

## Blackpool Council – Children’s Services

### Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE                | BUDGET                                     | EXPENDITURE                      |                            |                             | VARIANCE   | 2022/23<br>(UNDER)/OVER<br>SPEND B/FWD<br>£000 |
|---|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
|   | 2023/24                                    |                                  |                            |                             |  |  |
|   | ADJUSTED<br>CASH LIMITED<br>BUDGET<br>£000 | EXPENDITURE<br>APR - JUL<br>£000 | PROJECTED<br>SPEND<br>£000 | FORECAST<br>OUTTURN<br>£000 | F/CAST FULL<br>YEAR VAR.<br>(UNDER) / OVER<br>£000 |  |
| <b>CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>              |  |                                  |                            |                             |  |  |
| <b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>                  |  |                                  |                            |                             |  |  |
| LOCAL SCHOOLS BUDGET - ISB              | 20,112                                     | 6,819                            | 13,293                     | 20,112                      | -  | -  |
| LOCAL SCHOOLS BUDGET - NON DELEGATED    | 281  | 157                              | 124                        | 281                         | -  | -  |
| EDUCATION                               | 27,334                                     | 3,940                            | 23,394                     | 27,334                      | -  | -  |
| EARLY HELP FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES    | 182  | 61                               | 121                        | 182                         | -  | -  |
| BUSINESS SUPPORT AND RESOURCES          | 9,330                                      | 3,517                            | 5,813                      | 9,330                       | -  | -  |
| DEDICATED SCHOOL GRANT                  | (57,926)                                   | (20,952)                         | (36,974)                   | (57,926)                    | -  | -  |
| CARRY FORWARD OF DSG UNDER/(OVER) SPEND | 687  | -                                | 687                        | 687                         | -  | -  |
| <b>TOTAL DSG FUNDED SERVICES</b>        | -  | <b>(6,458)</b>                   | <b>6,458</b>               | -                           | -  | -  |
| CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPRECIATION        | 1,748                                      | -                                | 1,748                      | 1,748                       | -  | -  |
| EDUCATION                               | 1,933                                      | 1,475                            | 458                        | 1,933                       | -  | -  |
| EARLY HELP FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES    | 5,840                                      | 329                              | 5,511                      | 5,840                       | -  | -  |
| CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE                  | 59,079                                     | 19,634                           | 44,189                     | 63,823                      | 4,744  | -  |
| BUSINESS SUPPORT AND RESOURCES          | (100)                                      | 332                              | 337                        | 669                         | 769  | -  |
| LOCAL SERVICES SUPPORT GRANT            | (18)                                       | -                                | (18)                       | (18)                        | -  | -  |
| SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANT                | (166)                                      | -                                | (166)                      | (166)                       | -  | -  |
| <b>TOTAL COUNCIL FUNDED SERVICES</b>    | <b>68,316</b>                              | <b>21,770</b>                    | <b>52,059</b>              | <b>73,829</b>               | <b>5,513</b>                                       | -  |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                           | <b>68,316</b>                              | <b>15,312</b>                    | <b>58,517</b>              | <b>73,829</b>               | <b>5,513</b>                                       | -  |

### Commentary on the key issues:

#### Directorate Summary – basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the latest outturn projection for each individual service within the Children’s Services Directorate against their respective, currently approved, revenue budget. Forecast outturns are based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and efficiencies in the remainder of the financial year, all of which have been agreed with each Head of Service.

#### Children’s Social Care

The full-year impact of the Children’s Social Care pressures as at M7 2022/23 has been rightsized as part of the Corporate Medium Term Financial Plan, equating to an additional budget of £5,221k allocated in 2023/24. However, Children’s Social Care Placements is forecasting an overspend against this increased budget of £4,744k, mainly due to new-to-care placements being higher than those exiting care and the additional support required following the breakdown of high-cost placements. The actual number of residential placements as at 31st July 2023 is 76 with this forecast to reduce to 69 by 31st March 2024, whereas the plan suggested there would be 70 as at 31st July reducing to 60 by the end of March 2024.

However, the number of Children in Care continues to reduce and currently sits at 540 children. This brings Blackpool from a rate of 218 per 0-17 10,000 population to 194. The ambition is to bring ourselves in line with comparator Local Authorities over the next couple of years and we are confident that this ambition will be realised. Officers have seen this reduction as a result of reduced entry into care,

and increased numbers exiting our care system. Within the cohort of Children Looked After, the Council has had a higher than national average of children in residential placements. Residential settings, for most children, are not the optimum placement and these children do not usually have the same degree of positive outcomes as children in foster placements, or family placements for example. Residential placements are costly, with unit costs rising year on year by 14.1%. We have seen movement in the numbers of residential placements, from 84 to 76 as a result of a focussed, ongoing piece of work led by our newly recruited Head of Service for Supporting our Children. We have reviewed a number of care plans and as a result children have been moved from residential settings to settings that better meet their needs, always ensuring their safety and individual needs are at the forefront when planning.

The service has additionally seen a reduction in agency social work staff during the last 12-18 months. In 2021/2022 the service had rates of up to 40% agency staff in some teams. A refreshed Workforce Strategy, overseen by a Workforce Board, chaired monthly by the Director of Childrens Services, has seen a reduction of agency staff to under 15% across the social care teams. The national average is now 17% and regionally the rate is much higher. The last set of regional data put Blackpool at the lowest for agency rates. Officers continue to monitor this closely in a challenging and competitive market.

### **Dedicated Schools Grant Funded Services**

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is the funding stream that supports the Schools Budget, which includes amounts that are devolved through the Individual School Budget (ISB), together with centrally-retained pupil-related services as listed in the revenue summary. Any under or overspends against services funded by the DSG will be carried forward to 2024/25 and, in the case of overspends, become the first call on the grant in that year.

### **Business Support and Resources**

Business Support and Resources is forecasting an overspend of £769k. There was an additional Children's Services savings target of £1,924k, of which, only £1,155k is anticipated to be met this financial year, leaving a budget gap of £769k.

### **Summary of the Children's Services financial position**

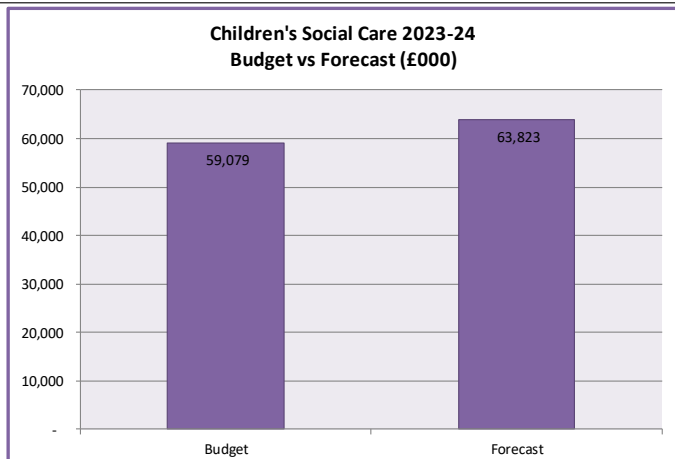
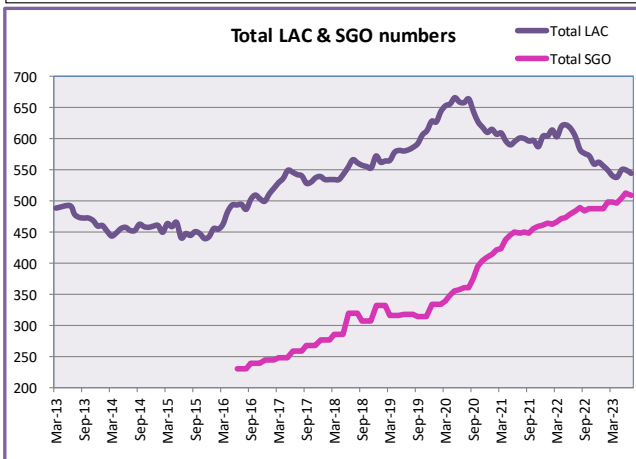
As at the end of July 2023 the Children's Services Directorate is forecasting an overspend of £5,513k for the financial year to March 2024.

### **Budget Holder – Victoria Gent, Director of Children's Services**

Children's Social Care Trends

| Date   | External Placements Projection |          |                 |                   |          |                 | Internal Fostering |          |                 | Supported Accommodation |          |                 | LAC number | SGO    |                 |
|--------|--------------------------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------|----------|-----------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|--------|-----------------|
|        | Residential                    |          |                 | Fostering inc M&B |          |                 | Number             | % of LAC | £ per placement | Number                  | % of LAC | £ per placement | No.        | Number | £ per placement |
|        | Number                         | % of LAC | £ per placement | Number            | % of LAC | £ per placement |                    |          |                 |                         |          |                 |            |        |                 |
| Jun-13 | 41                             | 8%       | 111,596         | 72                | 15%      | 36,202          | 263                | 53%      | 11,887          | 16                      | 3%       | no data         | 492        |        | no data         |
| Sep-13 | 33                             | 7%       | 111,523         | 66                | 14%      | 35,667          | 272                | 58%      | 11,908          | 17                      | 4%       | no data         | 472        |        | no data         |
| Dec-13 | 30                             | 7%       | 117,073         | 69                | 15%      | 36,560          | 260                | 57%      | 11,828          | 17                      | 4%       | no data         | 459        |        | no data         |
| Mar-14 | 27                             | 6%       | 118,473         | 64                | 14%      | 34,058          | 248                | 56%      | 11,757          | 15                      | 3%       | no data         | 443        |        | no data         |
| Jun-14 | 25                             | 5%       | 102,561         | 74                | 16%      | 35,928          | 250                | 55%      | 12,833          | 18                      | 4%       | no data         | 457        |        | no data         |
| Sep-14 | 21                             | 5%       | 121,210         | 75                | 16%      | 37,655          | 237                | 51%      | 12,570          | 27                      | 6%       | no data         | 462        |        | no data         |
| Dec-14 | 18                             | 4%       | 124,281         | 70                | 15%      | 38,760          | 243                | 53%      | 12,474          | 23                      | 5%       | no data         | 459        |        | no data         |
| Mar-15 | 23                             | 5%       | 128,868         | 73                | 16%      | 40,155          | 244                | 53%      | 12,374          | 19                      | 4%       | no data         | 463        |        | no data         |
| Jun-15 | 25                             | 6%       | 147,777         | 74                | 17%      | 40,625          | 219                | 50%      | 12,541          | 20                      | 5%       | no data         | 440        |        | no data         |
| Sep-15 | 25                             | 6%       | 142,934         | 73                | 16%      | 40,040          | 225                | 50%      | 12,549          | 16                      | 4%       | no data         | 450        |        | no data         |
| Dec-15 | 27                             | 6%       | 145,196         | 70                | 16%      | 41,243          | 217                | 49%      | 12,428          | 17                      | 4%       | no data         | 442        |        | no data         |
| Mar-16 | 29                             | 6%       | 146,120         | 69                | 15%      | 42,215          | 257                | 56%      | 12,453          | 22                      | 5%       | no data         | 462        |        | no data         |
| Jun-16 | 34                             | 7%       | 157,136         | 77                | 16%      | 42,145          | 259                | 53%      | 12,630          | 28                      | 6%       | 38,608          | 493        | 230    | 5,472           |
| Sep-16 | 32                             | 6%       | 169,996         | 84                | 17%      | 42,750          | 254                | 51%      | 12,688          | 27                      | 5%       | 41,376          | 502        | 240    | 5,582           |
| Dec-16 | 36                             | 7%       | 175,954         | 89                | 18%      | 43,038          | 258                | 52%      | 12,857          | 28                      | 6%       | 41,037          | 499        | 245    | 5,562           |
| Mar-17 | 44                             | 8%       | 179,669         | 103               | 19%      | 43,502          | 269                | 51%      | 12,872          | 26                      | 5%       | 42,416          | 529        | 249    | 5,555           |
| Jun-17 | 49                             | 9%       | 151,450         | 100               | 18%      | 40,933          | 272                | 50%      | 13,227          | 26                      | 5%       | 60,946          | 546        | 258    | 5,576           |
| Sep-17 | 35                             | 7%       | 161,487         | 95                | 18%      | 40,991          | 270                | 51%      | 13,213          | 36                      | 7%       | 57,928          | 528        | 267    | 5,383           |
| Dec-17 | 43                             | 8%       | 162,623         | 103               | 19%      | 41,277          | 272                | 50%      | 13,169          | 36                      | 7%       | 58,358          | 539        | 277    | 5,281           |
| Mar-18 | 44                             | 8%       | 165,935         | 98                | 18%      | 41,099          | 273                | 51%      | 13,116          | 30                      | 6%       | 55,728          | 534        | 286    | 5,109           |
| Jun-18 | 45                             | 8%       | 164,794         | 97                | 18%      | 40,083          | 297                | 54%      | 13,403          | 24                      | 4%       | 48,006          | 554        | 320    | 5,512           |
| Sep-18 | 45                             | 8%       | 159,388         | 97                | 17%      | 40,425          | 302                | 54%      | 13,441          | 28                      | 5%       | 46,073          | 557        | 308    | 5,294           |
| Dec-18 | 47                             | 8%       | 169,287         | 99                | 17%      | 40,227          | 305                | 53%      | 13,430          | 33                      | 6%       | 46,167          | 572        | 332    | 5,175           |
| Mar-19 | 53                             | 9%       | 177,477         | 94                | 17%      | 39,536          | 306                | 54%      | 13,289          | 23                      | 4%       | 45,845          | 565        | 317    | 5,238           |
| Jun-19 | 53                             | 9%       | 172,929         | 107               | 18%      | 42,426          | 305                | 53%      | 13,014          | 26                      | 4%       | 68,367          | 580        | 318    | 5,988           |
| Sep-19 | 58                             | 10%      | 180,014         | 116               | 20%      | 43,981          | 294                | 50%      | 12,649          | 32                      | 5%       | 56,148          | 592        | 315    | 5,693           |
| Dec-19 | 62                             | 10%      | 184,396         | 145               | 23%      | 45,812          | 300                | 48%      | 12,854          | 31                      | 5%       | 60,289          | 628        | 334    | 5,670           |
| Mar-20 | 65                             | 10%      | 183,892         | 167               | 26%      | 45,201          | 292                | 45%      | 13,166          | 33                      | 5%       | 61,076          | 653        | 339    | 5,624           |
| Jun-20 | 69                             | 10%      | 207,288         | 175               | 27%      | 47,565          | 284                | 43%      | 12,877          | 32                      | 5%       | 92,575          | 659        | 357    | 5,882           |
| Sep-20 | 75                             | 12%      | 211,328         | 173               | 27%      | 47,125          | 277                | 43%      | 12,979          | 30                      | 5%       | 97,225          | 644        | 376    | 6,056           |
| Dec-20 | 72                             | 12%      | 209,062         | 178               | 29%      | 47,361          | 248                | 41%      | 14,343          | 32                      | 5%       | 105,274         | 610        | 410    | 6,551           |
| Mar-21 | 72                             | 12%      | 209,953         | 189               | 31%      | 47,883          | 230                | 38%      | 14,234          | 25                      | 4%       | 107,561         | 609        | 424    | 6,685           |
| Jun-21 | 68                             | 11%      | 225,246         | 200               | 34%      | 45,809          | 213                | 36%      | 16,619          | 26                      | 4%       | 78,324          | 596        | 450    | 7,650           |
| Sep-21 | 64                             | 11%      | 229,272         | 194               | 33%      | 47,303          | 221                | 37%      | 17,059          | 39                      | 7%       | 70,834          | 596        | 448    | 7,752           |
| Dec-21 | 66                             | 11%      | 238,266         | 186               | 31%      | 47,535          | 219                | 36%      | 17,064          | 40                      | 7%       | 68,328          | 604        | 461    | 7,884           |
| Mar-22 | 70                             | 12%      | 247,935         | 184               | 30%      | 47,718          | 214                | 35%      | 17,348          | 47                      | 8%       | 68,576          | 608        | 467    | 8,076           |
| Jun-22 | 69                             | 11%      | 251,588         | 174               | 28%      | 50,006          | 221                | 36%      | 17,030          | 50                      | 8%       | 74,397          | 616        | 479    | 8,093           |
| Sep-22 | 70                             | 12%      | 255,469         | 164               | 28%      | 48,674          | 193                | 34%      | 16,646          | 57                      | 10%      | 72,203          | 576        | 484    | 8,186           |
| Dec-22 | 72                             | 13%      | 264,844         | 168               | 30%      | 52,295          | 199                | 35%      | 16,770          | 58                      | 10%      | 69,007          | 562        | 487    | 8,175           |
| Mar-23 | 77                             | 14%      | 267,333         | 171               | 32%      | 52,073          | 200                | 37%      | 16,785          | 44                      | 8%       | 67,462          | 540        | 499    | 8,205           |
| Apr-23 | 79                             | 15%      | 277,464         | 169               | 31%      | 57,959          | 197                | 37%      | 18,853          | 42                      | 8%       | 79,291          | 538        | 497    | 8,841           |
| May-23 | 83                             | 15%      | 283,061         | 174               | 32%      | 56,809          | 201                | 37%      | 18,793          | 38                      | 7%       | 77,678          | 550        | 504    | 8,869           |
| Jun-23 | 84                             | 15%      | 287,055         | 181               | 33%      | 56,473          | 201                | 37%      | 19,532          | 34                      | 6%       | 75,503          | 549        | 513    | 8,873           |
| Jul-23 | 76                             | 14%      | 294,796         | 182               | 33%      | 54,787          | 190                | 35%      | 19,011          | 41                      | 8%       | 70,674          | 544        | 509    | 8,906           |

Note: The variance between the current total number of Looked After Children (544) and the total internal fostering and external placement numbers (489) is children with care orders, adoption placements etc. They are still classed as LAC but do not incur any commissioned costs. SGO = Special Guardianship Order.



### Children's Social Care - Historic Spend & Budgets

(actuals to 2022-23, forecast 2023-24)

