

Dudley Schools Forum – 21st June 2022

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Combined Services Budget Outturn 2021/22

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with financial data and service provider information in respect of the Combined Services Budget for the 2021/22 financial year ended 31 March 2022.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

2. The Forum is the ‘guardian’ of the local Schools Budget, and its distribution among schools and other bodies, and therefore must be closely involved throughout the development process.

Recommendation

3. Schools Forum to note the report in respect of the Combined Services budget outturn for 2021/22.

Background

4. 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).
5. 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 and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022.
6. The School Funding Regulations include a provision for “Combined Budgets” under the types of funding that can be retained centrally from the DSG. 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.
7. 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 existing funding must be constrained in value to the budget set aside in the previous funding period.

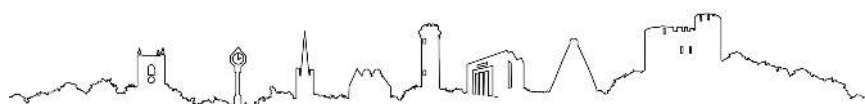
8. For 2021/22 Schools Forum has exercised its authority to allocate central funds for:
 - a. Astley Burf Outdoor Activity Centre
 - b. Staying Safe on School Trips
 - c. Domestic Abuse and Referrals Team (DART) – Education Liaison Post
 - d. School Safeguarding Trainer
 - e. Place Planning Support Officer
 - f. Pupil census work within the Data and Information Team

9. Table 1 details the 2021/22 actual expenditure, against a budget of £205,000.

Table 1 – 2021/22 Final Outturn for the Approved Combined Budgets

Details	2021/22 DSG Outturn £	Description of Provision
Astley Burf Outdoor Activity Centre	12,000	Access to Astley Burf Activity Centre for children who are eligible for Free School Meals. During the pandemic the centre was closed due to Covid restrictions. In line with council policy all staff for the centre were retained throughout and therefore the grant has helped support staff salaries. The centre has now reopened and bookings are going well. Many schools have now started to re-book and the centre has been open and fully operational since Covid restrictions were lifted. Further commercial income streams are being considered along with an updated business plan to ensure the long term viability of the centre moving forward. As usage improves, the reliance on this funding should hopefully diminish.
Staying Safe on School Trips	33,000	This service is now in the process of being moved into Education Outcomes to provide a far more closer aligned process and support mechanism for all schools. These funds provide the framework for the risk assessment of off-site educational visits for Dudley children and young people. The continuing costs to host the website, and the maintenance of the on-line system used for reporting and recording the visits are also supported from these funds,

		as well as covering some administration costs to support the system and offer support, advice and guidance. There are plans to move towards a far more traded model of working for schools who wish to purchase the training and external support and verification of trips and visits.
Domestic Abuse and Referrals Team (DART) – Education Liaison Post	44,000	<p>Funding of an Education Liaison Officer to support schools with their safeguarding remit, including the following duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understand of the role of DSL and safeguarding/CP within schools and EY settings • Attendance at DART meetings daily and action any tasks to update schools/Early Years setting • Operation Encompass – daily admin, contact Schools & Early Years with notifications and liaise with DSLs to discuss pastoral support with child/YP • Complete MASH checks with Schools/Early Years settings/CME team/EHE & GRT/Education Admissions (Synergy/Tribal) • Engage with schools/Early Years settings and support with threshold pathway and referral process • Collate and present accurate data from DART/Op Encompass/MARAC referrals, themes trends, etc. to SERG and DSL Forum and DSPP
School Safeguarding Trainer	42,000	<p>Funding covers part of salary of a School Safeguarding Trainer to deliver training to Senior Leaders and Governors in schools. The post delivers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and Development • Training Delivery • Admin duties <p>Independent providers have been asked to contribute towards the cost of this service during the current financial year and moving forward, all schools will be asked to make a contribution towards the training elements of the SiE team</p>
Place Planning Support Officer	40,000	The funding continues to support the Place Planning Support officer post with much needed resilience within the team, providing critical support for this function. This involves improving and updating the pupil forecasting model on an annual basis which in turn links directly to the local authority mandatory DfE School Capacity Return and informs the Basic Need Capital Allocation. The post also



		enables the team to provide IMD deprivation data profiles to all schools derived from School Census returns.
Pupil Census staffing support	34,000	The funding has been used for staffing to support the School Census, Early Years Census, Alternative Provision Census and Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) statutory data collections. This has enabled more detailed work to be performed to investigate the eligibility and therefore maximise 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 not included as such on their School Census return. Schools could have lost out on significant funding if not included
Total	205,000	

Budget Working Group Discussed

10. Yes – 14 June 2022.

Finance

11. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant; Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

12. The Schools Forum is a statutory decision making and consultative body constituted in line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and its associated regulations, including the Schools Forum (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, to enable members of the local school community to work in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council when making decisions about school funding and finances.

13. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) (No.2) Regulations 2022.

Risk Management

14. There are no material risks to the Council's Risk Management Framework resulting from the contents of this report.

Equality Impact

15. This report has no direct implications for the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

16. This report has no direct implications for human resources, organisational development or service transformation.

Commercial/Procurement

17. There is no impact on the potential to commercially trade and no impact on our customer base.

Council Priorities and Projects

18. The 2019/2022 Council Plan is clear in its ambitions for educational outcomes including raising skills, educational and work potential, increasing good or better schools and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. This report relates to the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding to support the educational outcomes of children and young people in the borough.



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