

19 November 2014

APPROVAL OF CENTRALLY-RETAINED BUDGETS FOR 2015-16

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Author: Jonathan Burberry/ Simon Newland
Tel: 01992 555943

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek the approval of the Forum for the holding of a number of central budgets in 2015-16.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Forum is asked:

- (i) To agree for 2015-2016 the central budgets listed in Table 1 in section 4.
- (ii) To note the delegation or discontinuation of certain central budgets identified in section 5.

3. Background

- 3.1 Non High Needs central budgets have to be agreed annually by the Schools Forum.

- 3.2.1 For 2014-15 the Forum agreed a number of central budgets and these fall under the following headings:

Schools Block

- a) Admissions and Appeals
- b) Servicing of Schools Forums
- c) Capital Expenditure Funded from Revenue
- d) Combined Services (including budgets under the Miscellaneous Items heading)
- e) Payment of fees for pupils without SEN in Independent Schools
- f) Growth Fund for additional places and infant class size protection funding
- g) Falling Rolls Fund (Fund for small secondary schools in areas of demographic growth)
- h) Licenses arranged nationally by the DfE

Early Years Block

- a) Early Years full time places
- b) Provision for two year olds, including central early years budgets

3.2.2 The authority is requesting that the majority of these budgets continue in 2015-16. Section 4 below gives details of each budget which the authority is asking the Forum to agree for 2015-16. Maintenance is dealt with in the separate report to Forum elsewhere on this agenda.

4. Central Budgets Requested for Approval

4.1 Table 1 below summarises the 2015-16 budgets that the Forum is asked to agree. For comparison the 2014-15 budget figures for these items are also shown.

Table 1: School and Early Years Blocks Centrally Retained Budgets

		2015-2016 Budget Requested	2014-2015 Budget
		£000	£000
1)Admissions and Appeals		1,997	1,997
2)Combined Services	-Family Support Workers	1,141	1,141
	-Lead Adviser to the Virtual School	78	78
3)Miscellaneous items	-School Workforce Census	14	14
	-Education of Children in Residential Care	61	61
4)Servicing of Schools Forum		40	40
5)Boarding Pathfinder		52	52
6)DfE arranged Licenses		520	636
7)Growth Fund	-Additional Places	4,350	4,000
	-Infant Class Size Protection	521	521
8)Falling Rolls Fund		640	400
9)Early Years full time places		100	250
10) Central early years budgets	-Ongoing Quality Improvement	630	630
	-Business Support	75	75
	-Workforce Development	75	75
Total		10,294	9,970

The regulations require that the budgets for items 1 to 4 in 2015-16 cannot exceed the equivalent budgets in 2014-15. Inflation and other pressures therefore have to be absorbed within the cash limited total. The budgets for items 2 and 3 have to relate to commitments originating prior to April 2013. The remainder of this section gives further details about the central budgets requested for approval.

4.2 **Admissions and Appeals** –Proposed Budget £1.997m

A paper on the admissions and appeals budget was presented to the June meeting of the Forum, which considered the service in some detail and concluded that it was content with the quality and value-for-money offered.

4.3 **Combined Services** – Proposed Budget £1.219m

This proposed budget comprises two elements:

(a) Contribution to Funding Family Support Workers (FSWs) £1.141m

This provides funding to local partnerships of schools (19 in total, covering all schools in the county) to support part of the cost of FSWs (approximately 67 workers countywide), which is deployed through local partnerships. FSWs work to improve outcomes for children, young people and families within their local partnership by adopting a whole family approach through the use of the family Common Assessment Framework.

This is to identify needs and provide timely early interventions where a co-ordinated support through a Team around the Family approach is required, to prevent negative impact on the child/young person's learning, attainment and/or their wellbeing; and to prevent escalation of need for statutory service intervention. The work includes the following:

- a) Where appropriate family support workers support the CAF process in schools, including through supporting the administration process, initiating or taking on the lead professional role in family CAFs as determined by their partnership of schools and local need;
- b) Family support workers support cases stepped down from safeguarding and specialist children's social care who require ongoing support beyond statutory service interventions;
- c) Family support workers also provide appropriate intervention programmes for vulnerable children and families through focused case work (this may include home visits and outreach work, where issues in the home may be impacting on a child or children's learning, working in partnership with other services. They also offer a range of programmes locally for example targeted parenting programmes; protective behaviours programme etc.
- d) Family support workers also support vulnerable children and young people at key transition points where support is identified by schools or families (e.g. where individual transition support is identified by a school; where a child has moved into the county from another authority; where transition support is in place through a CAF etc);
- e) Family support workers work to improve engagement and participation of parents/carers with their children's learning and development by facilitating access to local universal and preventive services; sign posting and offering appropriate advice and support and working in partnership with schools and local services to improve parents/carers engagement in their children's learning development.

The key outcomes achieved through the family support work in local partnerships of schools in 2013/14 include:

- f) Early identification of a child or family's need using the Family CAF and timely intervention through co-ordinated Team Around the Family approach, ensuring the needs of the child/family are met at the earliest point, by the right services/agencies thereby preventing escalation of need for statutory intervention and improving outcomes for children and families;
- g) Contribution to narrowing the gap in attainment and wellbeing by removing barriers to learning through their individual work with children and families; and improvement in parent/carer participation in their children's learning and development;
- h) Promote and facilitate access to local universal and preventive services; and work in partnership with schools and local services to better respond to local needs;
- i) Supporting the cases stepped down from safeguarding and specialist services to ensure families continue to receive appropriate support after statutory intervention is concluded.

b) Lead Adviser to the Virtual School. £78k

The post of Lead Adviser for the Virtual School has been financially supported to strengthen the working partnership between the Virtual School and all Hertfordshire schools and academies. The focus of this role is to support schools in their work to improve the academic outcomes and standards for this vulnerable group and for schools efficient and effective use of the pupil premium plus. This work has significantly raised the profile of the Virtual School with Hertfordshire schools. Since the funding of this post, the data demonstrates a significant improvement in the standards attained by Children Looked After (CLA) in all key indicators. For example, working in partnership with schools, standards attained at the end of Key Stage 2 are at their highest ever. In many areas the gap has narrowed at a faster rate for Hertfordshire children looked after and their peers, compared to national figures.

4.4 Miscellaneous Items - Proposed Budget £75k

a) School Workforce Census £13.5k

The School Workforce Census is a statutory collection of individual level data on teachers and support staff from local authorities, local authority-maintained schools and academies.

This £13.5k budget contributes towards the cost of the central Data Collection team (£4.5k) and School IT Systems Support within the Herts for Learning contract (£9k) to support Hertfordshire schools prepare and submit the statutory annual data collection for School Workforce Census.

If this budget were not available SITSS would need to increase its annual SIMS support contract charges to schools to meet the shortfall. Data Collection team would need to reduce the support that is provided to schools and it is likely that they would only be able to comply with the minimum requirements for the DfE's Census. For example, schools would be expected to upload the Census files themselves as is the case in many other authorities. Data quality would inevitably suffer as there would be less time to carry out the usual data quality assurance checks. Any reduction in the support that schools get through SITSS is also likely to increase the difficulties in the data collection process.

b) Funding for the education of children in residential care in Hertfordshire - £61k

Children and young people who live in residential care within Hertfordshire present major challenges to the education system and schools due to their unregulated behaviour and extreme social and emotional responses to the trauma they have experienced prior to entry to care. A specialist approach has been adopted with a proven track record to enable these hard to place children to be educationally supported and prepared for transition post 16. The £61k budget continues to fund both a part time Education Adviser (working only with the children from the residential homes in Hertfordshire) and funds teaching and learning for these young people within the North Herts Secondary Centre (NHESC). The Headteacher of the NHESC sits on the Virtual School Governing Body.

4.5 **Servicing of Schools Forum** -Proposed Budget £40k

This comprises the budget for support for the Schools Forum by County Council officers plus venue costs. Forum considered the composition of this budget in some detail at meetings last spring.

4.6 **Payment of Fees to Independent Schools for Pupils without SEN – Boarding Pathfinder** - Proposed budget £52k

The Boarding Pathfinder Project is a national scheme that has been promoted to all local authorities by both the last and current governments to offer an alternative way to support disadvantaged children and families in crisis. Only a very small number of children meet the criteria for this support. The Boarding Pathfinder has an annual budget of £52k. Once children have been placed, the annual cost to support their attendance until the end of year 11, forms part of each year's expenditure. Therefore, only a maximum of 3 children could ever be placed at any one time.

This funding is currently supporting two young people.

4.7 **DfE Arranged Licenses** –Proposed Budget £520k

In 2013-14 the DfE introduced an arrangement whereby certain licenses were arranged nationally and charged to local authorities on behalf of schools and academies in their area. This arrangement is expected to continue in 2015-16 and the central budget is requested to fund this license charge. It is anticipated that the 2015-16 cost of the nationally arranged licenses will be announced as part of the DSG settlement. The Forum is

asked to agree a budget based on the final 2014-15 charge but a variation to this may be requested in January, following the DSG announcement. The 2014-15 budget was based on an estimate provided by the DfE. The actual charge for 2014-15 was lower than the estimate.

- 4.8 **Growth Fund for Additional Places** – Proposed Budget £4.350m
Schools which are expanding at the request of the County Council receive allocations from the Growth Fund. Additional funding is provided in this situation because the extra cohort of pupils starting in September is not recorded in the school's census in time to generate additional funding in the normal way through the budget share. The Growth Fund therefore provides per pupil funding for the extra pupils for the period September to March. In addition to the September to March funding described above, the Growth Fund incorporates a protection factor which guarantees pupil funding for expanding primary schools up to 24 or multiples thereof and funding for transitional costs for a secondary school becoming an all through school.

An additional element of the Growth Fund for 2015-16 agreed at the October Forum meeting is a further allocation of £7k to schools taking a bulge class for the first time. As reported to the October Forum the estimated cost of this factor is £350k in 2015-16 and an increase in the budget for the Growth Factor is requested for this amount.

- 4.9 **Growth Fund for Infant Class Size Protection** – Proposed Budget £521k
The Growth Fund also provides allocations to support schools in particular circumstances with delivering the infant class size (ICS) requirement. The budget requested is the same as in 2014-15.

- 4.10 **Falling Rolls Fund** – Proposed Budget £640k
The budget requested includes £460k for the Fund for small secondary schools in areas of demographic growth, an increase of £60K from 2014-15, and an allocation of £180k for the proposed new falling rolls fund for primary schools. The £60k increase in the fund for secondaries relates to projected reductions in MFG protection at eligible schools. MFG protection is offset against allocations from the Fund.

- 4.11 **Early Years Full time Places** – Proposed Budget £100k

Schools Forum is asked to continue to fund the most vulnerable three and four year olds as identified by Children Centre's and early education providers to access an additional 15 hours of free early education. This enables professionals such as Children Centres/Health/Social Care to work with the family, whilst their child is being cared for in a good or outstanding setting, to receive services such as parenting support or health services. This funding would support 40 places being made available during the year which would support between 40 – 120 vulnerable families, depending on the length the place was required. Children Centres report very positive outcomes for children and their families as a result of the full time places scheme which is currently being fully evaluated.

The resource for providing full time early years places is held as a central budget. A technicality within the school finance regulations is that PVI providers cannot be funded in their budget shares for more than the 15 hours free entitlement. Additional funding up to full time provision may be provided but this has to be from a central budget. Maintained schools can be funded for full time provision in their budget shares. However, for simplicity the whole budget for full time provision is held centrally and allocated out in year.

The base budget for full time places of £100k was enhanced by £150k from the DSG carry forward in 2014-15. However, at this point the Forum is only asked to agree the £100k central budget for full time places. A review of the effectiveness of the full time places scheme is scheduled to go to Forum in April.

4.12 Central Early Years Budgets – Proposed Budget £780k

These early years budgets were funded from the 2 Year Olds trajectory funding (within DSG) in 2014-15. Trajectory funding is being discontinued in 2015-16 but the Forum is asked to continue to support the following budgets:

4.12.1 Ongoing quality improvement £630k

To support PVI providers and childminders to offer high quality early education, childminding and out of school provision to our most vulnerable children, HfL delivers a programme of quality improvement including setting visits and extensive training opportunities. In 2013/14, Hertfordshire was again in the top quintile for EYFSP performance in England and the support provided by HfL, contributed to this achievement. Ofsted outcomes for PVI providers were substantially better than national and statistical neighbours.

4.12.2 Business Support £75k

It is proposed to continue to offer bespoke business support to our 471 PVI providers and 1500 childminders to ensure long term sustainability, change business models and increase capacity in areas in the county identified as needing additional free early education capacity. Due to the intensive business support offered to PVI providers for 13/14 there were no unexpected closures of PVI settings due to financial or business issues.

4.12.3 Workforce Development £75k

Succession planning and leadership and management skills has been identified as an area of workforce development which needs continued support, it is therefore proposed to continue to offer training and development opportunities in these areas to PVI providers.

The remaining early years' central budgets currently supported by trajectory funding are being discontinued as outlined below.

5. Central Budgets to be Delegated or Discontinued

The following 2014-15 central budgets will cease in 2015-16:

5.1 Two Year Olds - Funding for Provision (2014-15 budget: £10.355m)

This comprises the funding for 2 olds provision in early years settings. It was retained as a central budget in 2014-15 and distributed to providers in year because, due to the expansion of 2 year old provision, it was not clear prior to the start of the financial year which providers it should be allocated to. The expansion of the 2 year old provision will have largely been completed by 2015-16 and 2 year old funding will be allocated in budget shares.

5.2 Central Early Years Budgets being discontinued (2014-15 budget: £469k)

The following budgets, which were supported by 2 year olds trajectory funding, will be discontinued in 2015-16:

Qualification funding: £275k
Capacity building funding: £194k

These budgets are no longer required due to the completion of the rollout of 2 year old provision.

6. Recommendations:

The Forum is asked:

1. To agree for 2015-16 the central budgets listed in Table 1 in section 4,
2. To note the delegation or discontinuation of the central budgets identified in section 5.