

Schools Forum 20<sup>th</sup> May: Items 6 DSG & 7 Place Planning - Questions and Answers

**Question 1: Chris Pring – Item 6 DSG Paper**

- a) 4.6 Underspend (should this figure be -£0.463)?
- b) Table 2 – Items missing (Insurance/Maternity/FSM/Ed Psyc) from de-delegated tables
- c) Table 3 De-Del – figure has changed to 464 (463 on table 2)
- d) 8.1 ....being pupils of key workers. This should be .....key workers and vulnerable pupils.

Reply

- a) Yes, in paragraph 4.6 the underspend should read -£0.463m
- b) Table 2 just shows items with movements and balances at year end, in line with data provided in previous years. The other de-delegated items spent to budget so no movement or carry forward.
- c) In table 3 there is a rounding issue – updated table below;

**Table 3:** DSG year-end balances 2019/20

£'000	b/f	2019/20 movement	c/f
Schools Block	0	(174)	(174)
De-Del	(414)	(49)	(463)
CSSB	0	0	0
EYB	(1,115)	1,135	20
HNB	(432)	1,534	1,102
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>(1,962)</b>	<b>2,446</b>	<b>485</b>
Advanced funding	0	2,407	2,407
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(1,962)</b>	<b>4,853</b>	<b>2,892</b>

d) Yes, in paragraph 8.1, the text should read 'key workers and vulnerable pupils.'

**Question 2: Wendy Weston – Item 6 DSG Paper**

- a) As a union with members in centrally managed Children's Centres when can we expect information on how the deficit budgets are to be managed?
- b) When is the all party parliamentary group to report back on the future of maintained nursery schools?

**Reply**

- a) Details on plans to manage deficits in Children's Centres will be shared with Forum later in the year once they are agreed. Obviously the current situation with Covid-19 has had an impact and the effect of this needs to be considered across the sector.
- b) We haven't received any update from the group or indication of when they will report their findings, we are very interested in the outcome of this too.

**Question 3: Aileen Morrison – Item 6 DSG Paper**

- a) There are references to a number of groups and task and finish groups including the 'Belonging' Task group? Could the LA provide a crib sheet on the different working groups and their purposes? How does the LA ensure membership to groups is open and transparent?
- b) Appendix 3 Shows AP spending and includes Block contracts. How are the large discrepancies in ALP funding justified?
- c) ALP spot purchasing- Can you comment on the fact that Secondary schools pay the LA for places at St Matthias and Lansdown Park so the £561,000 cost of ST Matthias is not complete picture. Where is the income generated through schools' contributions accounted for?
- d) Is the LA working with the sector to ensure value for money and to approach the DfE for an increase in places funded by the ESFA- Current provision (eg St Matthias) could expand and these places could attract ESFA funding that would reduce the burden on high needs budgets.

**Reply**

- a) The various working groups are in the stages of being developed and once they are finalised and their remit agreed we will share

details with Forum.

- b) The council is about to undertake an in depth review of alternative learning provision as part of a formal recommissioning process. The review is part of a wider SEND sufficiency exercise and does include an examination of funding for AP, the rising running costs of placements and value for money, as well as appropriateness of provision and quality outcomes. There are elements of AP school funding that we can't alter. The £10k place funding from ESFA does not go as far as it did in 2012. The discretionary element(s) of high needs funding (Top Up and contracted places) need to ensure good outcomes and effective use of money. The review of AP is being managed by Oliver Buell. We will be bringing in external expertise to give an independent view of the sector. The current plan envisages completion of this work by 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020.
- c) Charges are levied to schools to reflect the fact that they have already received funding in their block allocation for the pupils that are then placed in AP. This has the effect of transferring funding into the high needs block, the income is not allocated to the specific AP provision, but is included as income within the AP budgets overall.
- d) All work by the LA with the sector tries to ensure value for money. This has to be balanced against the needs of vulnerable school age children and the LA's statutory duties to make educational provision for them, as well as those external factors that are outside the council's control. Unforeseen delays with planned increases to AP school places funded by the ESFA are one example of this, as are high levels of school exclusion in Bristol and high demand for (SEND/SEMH) specialist school places exceeding existing places capacity. Education settings have submitted ideas to expand existing provision. We are currently reviewing these ideas with a view to move forward with those that will release the right provision in the areas of the city that we are experiencing most demand

#### **Question 4: Carew Reynell – Items 6 DSG & 7 Place Planning**

a) Item 6:

When will projections for 20/21 be available? I'm particularly interested in High Needs, where 19/20 projections increased substantially towards the end of the year.

b) Item 7:

- i) The figures in Appendix 2 appear to show a potential commitment of £2.75m in 21/22, compared with a budget of £2m in 20/21. Is that right?
- ii) Does the authority have specific plans in place to provide the 240 places that would have been provided by the Oasis Temple Quarter School? If so, have they been costed?
- iii) How does the cost to the Growth Fund compare with the notional figures in Appendix 2?
- iv) There has, in the past, been talk of the possibility of amending the Growth Fund policy to reduce the amounts payable for new places (as is done by some other authorities) if the cost of the policy was likely to exceed the funding provided by DfE. Could this be considered for 21/22?

## Reply

a) The first projections will be available as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Monitoring Report – following cancellation of the July Forum meeting, it was agreed that this report be circulated to Forum Members.

b) Item 7:

i. There are three elements to Growth, each funded differently.

1. Routine growth from Growth Fund £2.0m
2. Growth due to academy schools for the 5 month overlap, funded from refunded recoupment
3. New and growing schools, funded directly in the formula and not charged to Growth fund.

The question is comparing the budget assigned to 1. against the overall Growth cost, which is all three considerations. The table in Appendix 2 states the anticipated cost to Schools Block, which is correct as all growth is funded from schools block, but not all growth is funded from Growth Fund.

ii. The Place Planning and Education Capital Teams have looked at possible options to increase places at a number of schools that could potentially provide additional provision. The indicative capital costs of these options have been calculated but the total cost would be well in excess of currently available capital. If existing schools were expanded this would increase pressure on the Growth Fund. By how much would depend on how many pupils and which schools they go to. Temple Quarter would be treated as a new and growing school, so the ESFA requires growth in that school is funded via the APT (via the schools formula directly, with an estimate for pupil numbers) rather than through the growth fund.

iii. The table in the report is looking forwards and identifies which schools are funded from Growth Fund, and which are APT. The actual cost will depend on the prevailing school formula value, the numbers of pupils, and whether the policy is amended in the timeframe.

iv. This has been discussed before at Schools forum, the last time was in March 2018 and there wasn't a change to amounts payable, with the policy staying broadly similar. This issue will be put on the agenda of the Finance sub-group to discuss the options and implications of any changes.

## Question 5: Christine Townsend – Item 7 Place Planning

- a) 4.4 Of the 213 places offered to applicants living outside of the Bristol boundary and therefore falling outside the legal requirement held by Bristol to provide a school place, how many of these places will receive funds from Bristol's Growth Fund under the council's current policy?
- b) 4.7 Why is the School Capacity Survey not taking place in 2020?
- c) 4.11 What was the outcome of the planning application for the Oasis Temple Quarter secondary that went to the committee on May 28th? What is the deadline for the Environment Agency to 'call-in'?
- d) What is plan B if Oasis Temple does not open for Sept 2021?
- e) Table 1 includes Trinity at full PAN for 21/22 but omits Oasis Temple entirely despite both being in doubt. What is the reason for Trinity inclusion

and Oasis exclusion?

- f) 4.19 What progress has been made on the use of increasing primary estate capacity (created by falling mainstream demand) repurposing for educating children with SEND with or without an EHCP?

Reply

- a) 6 schools are scheduled to receive money from the Growth fund (Trinity is a new schools so is funded in APT as a new and growing school), as agreed in previous years. The 6 are Bristol Brunel Academy, Bristol Metropolitan Academy, City Academy, Colston Girls School, Cotham School, St Bede's College. Growth Fund is allocated to compensate a school for increases in NOR, caused by growing at the request of the authority. Admission of pupils from outside the LA boundary is not linked to Growth Funding, but these pupils will increase the census figures and therefore funding into the DSG.
- b) The 2020 School Capacity and Forecasts collection (SCAP) was due to commence in June The decision to cancel was made by the DfE to reduce burdens on local authorities during the current pandemic.
- c) The developer withdrew the application from the committee to undertake further work to mitigate against an objection and possible call-in by the Environment Agency.
- d) See answer above
- e) Trinity was included in the projection when progress was on schedule. The scheme is much more advanced and BCC is the contractor. We are therefore in more control and have more information than OATQ which is being managed by the DfE directly.

Following information sessions with schools and invitations to submit Expressions of Interest, a number of projects are being assessed. The process will ensure the schemes are technically possible, meet need and can be developed within the available budgets. Initial estimates of the work needed to deliver the projects show completion dates (i.e. when young people will be able to use the new provision) ranging from 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020 for more straight forward schemes and 2021 for more complex schemes.