

SLOUGH SCHOOLS' FORUM

8th March 2016

Final School Budgets 2016-17

(Directorate of Wellbeing)

1.0 Background

The Council is required to notify schools of their budgets for the new financial year. Indicative budgets have already been distributed. This paper advises schools when they may expect the various elements for their final budgets for 2016 – 2017.

1.0 Maintained Schools

The draft budget was sent out to maintained schools on 24th February 2016. Schools are advised to note the following:

- 1.1.1 The Schools Block Budget** – This is now set and cannot be changed during the year. A request has been made for the detailed analysis of the Schools' Budget derived from the Authority Proforma Template (APT) which is being prepared and will be sent to schools within the next 2 weeks.
- 1.1.2 The Early Years Budget** - is an indicative budget which is based on the January 2016 census. This budget will be revised, when the Department for Education (DfE) verifies the information. This enables the DfE to confirm the final 2016-17 Early Years block budget. This has been scheduled for July 2016.
- 1.1.3 The High Needs Block Budget** - is also an indicative figure based on children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision as at January 2016. This will need to be updated for children in SEN provision from 1st April 2016. It is the Council's expectation that the Trust will have greater responsibilities around the High Needs Block funding and children with SEN in the near future. A further report on this will be presented to Schools Forum as soon as more details are finalised. However, it is not expected that the resources as allocated in the HNB will change as a result of this in the near future.
- 1.1.4 6th Form Funding** - is also an indicative budget. The DfE will confirm the numbers between March 2016 and April 2016. Shortly after this the Education Finance team will produce the relevant adjustments and notify schools.
- 1.1.5 Indicative Pupil Premium** – this is not the final budget. It will be adjusted in July 2016 when the Council receives the actual figures from the DfE. It is worth noting that last year the DfE made a further adjustment in October. It

is likely that this will be the same again for 2016- 2017.Schools will be informed if this does happen.

1.1.6 Other Grants – Any other grants that affect school budgets will be notified to the LA from the DfE in due course. Schools will be informed and their budgets adjusted accordingly.

1.1.7 Growth Fund – This will be allocated in September 2016.

1.2 Academies

The cash sheets with the budget breakdown have been submitted to the DfE and will be available from April 2016. However academies are advised to note the following:

1.2.1 School Block Budget has been set and the academies element of this budget has been transferred to the DfE.

1.2.2 However, academies should note that this is not the budget; the DfE is responsible for setting the budget for academies for the academic year September 2016 to August 2017.

1.2.3 Early Years and High Needs Blocks Budgets - As for the maintained schools above, the figures provided for both the Early Years and High Needs blocks are indicative and just like for the maintained schools these will be revised and final figures will be released later in the year.

1.2.4 Other grants which are payable to academies will be allocated directly to them by the EFA and the Growth Fund for academies will be paid in May and September

1.3 Priorities for the Education Finance team

The following are the priorities for the Council's Education Finance Team over the coming months:

1.3.1 Responding to schools' concerns – The Council is very aware schools have expressed real concerns about the quality of finance support. This is being taken very seriously. Over the coming months the following steps will be taken to hopefully improve the position:

- a) Meeting individually and collectively with Head Teachers to listen and act on their concerns. A meeting has already taken place with St. Anthony's

and a collective meeting with Headteachers is scheduled for early next month. This meeting will be attended by the Council's S151 Officer.

- b) Communication with schools by individual officers as well as school groups will be addressed to ensure these always meet with the best practice.
- c) We will be working harder to be proactive in identifying potential "trouble points" and do better to mitigate these.
- d) The finance team is being restructured to offer more resilience in the support available to the Education Team as well as to improve our chances to permanently recruit to the senior role.
- e) Working better with the Council's Education lead officers to provide greater strategic clarity to Council reports.

1.3.2 LA Government Statutory Returns – there are several returns that require completion by 31st March 2016. The most challenging of these returns is the Section 251. This will require significant cross working with other Council colleagues and will therefore be particularly challenging this year.

1.3.3 Schools Government Statutory Returns – we will be assisting maintained schools with their government statutory returns, especially Schools Financial Value Standard which also needs to be completed by 31st March 2016.

1.3.4 Payments – We will be ensuring all payments are made to Schools and Academies for this financial year which ends on 31st March 2016.

1.3.5 Closedown of accounts - The closedown timetable including the reports required from our maintained schools and nurseries will be sent out from 26th February 2016. The Council's auditors require this information in order to prove that schools are complying with their statutory duty. This year our staff will be on hand to offer some support for maintained schools on statutory returns and closedown issues to ensure schools are as compliant as possible.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools' Forum is asked to note this report.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is required to notify Schools of their annual budget

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not applicable.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

None

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer

6.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of this report.

Section 151 Officer – Strategic Director of Resources

6.2 The financial implications of the report are outlined in the supporting information.

Access Implications

6.3 There are no access implications.

7 CONSULTATION

Not Applicable

Contact for further information

Coral Miller (Interim Principal Accountant, ECS)

(01753 477209)

coral.miller@slough.gov.uk