

**Dudley Schools Forum – 3rd June 2014**

**Report of the Interim Director of Children’s Services**

**Combined Services Budget Outturn 2013/14**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide Schools Forum with financial data in respect of the Combined Services Budget for the 2013/14 financial year ended 31 March 2014.

**Budget Working Group Discussed**

2. Yes – 21 May 2014

**Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities**

3. The Schools Funding Regulations include a provision for “Combined Budgets” under the types of funding that can be retained centrally from the Dedicated Schools Grant; it is conditional that the Schools Forum agrees the amounts involved and ensures that there is an educational benefit to the pupils.
4. It is a requirement that the local authority provides an annual outturn report to the Forum in respect of the combined services budgets.
5. From 2013/14, in line with the School Funding Reforms, any budget deductions under the Combined Budget provision must not exceed the amount deducted for the previous funding period. This means that no new Combined Budgets can be allowed and those approved before 2013/14 must be constrained in value to the budget set aside in the previous funding period of 2012/13.

**Action for Schools Forum**

6. To note the 2013/14 financial outturn in respect of the combined services budgets.

Rebecca Yates  
Senior Principal Accountant  
19 May 2014

**Schools Forum 3 June 2014**

**Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services**

**Combined Services Budget Outturn 2013/14**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide Schools Forum with financial data in respect of the Combined Services Budget for the 2013/14 financial year ended 31 March 2014.

**Background**

2. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funds the Schools Budget. The Schools Budget is a combination of centrally retained budgets together with the ISB (Individual Schools Budget).
3. The DSG is a ring fenced grant and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the Schools Budget, as defined by the School Finance and Early Years (England) Regulations 2013.
4. The Schools Funding Regulations include a provision for "Combined Budgets" under the types of funding that can be retained centrally from the Dedicated Schools Grant. Prior to 2013/14 it was conditional that the Schools Forum agreed the amounts involved and ensured that there is an educational benefit to the pupils.
5. From 2013/14, in line with the School Funding Reforms, any budget deductions under the Combined Budget provision must not exceed the amount deducted for the previous funding period. This means that no new Combined Budgets can be allowed and those approved before 2013/14 must be constrained in value to the budget set aside in the previous funding period of 2012/13.
6. For 2013/14 Schools Forum has exercised its authority to allocate central funds for:
  - a. Astley Burf Outdoor Activity Centre
  - b. Carbon Reduction Commitment
  - c. Anti Bullying Co-ordinator
  - d. Staying Safe on School Trips
  - e. Domestic Abuse and Referrals Team (DART) – Education Liaison Post
  - f. School Safeguarding Trainer
  - g. School Information Governance Officer
  - h. Place Planning Support Officer
  - i. Pupil census work within the Data and Information Team

7. Table 1 details the budgets allocated for 2013/14 and the actual expenditure.

Table 1 – Budget Allocations 2013/14 for Approved Combined Budgets

<b>Details</b>	<b>2013/14 DSG Budget £</b>	<b>2013/14 DSG Out-turn £</b>
Astley Burf Outdoor Activity Centre	10,300	10,300
Carbon Reduction Commitment	100,000	69,178
Anti Bullying Co-ordinator	50,000	50,000
Staying Safe on School Trips	31,000	31,000
Domestic Abuse and Referrals Team (DART) – Education Liaison Post	39,200	39,200
School Safeguarding Trainer	35,900	35,900
Information Governance	20,300	20,300
Place Planning Support Officer	33,300	33,300
Pupil Census	30,700	30,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>350,700</b>	<b>319,878</b>

### 2013/14 Update on Combined Budget Activities

#### 8. Astley Burf

The £10,300 contribution from the DSG has enabled the centre to offer the outdoor adventure experience to children who are eligible for free school meals at no charge, the centre has been able to remain financially viable. The centre has been fully utilised this year and is often referred to as the jewel in the crown. This year a grant has been received to provide a new cabin and additional equipment adapted for children with disabilities. To see the enjoyment and excitement of the children who attend is a delight.

#### 9. Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC)

During 2013/14 £69,178 has been spent of the £100,000 allocated. During 2013/14 Buildings & Estates Officers have been involved with fifty one schools, encouraging them to capture as much of the potential saving that can be achieved at low or no cost. All of these schools have now received a bespoke report from Briar Associates assessing energy saving opportunities. This highlights a potential £250k annual saving could be made without any investment. Forty six of the schools have also had an out of hours electricity survey carried out, showing that over £100k could be saved per annum if all appliances using electricity were switched off at night/at weekends/during school holidays.

Work has also been done at a number of settings whereby light switches have been actively labelled to highlight instances where significant areas of the school are lit sufficiently naturally and do not require artificial lighting. This has shown the

schools that over £50k could be saved annually if lights that were not required during certain times of the day/year were not switched on.

All schools IT systems (pc's only) are now subject to their individual scheduled start up/shut down procedures being overridden centrally by RM during school holiday periods. At the forty six schools where out of hours surveys have been carried out, 2,500 pc's have been switched off. If these pc's were on for ten hours per day (as was previously typical) during the thirteen weeks of school holidays each year this equates to over 2.2 million hours of electricity being wasted annually. Fourteen schools have also had detailed mechanical surveys showing that, on average, £750 per setting could be saved annually on gas bills by implementing new operational procedures with no capital costs.

#### 10. Anti Bullying Co-ordinator

The £33,300 funding provided in 2013/14 has enabled the new post holder to work with Dudley schools to establish our Anti-bullying Pledge scheme. The aim of this pledge is to support Dudley schools in their work to build positive relationships and minimise and deal with bullying. Schools are supported through the Anti-bullying Pledge Scheme accreditation process, five of which have already been accredited. A further fifteen are expected to achieve this within nine months. More schools are signing up as the word spreads.

The scheme was launched at a central training event, although further bespoke twilight training sessions have been delivered to individual schools on request and this approach remains popular. Blended learning materials have been developed in partnership with local and national partners and all schools have been invited to central training sessions in June, as well as exclusive access to a series of playbooks featuring e-learning materials.

The anti-bullying co-ordinator also works closely with the complaints officer in identifying emerging trends and addressing parental concerns surrounding bullying issues. In addition to offering support to individuals and families, conversations and joint school visits are significant in providing consistent and cohesive solutions and interventions.

#### 11. Staying Safe on School Trips

The £31,000 in 2013/14 financial year has provided for the framework for the risk assessment of off-site educational visits by Dudley children and young people. The continuing costs of training with regards to service development and health and safety issues, and the maintenance of the on-line system used for reporting and recording the visits are also supported from these funds. Due to the continued effectiveness of the service there has not been a single serious incident within the last 12 months as all risks have been managed effectively.

#### 12. Domestic Abuse Referral Team (DART) – Education Liaison Post (ELO)

The £39,200 funding has enabled the Educating Liaison Officer to support schools with their safeguarding remit, including the DART and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process.

The key responsibilities of the ELO has been to ensure that schools are included and are key to the gathering and sharing of information where there are concerns

about domestic abuse. By sharing information in an appropriate and timely way, children, parents and carers have benefited from accessing services where they can receive the correct support and interventions in order to safeguard them appropriately.

This post which is based within the Safeguarding and Review Service has been crucial in ensuring that we make every effort to ensure children are safeguarded.

### 13. School Safeguarding Trainer

The £35,900 funding has enabled the Schools Safeguarding Trainer to deliver Safeguarding training to Schools. This has enabled approximately 3000 training places to be taken up by Education staff. School's have also been able to access new training programmes that have been developed by the School Safeguarding Trainer which include , Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence, Teenage Relationship Abuse, Internet Safety to Staff, and Record Keeping.

### 14. Schools Information Governance Officer (SIGO)

The £20,300 has enabled the SIGO to work proactively to ensure schools are aware of and are meeting their information governance responsibilities. Examples of support provided to schools are as follows:-

- Schools are required to individually register with the Information Commissioner (ICO), it is a criminal offence if they don't. Registrations are checked on a monthly basis. In total 12 schools had to be contacted as their registration had expired and had not been renewed.
- Schools have been provided with assistance to respond to 82 requests for information; Data Protection (40) FOI (42). Four schools required a visit to support them to review the information requested.
- One school has been supported with responding to two complaints made to the Information Commissioner. Both complaints were not upheld.
- Information Governance Training sessions were provided in November 2013, to 82 members of staff representing 57 schools (Primary 48, Secondary 6, Special 3). 99% of attendees felt that the training was good or excellent.
- The number of school staff completing the on-line training courses has increased from 730 courses as at 29/04/2013 to 2014 as at 31/03/2014 an increase of 275%.
- Eight schools have been supported in dealing with Information Security Breaches.
- Model Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policies for schools have been developed and provided to schools.
- An Information Governance Self Assessment has been produced and provided to all schools. 40 Self Assessments have been completed and the feedback analysed. 11 of these schools were visited to provide assistance.
- Six schools have been visited and Information Governance presentations delivered to all staff.
- Seventeen schools have been supported with updating their Publication Schemes in line with changes to the ICO guidance.
- Two schools assisted with the installation of CCTV e.g. Policy, Signage , notification to ICO
- Feedback questionnaire launched in February 2014, which is issued to schools following providing them with advice / support. Questionnaire asks for ratings on timeliness, usefulness, courteousness and overall satisfaction. 100% of respondents rated all these elements as good or excellent.

15. Place Planning Support Officer

The support analyst post of £33,300 has provided much needed resilience within the place planning team, providing critical support for the place planning function. This has involved improving and updating the pupil forecasting model which feeds the mandatory local authority DfE School Capacity Return. Pupil projections are a key component of this return and the whole place planning process. The inclusion of this post has resulted in the processes being more streamlined.

In addition to this, the post has taken the lead on producing the annual school deprivation profiles. The post has also taken on board, the production of the school census reporting from the school census information supplied by the schools directly. This data underpins the Super Output Area (SOA) analysis which again connects to the pupil projection methodology and the deprivation profiles. The linkages with neighbouring authorities have been expanded to obtain out of borough pupil information to better inform migration hot spots and the impact on schools affected by this

16. Pupil Census

The £30,700 funding provided has been used during 2013/14 financial year to pay for staff to support the School Census, Consistent Financial Reporting and School Workforce Census data collections. This has enabled more detailed work to be performed and maximisation of the Pupil Premium funding for schools, in particular working with the Free School Meals team to highlight where pupils had been authorised to receive a free school meal but hadn't been included as such on their School Census return.

The funding was also used to fund staffing costs associated with the on-going development of the Co-ordinated Admissions computer system. This system enables schools to see their new applicants on-line via the Schools Admissions (SAM) website. Schools can therefore see up to date information rather than being sent out of date spreadsheet information.

17. All projects currently supported by the Dedicated Schools Grant under the Combined Budget provision are planned to continue into 2014/15. The budget of £333,000, earmarked to enable the projects to continue, was approved by Schools Forum at the 25 February 2014 meeting.

## **Finance**

18. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School Finance and Early Years (England) Regulations 2013.
19. Schools Forums are regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2013.
20. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

## **Law**

21. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

## **Equality Impact**

22. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

## **Recommendation**

23. Schools Forum to note the report in respect of the combined services budget outturn for 2013/14 and the ongoing budget set aside to continue the projects in 2014/15.



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