



Item	Title	Actions
1.0	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted and introductions made.	
2.0	<b>Schools Forum Membership</b>	
2.1	Vacancies remain for: 1 x PVI Nursery Provider vacancy. 1 x Alternative Academy vacancy. 1 x Primary Headteacher vacancy. <b>Action:</b> to re-advertise the Primary Headteacher vacancy.	LG
3.0	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>	
3.1	The minutes were agreed.	
4.0	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
4.1	There were no matters arising.	
5.0	<b>DSG Budget Monitoring 2022-23</b>	
5.1	There is an In year underspend of £2.35m, the majority of which is in the High Needs Block. The underspend represents 0.48% of the total DSG funding in 2022-2023.	
5.2	<u>Schools Block</u> The block has a projected underspend of £267k. Most of this is a £258k saving against the growth fund. In addition, there was a small overspend of £44k on the de-delegated budget mainly due to a £269k spend on maternity pay and suspended employee payments. This has been offset by £249k contingency budget.	
5.3	<u>Early Years Block</u> Previous years have shown a consistent underspend in this block. There is a projected underspend of £198k but at this stage it is not possible to confirm that figure. To counter the underspend, this year saw an increase in the rate for 3-4 year olds and this resulted in reducing the underspend by £1.2m.	
5.4	<u>High Needs Block</u>	
5.4.1	After the agreed transfer of £3.1m from the Schools Block the total projected underspend is £1.88m. Pressures continue across high needs provision. An overspend of £469k is projected on out of area and residential placements; however due to the delay in processing invoices this may change. SEN top ups to institutions shows a £2.135m overspend with the largest payment being top ups to mainstream schools. The budget for additional £6k blocks is expected to be £99k overspent. This will mean that mainstream schools are projected to receive £5.4m more than in 2021-2022.	
5.4.2	At the start of the year a need was identified for additional special placements and as a result £2.6m was put in the budget	
5.4.3	Services provided by Children and Families are showing an underspend of £1m. This is mainly due to vacancies and delays in recruitment.	
5.4.4	It was noted that mainstream schools continue to feel increasing pressures. Discussions have been held at the Executive Board around plans for the surplus. It was explained that the projected surplus amounts to 0.28% on general DSG.	

5.4.5	The cap on gains continues and for Leeds the effect of this so far equates to £23m. The plan for any surplus is to roll it forward to the High Needs Block. There is no intention to use any of that elsewhere.	
5.4.6	Local authorities running a deficit are required to produce a DSG deficit reduction plan. This results in strict controls and possibly interventions by the DfE. Projections for the next few years indicate that the budget will be once again in deficit. At a recent regional meeting the DfE re-emphasised the need for local authorities to set a balanced budget. The DfE also confirmed that the high needs funding formula and caps will continue. In 2019-20 the DfE changed the schools and early years financial regulations, making it a statutory requirement to carry forward any deficit. This is to be dealt with by future income unless approval is received from the Secretary of State to do otherwise.	
5.5	<u>Central School Services Block</u> A minor saving of £2k is forecasted; this is mainly due to savings in the Admissions Service.	
5.6	<u>2022-23 Reserves</u>	
5.6.1	Projecting a carry forward of £1.372m and a de-delegated balance of just over £1m.	
5.6.2	<i>Budget monitoring for month 10:</i> On occasions maintained schools have had money returned from the de-delegated surplus. This will be considered and brought back to Schools Forum when the final outturn position is available. <b>Action:</b> bring back to the June meeting.	LMc
5.7	Schools Forum noted projected underspend on DSG.	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>High Needs Budget 2023-24</b>	
6.1	The budget for 2023-24 was approved by Full Council yesterday and presents a balanced budget of £117m. Leeds continue to see an increase in SEND demand and complexities. In recognition of this there has been a national high needs funding allocation increase of £970m (10.6%) for 2023/24. The current allocation for Leeds has increased by £13.05m and includes the £5.17m supplementary grant. The cap on gains relates to £1.86m for Leeds, with a cumulative effect of £24.6m since 2018-19.	
6.2	A condition of the supplementary funding requires an increase in funding to special schools, alternative provision mainstream schools, academies and free schools by 3.4% compared to 2022-23 funding. In addition, there is a further requirement of a minimum funding guarantee of 3% for special mainstream schools, academies and free schools. This covers all place and top up funding. Place funding is set by the ESFA and remains at £10k for 2023-24. To meet these requirements funding for inclusion rates in these settings is increased by £24 to £732 per unit. To support the inclusion of high needs pupils to mainstream settings the unit value will also increase by £24.	
6.3	There are two main reasons for increased costs in the High Needs Block. Firstly, there has been a significant increase in numbers of EHCPs or in Leeds' case, eligibility for FFI funding. Secondly, the complexity of those cases.	
6.4	The budget for commissioned services will increase by £160k. Services directly managed by Children and Families has increased by £480k, mainly due to a further £400k increase in the invest to save budget, taking it to £1m.	

6.5	<p><i>Invest to save:</i> the investment is to help address the rise in need in the city and address staffing capacity. Recruitment is taking place for an Early Help SEND Coordinator and once that person is in post recruitment will take place for the rest of the team. The purpose of the team is to put the support in to schools. There will be a focus on the graduated approach in the code of practice, schools saying they need support for SENCOs as well as support in quality first teaching and across the SEND practice framework. In context, every year all local authorities are required to fill in data where money has been spent in the High Needs Block. Nationally, the spend per population head is £40, in Leeds it is £13. The team will work with SENCOs to deliver training and capacity. Funding for this team will come from the DSG block; schools will not have to pay extra to access it. The structure is still being worked on and consultation will take place with schools and SENCOs. One model being looked at is to have teachers seconded from schools and schools paid for them.</p>	
6.6	<p>The £1m budget is there to configure the team. The difference is that teams in place currently are highly skilled practitioners and this will be a quality monitoring role, working with SENCOs.</p>	
6.7	<p>A bid was put in to the DfE for more special school places; this was successful, and a free school is being delivered by the DfE. The authority has also worked with SILCs to expand them and a further 160 places were created last year.</p>	
6.8	<p>There are some risks around some of the assumptions within the budget and this will be closely monitored and reporting back to Schools Forum throughout 2023-24.</p>	
6.9	<p><i>Mainstream additional places £6k blocks:</i> The Operational Guidance for 23-24 states that local authorities are required to have a process in place to allocate additional £6k blocks to schools with higher numbers of high needs pupils. Within the schools funding there is a notional SEN amount which is allocated to SEN pupils. Authorities are not allowed to remove that budget from schools. The guide says that it expects this scheme to distribute funding to a minority of schools. Historically this has been the case however for 2022-23 it is expected to relate to 54% of Leeds schools. The authority can change the scheme and can look at how the notional SEN fund is calculated. If the scheme is changed schools and Schools Forum would have to be consulted. It is not known for sure whether funding must come in the form of blocks and further consultation of the regulations would need to take place to establish this.</p>	
6.10	<p>It is worth noting that the amount of funds passported to institutions last year was 91.5%. This year 92% will be passported. Commissioned services amount to 2.3% of the High Needs Block and services provided by the Council total 5.7%. The authority does not top slice the High Needs Block; it is not allowed. <b>Action:</b> meeting to be arranged to look at the guidance and what can be done if the scheme is changed.</p>	SMLMc/VW/ TP
6.11	<p>Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.</p>	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Free Early Education Entitlement rates and centrally retained funding 2023-24</b>	
7.1	<p>The local authority continues to receive funding to fund early education entitlement for 2, 3-and 4-year olds. Funding received from the DfE is not sufficient to cover further rising costs to the sector. The rate of funding has increased by 30p for 2-year olds, taking the rate per hour to £5.87 and for 3 and 4-year olds by 16p to £5.28. The 16p is split – 11p for the former teachers’ pension employer contribution grant (TPPG) and 5p general uplift to the base rate.</p>	

7.2	Consultation has taken place with providers and will consider comments made by Schools Forum. The new rates come into effect from 1 April 2023.																					
7.3	Schools Forum is asked to agree the allocation of the centrally retained element of the 3 and 4-year olds funding stream.																					
7.4	The authority proposes to pass through the full 2-year old funding of 30p; providers were in favour.																					
7.5	For 3-4-year olds it is proposed to increase the base rate by 14p to £4.92 per eligible hour. One area of difference is the former TPPG and how is distributed to the sector. The two options consulted on were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option One: create a quality teaching supplement. This would only be available to settings with qualified teacher status.</li> <li>• Option Two: to roll the former TPPG into the base rate, making it accessible to all providers within the city.</li> </ul>																					
7.6	All bar one of the responses opted for option two.																					
7.7	The authority can retain up to 5% of the centrally retained services allocation for 3-4-year-old. As in previous years the authority will not be seeking to do this. As result of unavoidable inflation an additional 2p is being asked for. This increase keeps the percentage at a lower level of 3.8%.																					
7.8	Since the meeting it has been discovered that benchmarking of the early years pass through rates for local authorities is not published in the Section 251 data. In addition, the information needed to calculate the pass-through rate as defined by the ESFA is also not publicly available.																					
7.9	<u>Supplements</u> There are no changes to the supplements.																					
7.10	<u>Voting</u> Approval of the expenditure from centrally retained funding as described in section four of the 2023/4 DSG Early Years Block paper. <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">(1) Special Education Needs Inclusion Team</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(2) Commissioned Service – Portage</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(3) Sensory Services</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(4) Education Psychology</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(5) Early Years Funding for Inclusion Team (3 and 4-year olds)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(6) Family Information Service</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(7) Family Services</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(8) Sufficiency</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(9) Commissioned Services – Northpoint Wellbeing</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(10) Learning Improvement</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> </tr> </table>	(1) Special Education Needs Inclusion Team	100%	(2) Commissioned Service – Portage	100%	(3) Sensory Services	100%	(4) Education Psychology	100%	(5) Early Years Funding for Inclusion Team (3 and 4-year olds)	100%	(6) Family Information Service	100%	(7) Family Services	100%	(8) Sufficiency	100%	(9) Commissioned Services – Northpoint Wellbeing	100%	(10) Learning Improvement	100%	
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<b>8.0</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>																					
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<b>8.0</b>	<b>Meeting Dates for 2023-24 and Forward Plan</b>																					
8.1	The next meeting will take place via MS Teams on Thursday 22 June 2023 at 1630-1830.																					