

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL COMMITMENTS BUDGET

Report of the Director of Children's Services

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 To detail the evidence supporting the retention of the central budget in respect of family support workers.

2 Summery

- 2.1 This paper and its annexes outline the evidence for retaining the central budget which contributes to the cost of family support workers.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 The Forum is asked to note the evidence set out in this paper, which supports the continued retention, as a historical commitment, of the budget contributing to the family support workers service.

4 Background

- 4.1 Since 2013, the school finance regulations have restricted a number of central schools block budgets which are classed as historic commitments. These budgets cannot exceed the value agreed prior to April 2013 and no new commitments can be entered into. In Hertfordshire we have a budget under the Contribution to Combined Budgets category of historic commitments. This is the central budget of £891k to fund a contribution towards the cost of family support workers.
- 4.2 This budget can only continue to be funded from the Schools Budget because it is a historical commitment which was agreed by the Forum prior to the introduction of the new school funding arrangements in April 2013 and with no end date set. Hertfordshire's compliance with these requirements has previously been outlined to the Forum but it is appropriate to set out in detail the evidence to support the Forum's decision to retain the central budget for family support workers.
- 4.3 Combined budgets enable schools budget funding to join other sources of funding to contribute to services outside the schools budget – but which have an educational benefit. DfE examples of acceptable items for Combined

Services include Early Intervention Family Workers who operate in close partnership with schools and deliver interventions to stop emerging needs escalating and requiring more intensive involvement. This equates to the role of family support workers.

4.4 DfE guidance is that acceptable evidence of historic commitments must include:

- Minutes from the schools forum prior to 1st April 2013 - schools forum should have agreed the commitment prior to 2013.
- Proof that the commitment extended at least as far as the 2018 -19 financial years. Evidence can include reports which indicated an end date into 2018 to 2019 or beyond, or where the commitment has no specific end date.
- Where budgets relate to non-staffing costs, there must be a contractual commitment (such as a PFI agreement or lease agreement) which extends into the relevant financial year.
- Schools forum papers and minutes that show that approval has been granted for the financial year. The forum is expected to approve each spending line annually.

5 Outline of evidence attached

5.1 Attached at annexes A, B and C are three pieces of evidence to demonstrate compliance with these requirements.

5.2 **ANNEX A** comprises Item 7b from the January 2008 Schools Forum and an extract from the minutes of the January 2008 Schools Forum meeting covering item 7b

This shows that Schools Forum agreed the original budget contribution from the Schools Budget of £880k for the Family Support Worker service (also known as Children and Young People's Support Workers) at its January 2008 meeting, with no end date specified. As outlined in the paper, the budget relates to staffing and family support workers provide an educational benefit.

5.2 **ANNEX B** shows Item 6 from the November 2012 Schools Forum and an extract from the minutes of the November 2012 Schools Forum meeting covering item 6.

This shows that the Schools Forum continued to agree the budget for the Family Support Worker service and prior to April 2013 the size of the budget agreed was £891k (comprising a slight inflation uplift on the original amount).

5.4 **ANNEX C** shows Item 5 from the November 2017 Schools Forum and an extract from the minutes of the November 2017 Schools Forum meeting covering item 5.

This shows that the budget agreed for family support workers for 2018-19 does not exceed that agreed prior to April 2013.

6. Conclusion

6.1 We believe that the evidence demonstrates that the central budget for family support workers is compliant with DfE requirements.

6.2 The Forum is asked to agree the recommendation at section 3.