

## CABINET- 26 November 2024

### Cabinet Response to the Interim Recommendations from Select Committees Following Budget Deep Dives and Budget Briefing Sessions

#### Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee:

##### Early Help Deep Dive

*'Is early help prevention activity sufficiently well-funded to increase the wellbeing and life chances of the most disadvantaged Surrey residents in line with SCC's policy of no one left behind?'*

The Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee:

- I. Notes that investing in early help – which is discretionary funding - does make a positive difference. There are indications that early help reduces the demand on statutory services in Surrey, i.e., the number of children going into care, and the number on Child Protection Plans\*.

##### Cabinet Response:

Cabinet agrees with the select committee on the long-term value of early help support and with that in mind made the decision in the 2024/25 budget as part of the additional monies allocated through the social care grant to ensure this was targeted towards preventative and early help services.

- II. Believes investing more in preventive activities – such as easily accessed emotional wellbeing support for adolescents – would prevent young people's needs escalating, would contribute significantly to their wellbeing (and that of their families), and reduce the pressure on statutory services. Notes with regret there is no additional discretionary funding available to invest in prevention without making cutbacks elsewhere.

*Cabinet Response: Cabinet notes the committee's view.*

- III. Since preventive spending is having a positive impact on both outcomes for children and reduced statutory demand, recommends that early help spending is protected, with inflationary costs built in. The Committee is convinced of the value that early help brings and Cabinet should factor this into its budget decision-making.

##### Cabinet Response:

Cabinet recognises the benefits of preventative services and has previously targeted funding to support those services and will protect those services where possible. However, Cabinet must also consider the difficult balance of setting a budget to meet the many statutory services in Children' services with an expected exceptionally difficult budget settlement.

*\*Cllr John O'Reilly would like to record his acknowledgment of SCC's successes in reducing the demand on statutory services in the county (i.e. the number of children going into care and the number of Child Protection Plans, contrary to the national trend).*

## **Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise Deep Dive**

*'What is the likely impact on the infrastructure organisations – and on the organisations they support in the wider system - of the redistribution of funding, and can any negative impacts be mitigated?'*

The Select Committee has withdrawn its recommendations in the light of new information on the impact of the proposals to withdraw funding from Surrey Community Action and redistribute it to other organisations. It will advise its recommendations following an investigation to clarify the situation, which is planned by the end of November.

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