

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 5 MARCH 2026

REPORT ON: CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONED SERVICE REVIEW

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

REPORT NO: 70- 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.
- 1.2 It provides a summary of current commissioned services and outlines two separate proposals for approval.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - a Approve the recommendations to reduce funding to Third Sector partners by a total of £350k in 2026-27
 - b This includes a £175k part-year saving for re-designed supported accommodation, £50k for a re-designed anti-social behaviour service and £125k from all other providers.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The proposals being considered could deliver a saving of £350k in 2026-27 and £525k recurring full year savings after the supported accommodation re-design is implemented.
- 3.2 The proportionate contribution of the other providers to the £125k would be a 6.5% reduction for each provider and all the financial details are outlined in paragraph 4.11.

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 deliver services focused on a broad range of 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 more likely to be at risk of harm and/or require alternative care are children and young people with multiple overlapping needs, including early years and disability.
- 4.4 The Independent Care Review published in February 2020 also noted the importance of early preventative support and stated they should 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
 - **Collaborative and seamless** – multi-agency and joined up without multiple referrals
 - **Timely and sustainable** – flexible, responsive and proportionate for as long as needed
 - **Promoted** – easy and well understood access to routes of support
 - **Non-stigmatising** – no judgement and as normalised as accessing universal services

- **Assets and community based** – empowering and building on existing strengths
 - **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 The review has therefore concluded that instead of disparate services focused separately on specific needs, providers would operate as an alliance which collectively targets the shared resource to priority groups in accordance with these principles.
- 4.6 Routes into services would be supported by the Fast Online Referral Tracking system via a triage process which screens referrals and checks if needs can be met through existing commissioned or other non-commissioned services.
- 4.7 This would create whole family flexible support for a child, young person and parents/carers within their own home, school and/or community, as well as supporting access to education, learning, leisure, recreational opportunities and other locally accessible support.
- 4.8 It would strengthen flexible partnership working, 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 also assist with regular contract monitoring in relation to the number of referrals, the proportion accepted or declined, the timing of support, engagement of families and outcomes.
- 4.10 As the system will assist in monitoring the individual and collective capacity of services and the nature and extent of any unmet needs, it will support longer term evidence-based and transparent commissioning with partners.
- 4.11 The current range of commissioned services, their present remits, individual contract values and the immediate financial implications of the proposed 6.5% reduction in funding are listed below:
- **One Parent Families** (£146k to £138,700) – provide advice, information and support services to lone parents, their children and other families with similar needs
 - **Parent to Parent** (£45k to £42,075) – provide support for parents, children and young people with additional needs
 - **Relationship Scotland** (£21k to £19,635) – help families who are experiencing family conflict or relationship breakdown to mediate and sustain arrangements
 - **Aberlour Childcare Trust** (£124k to £115,940) – support for families affected by substance misuse
 - **Barnardo’s Scotland** (£507k to £474,045) – support to children and families experiencing disabilities and work with children that have complex additional support needs.
 - **Inclusion Group** (£319k to £298,265) – support to families with children or young people with disabilities
 - **Capability Scotland** (£100k to £93,500) – support to families with children or young people with disabilities
 - **Who Cares?** (£32k to £29,920) – provide an advocacy and representation service for care experienced children and young people.
 - **Befriends** (£13k to £12,155) – befriending support to disadvantaged children and young people, to develop their life skills and improve their well-being.
 - **Hillcrest Futures** (£31k to £29,985) – flexible assessment, treatment and intervention service for children and young people using or at risk of engaging in drugs and alcohol.
 - **Includem** (£119k to £111,265) – intensive community-based support to children, young people and families.

- **Tayside Council on Alcohol** (£29k to £27,115) – mentoring service to children and young people with multiple risk factors including disengagement from school.
 - **Total 6.5% saving applied across all providers for a full financial year and recurring** - £125k
- 4.12 In terms of mitigating any adverse impact, where referrals to FORT are declined due to insufficient capacity in both commissioned and non-commissioned services, the service will make decisions on bespoke packages based on their assessments of a family's needs.
- 4.13 Further mitigations include the allocation of £1.2m Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) to various Third Sector partners in 2026-27 (Committee Report number 313-2025) and the planned implementation of Whole Family Support (Committee Report number 349-2025).
- 4.14 The Council would also work with Third Sector partners to explore and support efficiency savings, such as shared property rationalisation, the co-location of other teams or opportunities to integrate services and reduce management costs.

5.0 SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

- 5.1 In addition to the wider review of commissioned services, the service has also reviewed a Supported Accommodation service currently delivered by Action for Children (AFC) at a total annual cost of £800k.
- 5.2 This service provides accommodation and wider life skills support to potentially homeless young people to promote their independence and transition to longer-term sustainable tenancies.
- 5.3 The Neighbourhood Services Community Safety and Resilience Team also separately fund AFC a total of £50k to deliver targeted support designed to reduce anti-social behaviour for the same cohort of young people.
- 5.4 The proposal is to firstly reduce the £800k to £500k by bringing the service in-house and accruing Housing Benefit payments. Secondly, to end the £50k funding for the anti-social behaviour service.
- 5.5. As the employment of the supported accommodation team would be transferred to the Council, implementation would take 6 months. This is reflected in the part-year saving of £175k for 2026-27, rising to £350k for a full year.
- 5.6 In relation to both services, the functions would be more closely integrated into Children and Families and Neighbourhood Services teams. Like the other commissioned services, they would flexibly respond to the holistic needs of young people on an individualised basis.
- 5.7 Overall, this set of proposals would therefore involve significant cost savings whilst providing opportunities to improve the nature and range of support in accordance with the 10 National Framework Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support.
- 5.8 It would augment existing support, which would be diversified to include an additional focus on helping care leavers and other vulnerable young people to both enter and sustain positive destinations in further education, training and employment.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 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.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

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

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None

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Integrated Impact Assessment

Committee Report Number: **70-2026**

Document Title: Commissioned Services

Document Type: Service

Description:

This report outlines a proposed 6.5% reduction in funding to Children's Social Work commissioned services, alongside the re-design of a Supported Accommodation and Anti Social Behaviour Service equating to a total part-year saving of £350k in 2026-27 and a total recurring saving of £525k from 2027-28.

Intended Outcome:

The intended outcome is to contribute towards the Council operating within budget whilst re-designing services to make best use of all available capacity and provide services in accordance with the 10 principles of flexible family support outlined by the Independent Care Review.

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

Monitoring:

The proposal will be monitored through data on referrals, input, outcomes and unmet need from the Fast Online Referral Tracking (FORT) system and contract individual monitoring arrangements with Third Sector providers.

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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

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

Serious & enduring mental health 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

Homeless: Positive

As the proposal involves reducing funding to a Supported Accommodation provider, it could be seen to have a negative impact but this service would be delivered internally by the Council at reduced cost and aligned with other supports targeted at the same cohort of young people to promote a more consistent and holistic approach. It should also be seen in the context of a range of additional Supported Accommodation options having been developed by the Council, such as Reid Square and Fairbairn House, to expand and improve the offer to care leavers and other vulnerable young people.

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

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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

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 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

Employment Opportunities: Negative

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Education: 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

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.