Cost of care £000	Total Committee Budget £000
Schools – Core	-16,014	8,599	22,786	0	15,371
School Improvement	-753	916	208	0	371
Educational Psychologists	-15	855	32	0	872
SEN Assessments	-436	1,970	36	0	1,570
Education for looked after children	-408	488	35	0	115
Childrens Assisted Travel	-315	0	5,969	0	5,654
Careers Education Information and Guidance	-378	708	785	0	1,115
Lifelong Learning & Apprenticeships for Care Leavers	-1,300	1008	292	0	0
Private Financing Initiative	-12,096	0	15,401	0	3,305
Teacher Retirement Costs	0	2,375	0	0	2,375
Services to Schools (Traded)	-313	279	28	0	-6
Total Committee Budget	-19,439	41,994	33,326	23,704	85,597

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Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

In addition to Council funding, the DSG is provided by the Department for Education (DFE) to support Wirral's schools' budget. DSG is a ring-fenced grant solely to be used to deliver education.

Table 4 below highlights the planned expenditure for each of the different funding blocks and the finding analysis.

TABLE 4 2023/24 Dedicated Schools Grant

	Budget £000
DSG Block costs:	
Schools Block	121,681
Schools de-delegated	2,096
Central Schools Costs	2,058
High Needs	59,025
Early Years	21,430
Total Expenditure	206,290
Funding:	
DSG Grant income	-206,077
Use of DSG reserve	-213
Total DSG Budget	0

Schools Block - the total budget for all maintained mainstream schools.

Schools De-delegated - funds deducted from school's budget share and held centrally to fund relevant services.

Central Schools Costs - central functions carried out on behalf of maintained schools and academies e.g., School Admissions.

High Needs Block – budget for pupils and students aged 0 to 24, with high needs including special schools.

The Early Years – provision of early education to those 2 and 3/4-year-old children who are entitled to receive it free of charge.

DSG Grant income – the 2023-24 budgeted allocation.

Use of the DSG reserve - the unallocated element of the High Needs block that is to off-set the cumulative deficit reserve balance.

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CAPITAL BUDGETS

Capital budgets are the monies allocated for spend on providing or improving non-current assets, which include land, buildings, and equipment, which will be of use or benefit in providing services for more than one financial year.

TABLE 5 2023/24 Children, Young People & Education – Capital Budgets

	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000
Condition/modernisation (SCA)	9,198	2,500	2,500
Basic Needs	1,028		427
School remodelling and additional classrooms (School Place Planning)	1		
Children's System Development	760		
Family support	157		
High Needs Provision Capital	4,392		
PFI	52		
SEN and disabilities (new grant)	478		
Transforming Care - Therapeutic Short Breaks	863		
Total Capital Budget	16,929	2,500	2,927

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RESERVES

Earmarked reserves are amounts set aside for specific purposes or projects.

TABLE 6 2023/24 Children, Young People & Education – Reserve position

	Opening balance £000
Service reserves:	
Intensive Family Intervention Project	405
Early Help & Play Development	117
Children’s Centre – Outdoor Play	92
DRIVE Safelives & Domestic Abuse Hub	50
YOS - Remand & Mobile Youth Centre	121
Local Safeguarding Children’s Board	23
Children IT data system	127
Mersey & Cheshire ICS Pilot	20
School Improvement	857
Schools Causing Concern	500
SEND OFSTED Inspection Improvement Action Plan	880
Help for Young People	26
Looked After Children Education Services	111
SEND - High Needs	110
Care Leaver Accommodation Development	203
Wirral Apprentice Programme	19
Total Reserves	3,661
Dedicated Schools Grant	
Deficit DSG reserve	-4,763