

Schools Forum 4 June 2013

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Combined Services Budget Outturn 2012/13

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with financial data in respect of the Combined Services Budget for the 2012/13 financial year ended 31 March 2013.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. Yes – 20 May 2013.

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 2012/13 financial outturn in respect of the combined services budgets.

Rebecca Yates
Senior Principal Accountant
15 May 2013

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Combined Services Budget Outturn 2012/13

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with financial data in respect of the Combined Services Budget for the 2012/13 financial year ended 31 March 2013.

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 2012.
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 2012/13 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 2012/13

Table 1 – Budget Allocations 2012/13 for Approved Combined Budgets

Details	2012/13 DSG Budget £	2012/13 DSG Out-turn £
Astley Burf Outdoor Activity Centre	10,300	10,300
Carbon Reduction Commitment	100,000	41,764
Anti Bullying Co-ordinator	50,000	0
Staying Safe on School Trips	31,000	31,000
Domestic Abuse and Referrals Team (DART) – Education Liaison Post	39,200	0
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
Total	350,700	203,264

2012/13 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. To see the enjoyment and excitement of the children who attend is a delight.

9. Carbon Reduction Commitment

During 2012/13 £41,764 has been spent of the £100,000 allocated. The budget was earmarked for staffing, electrical and mechanical services and energy surveys. The intention was to work with 33 settings during the first year, at present 37 settings have been invited into the programme of which 31 have become actively involved. There was a delay in the commencement of the process caused by contracting a suitable company to complete the surveys.

By 31 March 2013, 15 surveys have been completed and issued to settings by Briar Associates. Following the issue of the report the Project Officers conduct an overnight survey at the school following the recommendations of the report. The Project Officers then discuss these results and possible savings with the schools if the recommendations are carried out. It is anticipated that savings could be made by all schools surveyed to date. This is a rolling programme of support to all Dudley schools.

10. Anti Bullying Co-ordinator

The £50,000 funding provided has not been utilised during 2012/13 financial year, due to difficulties recruiting a suitable applicant. The post holder has now been successfully appointed and commenced employment week commencing 13 May 2013. The post will help schools to further develop their policies and practice to prevent, reduce or tackle bullying and maintain progress from the 2011/12 anti-bullying project. The role will also establish longer term arrangements for anti-bullying from 2013/14.

11. Staying Safe on School Trips

These funds provided 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

The £39,200 funding provided has not been utilised during 2012/13 financial year due to difficulties recruiting a suitable applicant. The post holder has now been successfully recruited and commenced employment from 15 April 2013.

The post will help to respond to the needs of children living in households where domestic abuse is alleged to have occurred by working directly with schools in alerting them to various situations and engaging them as part of the support network to keep children safe and promote their welfare. The post will also be able to offer advice and support to schools regarding thresholds and referral pathways where high levels of service may be required for individual children and their families.

13. School Safeguarding Trainer

The £35,900 funding has enabled the Schools Safeguarding Trainer to deliver safeguarding sessions in the school environment. During the 2012/13 financial year approximately 2,500 training places were taken up by education staff. The funding has also enabled the Safeguarding Trainer to attend a small number of assemblies and e-safety sessions with parents.

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. 72 schools have now received support or guidance on information governance matters.

Examples of support provided to schools are as follows:-

- A total of five schools were randomly selected and informal visits undertaken to better understand schools understanding of information governance and any particular help required.
- Schools are required to individually register with the Information Commissioner (ICO), and the registration was checked for all 105 schools on a monthly basis. For 37 schools, CCTV was part of the registration and these schools were asked to complete a small user CCTV checklist (11 responses received).
- Seven schools supported in dealing with information security breaches.

- All 105 schools websites have been checked to establish if schools have a publication scheme. The SIGO identified 20 schools where either no publication scheme existed, or the information available was incomplete. These have been informed and eight have responded and received further advice and guidance.
- 14 schools have requested visits to discuss information governance.
- In addition to the information governance online training which is available to all schools, 5 schools have requested formal training sessions for staff or governors.
- Five schools supported in responding to freedom of information requests and one appeal against an FOI request and subsequent complaint to the Information Commissioner.
- Three schools supported in responding to subject access requests.
- Five schools supported regarding information governance policies / records management.

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 in turn links directly to the local authority mandatory DfE School Capacity Return. The pupil projections are one of the data sets that feed into the place planning process and inform where additional school places are required across the borough.

In addition to this, the team also produce the school deprivation profiles annually and undertake bespoke work with schools. This involves looking at specific brackets of pupils from the information supplied by their census data (FSM, SEN, Ethnicity) and linking this with Super Output Areas of deprivation. 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 2012/13 financial year to pay for staff to support the school census 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 was introduced in September 2010 and 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 2013/14. The budget of £350,700, earmarked to enable the projects to continue, was approved by Schools Forum at the 12 February 2013 meeting.

18. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School Finance and Early Years (England) Regulations 2012.
19. Schools Forums are regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.
20. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

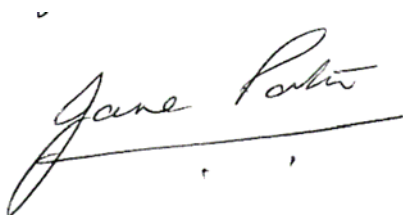
21. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

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 2012/13 and the ongoing budget set aside to continue the projects in 2013/14.



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