

Appendix C: Grant Thornton Value for Money Review – Management Actions Update

Update on Management Actions agreed in the January 2021, Grant Thornton Report “Value for Money Audit Findings for Bristol City Council” (BCC VfM report)

Rec no.	Management Action	Timing	Responsible Officer	Status
1. High	The Council should develop a recovery plan for the DSG and agree this with the schools’ forum and the Department for Education			
	<p>The forecasted deficit in the DSG is predominantly attributed to the increase need for support via the High Needs budget and in year movement attributed to emerging pressures in Early Years, due to longstanding underfunding of the early entitlements further exacerbated by the pandemic. Whilst we will continue to call for sufficiency of funding, investment and clarity about future funding arrangements for these sectors, plans will need to be considered for a sustainable long term provision that meets the needs of Children and young people in Bristol.</p> <p>The Education Transformation Programme has concluded its first year of delivery; largely focused on SEND improvement activities (linked also to delivering the Written Statement of Action) and promoting system-wide education inclusion. As the Programme enters its second year of delivery, priorities are being refreshed to promote financial sustainability via the pursuance of inclusion throughout the sector. Specifically focusing on the projects that will deliver additional capacity for specialist provision; a new clear and transparent</p>	31 March 2021	Director: Education	<p>Development of the DSG Management Plan has been ongoing since the first draft was prepared in line with agreed timings, however with some fine tuning required to the forecast prior to being presented to Bristol Schools Forum in May 2021. This is a live model and an ongoing iterative process, subject to refinement based on improved data and intelligence and will be regularly submitted to Schools Forum as the model evolves.</p> <p>The DfE has confirmed Bristol is not currently required to formally submit a DSG Management Plan to the DfE, however, Bristol has chosen to use the DfE recommended template and so is well placed to respond should this be required in the future.</p> <p>The Education Transformation Programme has secured a 12-month extension from the baselined closure date of September 2021.</p>

	<p>system for accessing Element 3 Funding; and, working in partnership with schools, a range of interventions designed to improve the offer and experience for children and young people with SEND</p> <p>Work is underway to complete the DSG Deficit Management Plan. This is a comprehensive tool that has been produced by the Department for Education to enable LAs to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitor how DSG funding is being spent. • compare data on high needs spend between LA's • form evidence-based and strategic future plans for the provision of services for children and young people with SEND. <p>Completion of the plan is being project managed and is due to be presented to Schools Forum on 30 March 2021. The completed plan will be kept up to date and used routinely for planning thereafter.</p>			<p>The extension reflects the delays to delivery caused by Covid and formally extends the scope. This includes understanding the true cost of delivering a statutorily compliant SEND Service in Bristol to inform service planning and DSG deficit management.</p> <p>The work of maintaining the Management Plan will transfer to a business-as-usual function from April 2022.</p>
2. Medium	The Council should address the overspends within Public Health to ensure sufficient reserves are maintained to meet any future overspends.			
	<p>The Public Health budget had been subject to annual grant reductions from 2015 of which C.2.6% (£858k) was reduced in each of the two years, 2018/19 and 2019/20. The service had anticipated this 2 year reduction in 2018/19 and planned to manage the service within its reducing financial resources (including reserves) whilst a review was undertaken to ensure that delivery within this reducing budget envelope, reflected key priorities. A service restructure and recommissioning exercise was completed and all recurrent commitments are</p>	Ongoing	Director: Public Health	<p>Service restructure and recommissioning exercises have been completed and public health recurrent expenditure is now comfortably within the envelope of the annual grant.</p> <p>There is a sufficient ring fenced public health reserve to manage any unplanned overspends and contingencies.</p> <p>The Director of Public Health and the Director of Finance (Section 151 officer)</p>

	within budget, with reserves being applied where appropriate for one-off Public Health related initiatives. This position will continue to be closely monitored and reported in budget monitoring, particularly in view of Covid-19			work closely to ensure appropriate oversight and management of the grant and the reserve.
3. High	The Council should evaluate and consider how it sets its capital budget to enable it to set more realistic budgets going forward. The Council's growth and regeneration plans should be updated to reflect the slippage in capital plans			
	<p>The Capital Programme is managed and monitored through the Capital & Investment Board and Delivery Executive provides member oversight. A Delivery Executive call in process has been established within 2020/21 to challenge and support capital project delivery as well as establishing more realistic delivery profiles which takes appropriate account of optimism bias. The new governance arrangements will need to be embedded and will be subject to continuous review to ensure they are working effectively.</p> <p>Improved reporting arrangements are now in place within Growth and Regeneration, with a monthly internal G&R Board reviewing progress against plan and monthly highlight reports for each capital project.</p> <p>A strategic partner for capital projects has been procured and commences 1 Feb 2021, which will provide additional capacity and capability to support capital programme delivery and improve overall governance of capital projects from 2021/22.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Executive Director: Growth & Regeneration</p> <p>Director: Finance</p>	Please refer to the report presented to 27 September 21 Audit Committee, providing an update on the progress made towards implementing the programme of changes required to the Council's capital programme delivery, governance, and processes, to mitigate potential risks and implement best practice.
4. Medium	The Council should focus on the identification its savings plans for 2021/22 and beyond to ensure that these can be actioned promptly and delivered on a recurrent basis			
	The combined savings programme approved by Council in 2017/18 and 2018/19 equated to £110m and robust governance arrangements were	Ongoing	Director: Finance	The current economic and operating conditions, pandemic response and recovery has presented some challenges

	<p>established for monitoring and reporting performance against the savings proposals.</p> <p>The savings of £15m represent the tail of this programme. The current gap in savings delivery is largely attributed to adult and children social care and facilities management. Delivery of which has been impacted by Covid-19.</p> <p>A review has been undertaken of the residual propositions and where necessary revisions have been made in the 2021/22 budget for a combination of new proposals or growth funding, and subject to approval of the budget by Council in February, delivery will be monitored via the budget monitoring and savings reports during the course of the financial year.</p>			<p>in delivering planned efficiency savings in some key frontline areas. The Council has in place an established and embedded governance framework for the continuous review assessment, evaluation and reporting of agreed savings. Mitigations are explored and where appropriate alternative delivery plans proposed. The level of delivery confidence is assessed, and non-delivery savings contingency established to provide a degree of flexibility whilst plans are being further developed and implemented.</p> <p>This process can be evidenced in the 2021/22 Budget report approved by Council in February, Outturn report for the year ended and monthly monitoring reports presented to Cabinet.</p>
5. Medium	The Council should report progress on the Joint Local Area SEND Inspection to Cabinet and scrutiny on a regular (six monthly or quarterly) basis. Progress should also be reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board.			
	<p>People's Scrutiny undertook a SEND deep dive through the format of an Evidence Day in February 2019.</p> <p>Recommendations were integrated into the SEND Written Statement of Action (WSOA), which is monitored formally by the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England (NHSE). Progress against the WSoA and the specific Evidence Day findings are regularly reported to People Scrutiny. To date - May 2020 and December 2020.</p> <p>The Cabinet lead members for Education and Skills</p>	<p>By September 2021</p>	<p>Director: Education</p>	<p>The Written Statement of Action reached its final milestone in July 2021 and DfE and NHS England advisers have been positive about the progress made throughout the monitoring period.</p> <p>Further DfE and NHSE meetings have been arranged to continue an overview of progress until the re-visit.</p> <p>The window for Ofsted/CQC 're-visit' is October 2021 to March 2022. During the</p>

	<p>and Children, Women and Families are both members of the SEND Improvement Board. This board meets every two months and receives detailed reports of progress against the Written Statement of Action (SEND inspection action plan) including a comprehensive data dashboard. The formal milestone monitoring reports are signed off by the Board prior to the DfE/NHSE's visit.</p> <p>The SEND Improvement Board reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) The role of the HWBB is outlined in the SEND Code of Practice and has identified Health and Wellbeing Champions. The Board has received two SEND Seminars and several papers, including the strategy in 2019-20. Detailed progress on inspection findings will be reported by September 2021.</p>		<p>re-visit, inspectors will assess whether sufficient progress has been made against the five areas of weakness identified in the 2019 inspection. If they determine that the Local Area is making insufficient progress in addressing any of the areas of significant weakness, it is for the DfE and NHS England to determine their next steps.</p> <p>A SEND Partnership Plan is in development to continue to tackle the areas of weakness identified in the inspection. It will also provide the opportunity to include other areas that were not highlighted in the inspection findings, but that parent carers have said are important to them.</p> <p>The SEND Partnership Plan will sit across the four pillars of the 'Bristol Belonging Strategy', ensuring SEND is firmly embedded in Bristol.</p> <p>People scrutiny regularly invite officers to present on SEND and quarterly reporting is made through Accessible City KPI's through council systems.</p> <p>Data is available to the public through the open data website and inspection reports and DFE visit findings are published on the local offer website.</p>
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