

**11 November 2015**

**APPROVAL OF CENTRALLY-RETAINED BUDGETS FOR 2016-17**

*Report of the Director of Children's Services*

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To seek the approval of the Forum for the holding of a number of central budgets in 2016-17.

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 The Forum is asked:

- To agree for 2016-17 the central budgets listed in Table 1 in section 4;
- To note the discontinuation of the central budget 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 2015-16 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:

- (i) Early Years full time places
- (j) Other central early years budgets

3.2.2 The authority is requesting that all of these budgets continue in 2016-17 except c) Capital Expenditure Funded from Revenue. Section 4 below gives details of each budget which the authority is asking the Forum to agree for 2016-17.

#### 4. Central Budgets Requested for Approval

4.1 Table 1 below summarises the 2016-17 budgets that the Forum is asked to agree. For comparison the 2015-16 budget figures for these items are also shown.

**Table 1: School and Early Years Blocks Centrally Retained Budgets**

		2016-17 Budget Requested	2015-16 Budget
		£000	£000
<b>1)Admissions and Appeals</b>		1,997	1,997
<b>2)Combined Services</b>	-Family Support Workers	1,141	1,141
	-Lead Adviser to the Virtual School	78	78
<b>3)Miscellaneous items</b>	-School Workforce Census	14	14
	-Education of Children in Residential Care	61	61
<b>4)Servicing of Schools Forum</b>		40	40
<b>5) Capital Expenditure Funded from Revenue</b>		0	847
<b>6)Boarding Pathfinder</b>		52	52
<b>7)DfE arranged Licenses</b>		867	867
<b>8)Growth Fund</b>	-Additional Places	4,550	4,350
	-Infant Class Size Protection	521	521
<b>9)Falling Rolls Fund</b>		986	640
<b>10)Early Years full time places</b>		100	150
<b>11) Central early years budgets</b>	-Ongoing Quality Improvement	630	630
	-Business Support	75	75
	-Workforce Development	75	75
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,187</b>	<b>11,538</b>

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The regulations require that the budgets for items 1 to 4 in 2016-17 cannot exceed the equivalent budgets in 2015-16. 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 2014 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. It is therefore proposed to continue as is with a further review in June 2016.

#### 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 2015/16 include:

- 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;

- 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;
- 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;
- 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 some key indicators. For example, working in partnership with schools, the latest virtual school data indicates the proportion of looked after children in primary schools making expected progress in reading and mathematics between Key Stages 1 and 2 is in line with national for all children. In addition, the proportion of children making more than expected progress is above that achieved for all children nationally. It is acknowledged that the gap at Key Stage 4 is still too wide and that more work is needed to improve outcomes and rates of progress for children in that age group.

#### 4.4 **Miscellaneous Items - Proposed Budget £75k**

a) School Workforce Census £14k

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 £14k budget contributes towards the cost of the central Data Collection team (£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 will continue to fund an Education Adviser (working only with the children from the ARC residential services in Hertfordshire) and the teaching and learning of 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. This budget was considered in detail in Spring 2014 and it is believed provides an appropriate level of funding.

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 a child has been placed, the annual cost supports their attendance to the end of Year 11 and therefore 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 still supporting two young people.

4.7 **DfE Arranged Licenses –Proposed Budget £867k**

The DfE operates an arrangement whereby the main licences relevant to schools are procured nationally to drive best value for money. This arrangement is expected to continue in 2016-17 and the central budget is requested to fund this license charge. It is anticipated that the 2016-17 cost of the nationally arranged licenses will be announced as part of the DSG settlement. The cost of DfE arranged licences in 2015-16 was £842k. However, some increase is expected in view of the increase in pupil numbers and therefore a continuation of the 2015-16 budget of £867k is requested.

## **Growth Fund for Additional Places – Proposed Budget £4.550m**

4.8 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.

4.9 The equivalent of 4FE of permanent expansions in 2016-17 will equate to approximately £200,000 of increased cost. The requested budget does not take account of any changes resulting from the review of the Growth Fund.

### **4.10 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 2015-16.

### **4.11 Falling Rolls Fund – Proposed Budget £986k**

The budget requested includes £806k for the Fund for small secondary schools in areas of demographic growth, an increase of £346k from 2015-16. The fund for primary schools is unchanged at £180k. It is likely that the fund will be reviewed as part of the Budget Pressures Programme in due course. The £346k increase in the fund for secondary schools relates to newly eligible schools and the removal of the £250k funding cap as agreed at the September forum meeting.

### **4.12 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 £50k from the DSG carry forward in 2015-16. However, Forum is only asked to agree the £100k central budget for full time places.

#### **4.13 Central Early Years Budgets – Proposed Budget £780k**

##### **4.13.1 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 2014/15, 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.

##### **4.13.2 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 in 14/15 there were no unexpected closures of PVI settings due to financial or business issues. With further changes expected once the details of the 30 hours extended entitlement are announced and the expectations for an increase in 50 week a year childcare for school age children, the sector will be, once again, asked to consider revising their delivery model.

##### **4.13.3 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.

#### **5. Central Budgets to be Delegated or Discontinued**

- 5.1 The Centrally Retained Revenue Funding budget will cease in 2016-17. The Centrally Retained Revenue Funding totalled £847k last year and was a one-off allocation for previously agreed capital works schemes that had slipped.

#### **6. Recommendations:**

The Forum is asked:

- To agree for 2015-16 the central budgets listed in Table 1.