

# Agenda Item 17

**TITLE** Draft 2024/25 Schools Block Budget

**FOR CONSIDERATION BY** Schools Forum on 6 December 2023

**WARD** None Specific;

**LEAD OFFICER** Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

This report forms part of regular reporting to Schools Forum, informing areas of statutory decision making and improving visibility and consultation on wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial matters.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Schools Forum is asked to note the update on the 2023/24 Schools Block Budget.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report provides Schools Forum with the updated provisional income for the 2023/24 Schools Block budget, using the provisional October 2023 pupil data received from schools and the Performance Data Team.

We will consult with schools showing the indicative school budgets in December requesting feedback at the start of next term. This will enable the final school budgets for 2024/25 to be considered by Schools Forum at its meeting in January 2024, prior to submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by the January deadline.

## 2024/25 Draft School Block Budget December 2023

### .01 Purpose of the Report

This report provides Schools Forum with an update on the Schools Block.

### .02 Recommendations

Schools Forum is asked to note the update on the 2024/25 Schools Block Budget.

### .03 Background

The Department for Education (DfE) issued provisional funding arrangements for the 2024/25 Schools Block in the summer, which were then adjusted in October.

Final funding for 2024/25 will reflect final pupil numbers from the October 2023 school census and associated updated pupil data, and is not expected to be confirmed by the DfE until mid to late December.

### .04 Updated Provisional Allocation for 2024/25

Modelling undertaken prior to the schools consultation was based on October 2022 census data. While October census information has now been submitted, as some academies do not have a data sharing agreement in place with WBC, we have updated our income projection using provisional census data and pupil numbers shared by schools in September.

The table below shows indicative Schools Block Funding based on provisional census figures and pupil information provided by schools in September.

Final funding for 2024/25 is expected to be confirmed by the DfE at the end of the Autumn term, in line with previous years timetable.

Block	2023/24 TOTAL			2024/25 PROVISIONAL OCTOBER			£ Increase	% Increase
	£ per pupil	Oct 22 census	£	£ per pupil	Draft Oct 23 census	£		
Primary Unit of Funding	4,579	15,719		4,813	15,543			
			71,983,274			74,810,480	2,827,206	3.9%
Secondary Unit of Funding	5,936	10,696		6,272	11,016			
			63,495,841			69,092,022	5,596,181	8.8%
Premises Factors			1,634,877			1,790,045	155,168	9.5%
MSAG			4,555,857			Now in baseline		
<b>Sub-total Schools Block</b>			<b>141,669,849</b>			<b>145,692,546</b>	<b>4,022,697</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
Growth Factors			1,665,896			1,147,963	- 517,933	-31.1%
<b>TOTAL Schools Block</b>			<b>143,335,745</b>			<b>146,840,509</b>	<b>3,504,764</b>	<b>2.4%</b>

**.05 Growth Fund**

Based on the current 2023/24 forecast, £68k is anticipated to remain at year end within reserve funds held to support growth requirements next financial year.

Growth Fund income has been estimated at £1.1m for 2024/25, however confirmation of funding is not expected from the DfE until December.

Further review of Growth Fund requirements for 2024/25 will continue as further information becomes available. Current forecast anticipates that £1.6m will be required for the Growth Fund for 2024/25.

**.06 Disapplication Requests**

The majority of schools supported the submission of a disapplication request on behalf of Wokingham’s all-through school. We submitted the disapplication request to the ESFA in November and we have just heard that it has been approved.

After many discussions with our schools, the majority of schools were in support of a transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. This was voted on and approved by Schools Forum at the extraordinary meeting held in November. As Schools Forum were in agreement with the transfer, and the transfer requested was not higher than 0.5%, we weren’t required to submit a disapplication request to the ESFA.

**.07 Next Steps**

Following receipt of census information and updated pupil data from the DfE in early December, the budget model will be updated to incorporate the results of the consultation.

Further consultation will then be undertaken with schools, later in December, showing the indicative school budgets with feedback requested at the start of the new term. Modelling will then be further updated over the school holiday period once final funding levels are confirmed by the DfE.

This will enable the final Schools Block Budget for 2024/25 to be considered by Schools Forum at its meeting in January 2024, prior to submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by the January deadline.

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