

School Forum 13th March 2024	
Report from Executive Director of People - Children Service	
CSSB Proposed Budget Allocation 2024-25	
Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
No. of Appendices:	N/A
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1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To report on forecast figures for CSSB 2023-24 against previously agreed budgets.
- 1.2 To advise Schools Forum of the Central School Services Block (CSSB) Allocation for financial year 2024-25 and related block transfers.
- 1.3 To propose CSSB budget allocations for 2024-25.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Schools Forum note the latest forecast figures for CSSB 2023-24.
- 2.2 That Schools Forum note the CSSB allocation under the DSG and the associated block transfer of £100,000 from the Schools Block DSG to the CSSB DSG as allowed in the January 2024 Schools Forum meeting.
- 2.3 That Schools Forum agrees the budget allocations for 2024-25 as outlined in this paper.

3 CSSB Forecast 2023-24

- 3.1 In the November 2023 Schools Forum meeting, the CSSB budget was presented for 2023-24. Most of the costs have been finalised in the accounts with a few costs still expected in March 2024. The latest forecast outturn for 2023-24 is shown below with a comparison to the original budget.

Table 1:- CSSB Budget and Forecast 2023-24

Area	2023-24 Budget £m	P11 Forecast £m	Variance £m	Notes
Income Streams				
Pupil led funding	0.753	0.753	0.000	
Funding for historic commitments	0.032	0.032	0.000	
Total CSSB DSG Allocation	0.785	0.785	0.000	
Schools Block Contribution	0.100	0.100	0.000	
Total Income Streams	0.885	0.885	0.000	
Budget Allocations				
LA Safeguarding Childrens Board	0.030	0.030	0.000	
Sub Total - Historical Commitment	0.030	0.030	0.000	
Servicing of Schools Forum	0.055	0.061	0.005	Salary forecast re-aligned to actuals
Admissions	0.292	0.311	0.019	Re-aligned to actuals
Copyright Licences	0.162	0.164	0.002	
Education Welfare	0.145	0.145	0.000	
Asset Management	0.013	0.005	-0.008	
Statutory Regulatory	0.188	0.176	-0.012	Audit charge favourable to budget
Sub Total - Ongoing Commitment	0.855	0.861	0.007	
Total Budget Allocations	0.885	0.891	0.007 Adverse	

3.3 Overall, it is expected that the 2023-24 CSSB budget will be slightly overspent by £0.007m. The most significant variances were in relation to salary costs for the admission team (£0.019m adverse) and Statutory & Regulatory costs (£0.012m favourable of which £0.08m is due to audit charges).

3.4 A number of allocations reflect a percentage of staff costs for administrative and management roles. During 2023-24 some of these roles were resourced, at least in part, through interim contracts. For the avoidance of doubt, the charges against the CSSB budget were calculated at the equivalent cost of a permanent resource.

4 CSSB Allocation 2024-25 and Block Transfers

4.1 The CSSB Allocation for 2024-25 is £839,974 and comprises of £814,414 pupil led funding (based on a pupil count of 29,107) and £25,560 funding for historic commitments. This is an overall increase of £55,143 compared to 2023-24.

4.2 ESFA are phasing out funding for historic commitments and this element has been reduced by 20% compared to the 2023-24 funding.

4.3 The per pupil rate used for Slough is the 3rd lowest in the country at £27.98 per pupil for 2024/5. This compares to an average in England of £40.27. These rates are based on a proforma completed by local authorities in 2017 detailing spend in each of the DSG blocks which showed a very low spend in Slough and resulted in a baseline of £20.19 per pupil. This rate has increased by the gains cap each year under the current DSG format.

Table 2:- CSSB funding comparisons 2024-25

Area	Per pupil rate 2024/25 (£)	Historic commitments 2024/25 (£)	Inclusive per pupil rate 2024/25 (£)
Slough	27.98	25,560	28.86
RBWM	43.98	20,077	48.35
Reading	42.82	21,372	53.25
Average South East	39.85		51.33
Average England	40.27	557,427	51.39

- 4.4 This low level of per pupil funding has resulted in an ongoing pressure on Central School Services and, as a result, Schools Forum agreed to an additional transfer from School Block to CSSB of £0.1m for the past 2 years (2022-23 and 2023-24) to support the admissions process.
- 4.5 At its meeting in January 2024, Schools Forum agreed to transfer 0.5% of the Schools Block allocation to the High Needs Block with the caveat that, if required, £100,000 of this balance was to be transferred to CSSB to support admissions activities as per the previous two years. Further analysis of the CSSB budget for 2024-25 indicates that this block transfer of £100,000 is necessary, in line with the prior 2 years.

5 CSSB Proposed Budget 2024-25

- 5.1 The proposed CSSB budget for 2024-25 follows a very similar format to 2023-24 with a small uplift of 4% for cost inflation which is largely in relation to salaries. Where actual costs in 2023-24 have exceeded budget, the 2024-25 figures are based on the period 11 forecast values.

Table 3:- CSSB Proposed Budget 2024-25

Area	P11 2023-24 Forecast £m	2023-24 Budget £m	Proposed 2024-25 Budget £m	Variance £m	Notes
Income Streams					
Pupil led funding	0.753	0.753	0.814	0.062	
Funding for historic commitments	0.032	0.032	0.026	-0.006	
Total CSSB DSG Allocation	0.785	0.785	0.840	0.055	
Schools Block Contribution	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	
Total Income Streams	0.885	0.885	0.940	0.055	
Budget Allocations					
LA Safeguarding Childrens Board	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.000	
Sub Total - Historical Commitment	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.000	
Servicing of Schools Forum	0.061	0.055	0.064	0.009	Uplift calculated on P11 forecast
Admissions	0.311	0.292	0.325	0.033	Uplift calculated on P11 forecast
Copyright Licences	0.164	0.162	0.171	0.009	Uplift calculated on P11 forecast
Education Welfare	0.145	0.145	0.151	0.006	
Asset Management	0.005	0.013	0.013	0.001	
Statutory Regulatory	0.176	0.188	0.186	-0.002	Amended to reflect new structure
Sub Total - Ongoing Commitment	0.861	0.855	0.910	0.055	
Total Budget Allocations	0.891	0.885	0.940	0.055	

- 5.2 Contributions towards statutory and regulatory costs have been amended to better reflect the current structure within the Children's Services Directorate and show a small decrease compared to 2023-24.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications have been detailed in the body of this paper.

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Not applicable

8 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 8.1 Not applicable

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are no legal implications for this report.

10 Equality Implications

- 10.1 Not applicable