

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 5 MARCH 2026

REPORT ON: CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONED SERVICES REVIEW

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT NO: 63 - 2026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report relates to a review of Children and Families Service commissioned services managed by Children's Social Work and a Neighbourhood Services commissioned service. It outlines a proposed funding reduction for approval and details are provided in Appendix 1.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a Note the review and approve a reduction in funding to all Children's Social Work commissioned services and a Neighbourhood Services commissioned service as described in the report by 4.3% equating to a total annual saving of £100K.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The proposal being considered would deliver a saving of £100k and contribute towards the Council setting a balanced budget in 2026-27. In total, £98k would come from Children and Families Services and £2k from Neighbourhood Services commissioned services.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Children and Families Service and Neighbourhood Services currently commission services from 13 different Third Sector providers ranging from the lowest cost of £13,000 to the highest of £800,000 and with a total annual cost of £2.3m.

4.2 The Council does not have a statutory duty to support these organisations and at present, they separately deliver services focused on a broad range of distinct needs such as mental health, substance use, child poverty and supported accommodation.

4.3 A review has been informed by a strategic needs assessment, which illustrates that key priority groups most at risk of harm and alternative care are 0–3-year-olds, primary/secondary pupils and children with a disability, where parents/carers have multiple overlapping needs.

4.4 The Independent Care Review published in February 2020 also noted the importance of early preventative support and said it is important for them to be delivered in accordance with 10 National Framework Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support:

- Whole family – rooted in GIRFEC and focused on both parents/carers and children.
- Needs based – tailored to fit around each family and not driven by rigid structures.
- Assets and community based – empowering and building on existing strengths.
- Timely and sustainable – flexible, responsive and proportionate for as long as needed.
- Collaborative and seamless – multi-agency and joined up without multiple referrals.
- Promoted – easy and well understood access to routes of support.
- Non-stigmatising – no judgement and as normalised as accessing universal services.
- Family voice – involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of services.

- Skilled and supported workforce – informed by an understanding of trauma.
 - Underpinned by children’s rights – funnel through which support services are viewed.
- 4.5 Instead of disparate services focused on specific needs, the proposed new arrangement would, therefore, involve partners operating as an alliance which collectively and flexibly targets the shared resource to priority groups in accordance with these principles.
- 4.6 This would enhance whole family support for a child, young person and parents/carers within their own home, school and/or community, as well as supporting wider access to education, learning, leisure, recreational opportunities and other locally accessible support.
- 4.7 In terms of access to services and managing capacity, the Fast Online Referral Tracking system would play a critical role via a triage process which screens referrals and checks if needs can be met through existing commissioned or other non-commissioned services.
- 4.8 This would maximise existing commissioned and non-commissioned resources, reduce the professional burden involved in making multiple referrals to different services and ensure families receive timely and appropriate support.
- 4.9 The FORT system will assist with regular contract monitoring in relation to the number of referrals, the proportion accepted or declined, the timing of support, engagement of families, outcomes, monitoring of any unmet need and evidence-based commissioning going forward.
- 4.10 The current range of commissioned services, their present remits, individual contract values and the immediate financial implications of the proposed 4.3% to each provider are listed in the table at Appendix 1.
- 4.11 In terms of mitigating any adverse impact, where referrals to FORT are declined due to insufficient capacity in both commissioned and non-commissioned services, agencies can make decisions on bespoke packages based on their assessments of a family’s needs.
- 4.12 Further mitigations include the allocation of £1.2m Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) to various Third Sector partners and transformation programmes in 2026-27 (Committee Report number 313-2025).
- 4.13 The planned implementation of Whole Family Support (Committee Report number 349-2025), initially in the Northeast and Eastend Wards, will also enhance integrated partnership support to local communities and promote the voice of families in the design and delivery of services.
- 4.14 Specifically in relation to AFC, the range of supported accommodation options will remain the same and the service will be more closely integrated with the Aftercare Team to sustain proactive outreach and enhance support for wider needs, such as employability.
- 4.15 The Council would also work with Third Sector partners on both workforce development and efficiency savings, such as shared property rationalisation, the co-location of teams or opportunities to integrate services and reduce management costs.
- 4.16 This proposal would therefore involve cost savings whilst providing opportunities to improve the nature of support in accordance with the 10 National Framework Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support and locally integrated services placing the voice of communities at the centre.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment to identify impacts on Equality & Diversity, Fairness & Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. An impact, positive or negative, on one or more of these issues was identified. An appropriate senior manager has checked and agreed with this assessment. A copy of the Integrated Impact Assessment showing the impacts and accompanying benefits of / mitigating factors for them is included as an Appendix to this report.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

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APPENDIX 1

Commissioned Services - Proposed 4.3% Saving

<u>Provider</u>	<u>Present Remit</u>	<u>Current Contract</u>	<u>Proposed Contract</u>	<u>4.3% Saving</u>
		<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
One Parent Families	provide advice, information and support services to lone parents, their children and other families with similar needs	146	140	6
Parent to Parent	provide support for parents, children and young people with additional need	45	43	2
Relationship Scotland	help families who are experiencing family conflict or relationship breakdown to mediate and sustain arrangements	21	20	1
Aberlour Childcare Trust	support for families affected by substance misuse	124	119	5
Barnardos Scotland	support to children and families experiencing disabilities and work with children that have complex additional support needs.	507	485	22
Inclusion Group	support to families with children or young people with disabilities	319	305	14
Capability Scotland	support to families with children or young people with disabilities	100	96	4
Who Cares	provide an advocacy and representation service for care experienced children and young people.	32	31	1
Befriends	befriending support to disadvantaged children and young people, to develop their life skills and improve their well-being.	13	12	1
Hillcrest Futures	flexible assessment, treatment and intervention service for children and young people using or at risk of engaging in drugs and alcohol.	31	30	1
Includem	intensive community-based support to children, young people and families.	119	114	5
Tayside Council on Alcohol	mentoring service to children and young people with multiple risk factors including disengagement from school.	29	28	1
Action for Children - Children & Families Services	supported accommodation for young people and targeted support for young people at risk of anti-social behaviour.	800	766	34
		2,286	2,188	98

Integrated Impact Assessment

Committee Report Number: 63-2026

Document Title: Commissioned Services

Document Type: Service

Description:

This report outlines proposed 4.3% savings to Children's Social Work commissioned services equating to a total £100k across all providers alongside changes to the scope of and access to available support.

Intended Outcome:

The intended outcome of the proposal is to contribute towards the Council setting a balanced budget whilst operating in accordance with the 10 principles of whole family support outlined by the Independent Care Review and mitigating any negative impact of service reductions.

Period Covered: 01/04/2026 to 31/03/2027

Monitoring:

The proposal will be monitored through data collated from the Fast Online Referral Tracking (FORT) system and individual contract monitoring arrangements with each service provider.

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Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

Impacts & Implications

Age: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Disability: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Gender Reassignment: No Impact

Marriage & Civil Partnership: No Impact

Pregnancy & Maternity: No Impact

Race / Ethnicity: No Impact

Religion or Belief: No Impact

Sex: No Impact

Sexual Orientation: No Impact

Are any Human Rights not covered by the Equalities questions above impacted by this report?

No

Fairness & Poverty

Geographic Impacts & Implications

Strathmartine:	Negative
Lochee:	Negative
Coldside:	Negative
Maryfield:	Negative
North East:	Negative
East End:	Negative
The Ferry:	Negative
West End:	Negative

Negative Implications & Mitigations: As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Household Group Impacts and Implications

Looked After Children & Care Leavers: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Carers: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Lone Parent Families: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Single Female Households with Children: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Greater number of children and/or young children: No Impact

Pensioners - single / couple: No Impact

Unskilled workers or unemployed: Negative

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Serious & enduring mental health problems: No Impact

Homeless: No Impact

Drug and/or alcohol problems: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Offenders & Ex-offenders: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Socio Economic Disadvantage Impacts & Implications

Employment Status: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Socio Economic Disadvantage Impacts & Implications

Education & Skills: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Income: No Impact

Caring Responsibilities (including Childcare): Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Affordability and accessibility of services: Positive

Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate the risk of any reductions in funding and will be closely monitored. The FORT system is designed to provide a single accessible route to receive support and remove the administrative burden placed on professionals when making multiple referrals.

Fuel Poverty: No Impact

Cost of Living / Poverty Premium: No Impact

Connectivity / Internet Access: No Impact

Income / Benefit Advice / Income Maximisation: No Impact

Employment Opportunities: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Education: Negative

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Health: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Life Expectancy: No Impact

Mental Health: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Overweight / Obesity: No Impact

Child Health: Negative

As the proposal involves reduced funding, it could have a negative impact on available support to children, young people and parents/carers. Implementing the 10 principles of whole family support to promote holistic approaches and remove or reduce duplication; changing access routes to services via FORT; triaging referrals to services with available capacity; and allowing bespoke packages to be purchased by referrers if capacity is not currently available are all designed to mitigate this and will be closely monitored.

Neighbourhood Satisfaction: No Impact

Transport: No Impact

Environment

Climate Change Impacts

Mitigating Greenhouse Gases: No Impact

Adapting to the effects of climate change: No Impact

Resource Use Impacts

Energy efficiency & consumption: No Impact

Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling of waste: No Impact

Sustainable Procurement: No Impact

Transport Impacts

Accessible transport provision: No Impact

Sustainable modes of transport: No Impact

Natural Environment Impacts

Air, land & water quality: No Impact

Biodiversity: No Impact

Open & green spaces: No Impact

Built Environment Impacts

Built Heritage: No Impact

Housing: No Impact

Is the proposal subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Corporate Risk

Corporate Risk Impacts

Political Reputational Risk: Negative

The proposal could be seen as unnecessary cuts and challenges to Third Sector partners but accompanying developments in relation to the 10 principles of flexible family support and the use of the FORT system are compatible with the findings of a local strategic assessment on the multiple needs of children and young people at risk of harm and the findings of the Independent Care Review. The proposal is designed to make best use of the total resource and promote a more accessible and holistic approach to meeting the needs of families.

Economic/Financial Sustainability / Security & Equipment: Positive

The proposal is designed to contribute towards the Council setting a balanced budget whilst revising approaches towards the delivery of services, promoting best value and being compliant with national policy. One of the mitigations to any reduction in overall capacity is that informed by assessed levels of risk and need referrers will have the option to purchase bespoke packages of support where capacity is not available due to reduced block funding. It is also made in the context of separate Whole Family Wellbeing Funding being allocated to Third Sector partners.

Social Impact / Safety of Staff & Clients: No Impact

Technological / Business or Service Interruption: No Impact

Environmental: No Impact

Legal / Statutory Obligations: No Impact

Organisational / Staffing & Competence: No Impact

Corporate Risk Implications & Mitigation:

The risk implications associated with the subject matter of this report are "business as normal" risks and any increase to the level of risk to the Council is minimal. This is due either to the risk being inherently low or as a result of the risk being transferred in full or in part to another party on a fair and equitable basis. The subject matter is routine and has happened many times before without significant impact.