

Item	Title	Actions
1.0	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted and introductions made.	
2.0	Schools Forum Membership	
2.1	Vacancies remain for: 1 x PVI Nursery Provider vacancy. 1 x Alternative Academy vacancy. 1 x Primary Headteacher vacancy. 1 x Academy Headteacher vacancy Action: to re-advertise the Primary Headteacher vacancy.	
3.0	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
3.1	The minutes were agreed.	
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.6.2. to be discussed again at this meeting • 5.4.6. 6 JT wanted clarification on whether caps would be removed. DfE said it would. LM advised cap continues to 23/24. Forum members would like an eye keeping on that. • 6.10. PH asked for guidance, and had the scheme changed in high needs block. TP advised that additional blocks should be allocated to minority of schools, as per the High Needs Block Operational Guide. 64% of schools currently get this funding. The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations state that the value for additional blocks must be £6k. 	
4.0	Matters Arising	
4.1	There were no matters arising.	
5.0	DSG Budget Monitoring 2022-23	
5.1	LM went through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn Report 2022/2023. This report has been circulated as part of the Agenda pack.	
5.2	<u>Schools Block</u>	
5.2.1	The Schools Block had a year-end surplus of £287k which was mainly due savings against the growth fund.	
5.2.2	The de-delegated budget had an in year under spend of £336k and £466k from surplus balance clawback. The total de delegated surplus carried forward is £1.95m of which £500k was already earmarked to offset the de delegated contingency budget in 23/24.	
5.2.3	It was proposed that £1.25m of the remaining surplus be refunded back to mainstream maintained schools, pro rata to their original contributions in 21/22 and 22/23.	
5.2.4	Member wanted to know if the schools knew that they were getting the money back. - TP advised that the schools will be made aware of the refund before they break up for the summer term. TP advised on the process the Council must take. A report must be done, and decision published this will take 30 days and the process is currently underway.	

5.2.5	The largest amount a school would be refunded is around £27k, primary schools are approximately £3-6k (Post meeting note; see information in appendix to report elsewhere on this agenda; actual figures are higher).	RM
5.2.6	The refund will be 2023/24 as it is not possible to adjust the 2022/23 budget.	
5.3	<u>Early Years Block</u>	
5.3.1	The Early Years Block underspent by £862k.	
5.3.2	Funding for Early years was based on the January 2022 and the January 2023 Census.	
5.3.3	The current estimate from the latest census indicates that there has been a reduction of 3 & 4 year olds of 1.1% and a reduction of 2 years old of 12%.	
5.3.4	These figures relate to children receiving Early Years Funding Entitlement, not the total number of children at this age.	
5.3.5	Panel member asked if there was a figure for the total number of 2-Year-olds in the City. ACTION To obtain total figure for 2-year-olds. RM can obtain these figures	
5.3.6	The underspend is £532k less than the underspend in 2021/22.	
5.3.7	A Government announcement on further childcare support for working parents is expected. Further details will be provided shortly.	
5.4	<u>High Needs Block</u>	
5.4.1	The High Needs Block had a year-end underspend of £6.84m. Of this underspend, a saving of £2.97m was against the Out of Area (OOA) and Residential placements. There has been some difficulty in accessing accurate data for projections during the year and data available in January suggested a similar expenditure pattern to previous years and as a result a higher expenditure amount was projected than actually occurred. In addition, there was more scrutiny in decision making around the places that were purchased.	
5.4.2	There was an overspend of £845k in SEND top ups, the largest element of this due to increased top ups paid to mainstream schools. £5.3m more was paid to these setting than in 21/22.	
5.4.3	The Invest to Save recruitment drive was unsuccessful. This has been revised with of better outcomes.	
5.4.5	£947k of the 2022/23 of the High Needs Supplementary funding was not utilised as previously reported to Schools Forum.	

5.4.6	As there is a significant underspend, Children & Families will look at a range of proposals and bring these back to a supplementary Schools Forum in July.	
5.4.7	Question was raised around how many children are going out of area – KJ can find out this out ACTION to find figures/numbers of children going to OOA placements	KJ
5.4.8	KJ explained difficulty in accessing OOA places. KJ said discussion around SEND early help and a piece work is currently going on to look at this. The feedback from schools is that the numbers of CYP and the complexity of needs has increased especially after the pandemic. OOA; a strategic drive is needed to look at costs and provision and there are some OOA settings that are full; this contributes to underspend. Further quality assurance for OOA placements is required and there is more reporting and accountability needed. There was a discussion as to what happens if there are insufficient quality places.	
5.4.9	The Chair requested that proposals re the use of the underspend are brought back to the supplementary meeting in July.	
5.4.10	TP outlined that the underspend is anticipated to be a one off, so we must be careful what to do with the surplus. We don't want a boom and bust and then have to reverse some funding decisions – need consistent approach for the future.	
5.5	<u>Central Schools Block</u>	
5.5.1	The Central Schools Block had a minor underspend of £44k mainly due to savings in Admissions.	
5.6	<u>Reserves</u>	
5.6.1	The final year end position demonstrates a General DSG surplus to be carried forward of £7.06m and a de delegated surplus of £1.95m.	
5.6.2	Deficit action plan for DfE – a plan doesn't need to be submitted for this year due to the surplus balance.	
5.7	<u>Initial High Needs Budget Projections 2023/24</u>	
5.7.1	It is still early in the year, but the initial projection demonstrates a small saving of £223k against the High Needs budget 23/24.	
5.7.2	The projection assumes a £2.7m underspend on OOA although full impact of new academic year is not yet known.	
	Further savings are anticipated on the Invest to Save in 23/24 as although plans are being developed, due to recruitment timescales it is not expected.	

5.7.3	that all appointments will be made by the year end and so savings of £500k are projected.	
5.7.4	Funding to mainstream setting is projected to be £4.98m overspent due to increased numbers of high needs pupils remaining within mainstream schools.	
5.7.5	With regards to the options to utilise the 22/23 surplus TP confirmed that any decision to give de-delegated money back to schools would be a council decision not a schools forum decision	
5.7.6	Frustration was expressed with regards to the surplus on the High Needs block, so a resolution to give this back to schools was raised. ACTION to consider refunding back to schools the previous High Needs Block transfer.	TP
5.7.8	Date of the proposed supplementary Schools Forum proposal was considered. ACTION date of the meeting be agreed, and invites sent.	KB
5.7.8	Noted that people are frustrated by the underspend and the money is there for the children of today not the future.	
5.6.7	SM provided reassurance that when underspend was recognised a lot of work went on behind the scenes to review and used this as an opportunity to do checks and balances and learn lessons for next year.	
5.7.9	SM noted that whilst the service acknowledge that the first recruitment drive was unsuccessful, they are confident that the latest recruitment process will be more effective.	
5.7.10		
6.0	School Balances and Extended Balances Outturn 2022/23	
6.1	LJ went through the School Balances and Extended Balances Outturn 2022/23 report which refers to maintained schools only.	
6.1.1	The report demonstrated that overall school balances have decreased by £10.05m during 2022/23 to £33.2m. Primary school balances have decreased by £10.02m, secondary schools have increased by £152k, SILC balances reduced by £932k.	
6.1.2	A question was asked about school balances expressed as a percentage of schools' budgets. 3-4% was mentioned as an approximation. ACTION Schools Forum asked for information on school balances expressed as a percentage.	U
6.1.3	Table 2 of the report summarised the year end surplus and deficit balances for each maintained school.	

6.1.4	Overall, the number of schools ending the year with a deficit balance has increased by 15 to 36 schools. The total value of these deficit budgets is £4.11m	
6.1.5	There are 138 schools with a surplus balance of which 79 schools have an excess surplus balance above the new 8% threshold. There are 24 schools which have retained a surplus balance above the threshold for 3 consecutive years and are liable for clawback. These schools have been asked to complete an application to retain their excess balances for consideration by members of Schools Forum and Childrens and Families.	
6.2	Details were given on how the LA is working with deficit schools to support them. The DfE can help with support from SMRAs and a number are to go ahead this year.	
6.2.1	Extended Service Accounts Schools hold £7m of balances in extended service accounts, in three broad areas 1. Breakfast/afterschool £3.75m 2. Clusters £2.1m 3. AIP £1.16m	
6.2.2	The AIP balances are currently being reviewed for 2022/23 and may be subject to clawback. ACTION Schools Forum is asked to note the 2022/23 school and extended school balances and the work ongoing to consider both clawback of excess surplus balances and to review deficit action plans. ACTION to bring back to next School Forum.	EJ
7.0	Any Other Business	
	LM reported that the EFSA had asked that we make Schools Forum aware of a potential change to the APT budget. The adjustment relates to just 5 PFI schools which will be notified of the changes to their funding 23/24. All 5 schools will receive additional funding.	
8.0	Meeting Dates for 2023-24 and Forward Plan	
8.1	The next meeting will take place via MS Teams on 18.07. 2023 at 1630-1830.	