

DEDICATED SCHOOLS BUDGET – BUDGET MONITORING 2017-18

Purpose of the Report

1. To present budget monitoring information against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the financial year 2017-18 as at 31st December 2017.

Main Considerations

2. Appendix 1 to this report outlines the budget monitoring summary as at 31st December 2017. The budget reflects the reductions made by the ESFA for academy recoupment, high needs places paid directly by the ESFA and for the January 2017 early years census.
3. An overspend of £0.321 million is currently projected against the overall schools budget. This is an adverse movement of £0.441 million since the previous report to Schools Forum. The biggest movements since the October forecast are in the forecast for expenditure on the entitlement for 2 year olds and within the high needs spend.

Early Years Budgets

4. Budgets for the free entitlement for 15 hours childcare for 3 & 4 year olds are currently assumed to be on target to break even. Data on take up of the free entitlement received after the autumn term pupil count indicates that this budget will be underspent. On the returns from settings it is difficult to identify the uptake of the universal entitlement compared with the entitlement to an additional 15 hours free childcare for children of working parents.
5. An underspend of £0.316m was reported to the previous meeting against the budget for the early years entitlement for 2 year olds. This was based on take up to date. Because the DSG allocation for early years will be updated for the January 2018 census, and it is likely that the allocation will be reduced if take up is not as estimated in the initial settlement, this projection has been revised to remove the potential underspend.

High Needs Budgets

6. High Needs budgets are projected to overspend by £1.488m, an increase of £0.335m since the previous report to schools forum. As previously reported to schools forum post-16 budgets continue to underspend as a result of success in developing access to local provision. The key pressures continue to be placements in independent special schools (ISS) and named pupil allowances paid to mainstream schools. A key risk identified for 2018-19 is that post-16 costs may start to increase because of increasing numbers assumed to be staying on in post-16 provision within their ISS placements.

Impact on 2018-19

7. Any overspend against the overall DSG budget at the end of the financial year will be offset initially against the DSG reserve. The reserve at the end of 2016-17 was reported as £0.583 million however the 2016-17 DSG allocation was then reduced by a further £0.242m after the end of the financial year to reflect the January 2017 early years census. The available reserve is therefore currently £0.341 million.

Proposals

8. Schools Forum is asked to note the budget monitoring position at the end of December 2017 and the potential impact on the DSG reserve and 2018-19 budget if the overspend cannot be reduced.

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