

Final Dedicated Schools Grant 2008/09

Schools Forum

16th October 2008

Author: Group Director Children.

Ward: All

Purpose

- To provide Schools Forum with the final allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2008/09.

Recommendation

- The Schools Forum is requested to recommend to the Local Authority the method of allocating the surplus DSG.

1. Reasons

- 1.1 To inform Schools Forum that the DSG has now been finalised and the total allocation for Swindon is £107.1m.
- 1.2 To explain the reason for the variance between the estimated DSG and the final allocation.
- 1.3 To recommend to the local authority the method of distributing the surplus DSG for 2008/09.

2. Detail

- 2.1 The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) do not announce the final DSG until after the start of the financial year, normally in June. This means that Local Authorities (LAs) have to prepare their budget based upon an estimated DSG allocation using the most up-to-date pupil numbers.
- 2.2 The finance team works closely with the schools data team to ensure that the variance in pupil numbers is as accurate as possible to reduce the risk of over committing resources.
- 2.3 The budget was agreed at the Schools Forum on 22nd January 2008, soon after that the finance team was notified that the early years numbers were likely to increase by approximately 54. Due to the timing and the uncertainty of the final pupil numbers it was considered prudent not to commit this money until the final allocation was announced.
- 2.4 The DCSF announced on the 19 June 2008 the final DSG allocations, the table below shows the pupil number variation between the budgeted figures and the actual figures.

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	SBC data	DCSF data	Variance
Nursery	0.0	0.0	0.0
Primary	16,203.5	16,203.5	0.0
Secondary	10,481.0	10,492.0	11.0
Special	363.5	363.5	0.0
PRU	79.0	246.0	167.0
Alternative Provision	27.0	14.0	-13.0
Early Years	981.08	1034.9	53.8
3 Year old adjustment	0.0	35.9	35.9
Total Pupils	28,135.08	28,389.8	254.72
Unit Allocation			£3,774.89
Total surplus			961,540

- 2.5 The main variance was due to the calculation of the dual registered pupils. These pupils are included on the schools number role when the PLASC data is submitted as well as being on the PRU return. The budget was calculated based on receiving one unit allocation however; the actual allocation includes the schools pupils count as well as the PRU pupil count.
- 2.6 The other significant variance is the numbers within the early years sector. These figures are always difficult to predict due to the complexity of the provision. In addition to this Swindon was fortunate enough to benefit from an adjustment within the 3 year old funding; this is not something that the Council could have predicted. As a result of this Swindon now has an unallocated amount of DSG for 2008/09 totalling £961k.
- 2.7 The Children Services Leadership Team in consultation with the Schools Forum Chair has considered a number of proposals regarding the method of distributing this surplus within the overall schools block, including retained services as well as individual school budgets.
- 2.8 When developing the proposals consideration has been taken to ensure that these projects are pupil-focused, particularly those in the most vulnerable circumstances, and link to key strategic plans/strategies, including the Children & Young People's Plan, the Children Services' Strategic Plan, relevant Council Promises and the LAA.
- 2.9 The detailed proposals are shown at appendix A to this report. The LA must remind schools about the potential financial impact of single status. Any new money delegated to schools should be set aside to help meet the costs of Single Status.

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Alternative Options

Schools Forum may wish to consider a different proposal, it must be understood however that this will delay the distribution of the funds.

Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- The budgets and expenditure referred to within this report are all contained within the ring-fenced dedicated schools grant.

Legal / Human Rights Implications

- None

Links to Corporate Plans and Policies (in particular to Swindon 2010 Promises)

- Promise 33 “We’ll help our most vulnerable, looked after young people to achieve an appropriate qualification, paying particular attention to literacy and numeracy and vocational skills to help their future prospects
- Promise 45 “We will make sure that schools will be at the heart of each community”
- Council's Health & Safety Policy
- Children Services' Strategic Management Plan
- Promise

Consultees

- The Director of Finance, and the Director of Law and Democratic Services are consulted on all reports.
- The Chair of the Schools Forum

Background Papers and Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Allocation of Surplus DSG

Appendix B – Background Information, Swindon Young People’s Empowerment Programme

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Appendix A

Proposal	Director	Description	Ongoing or one off funding	Value £000s	Link to
1	Access & Provision	Schools Forum will already be aware of the requirement for schools to meet the new nutrient based standards. Swindon has also been successful in securing £2m for targeted capital funding to install kitchens in schools where there are currently none. The Council currently employ a school meals project manager that is support by grant; this grant ceases from April 2009. However, the post will still be required to support schools in achieving national and local strategies in terms of promoting and helping schools achieve these. The recommendation to Schools Forum is that £55k is provided to support the continuation of this key strategic post, together with administration support to implement the successful bid, as well as to develop possible future bids.	Ongoing	£55K	Children's Services Strategic Plan, School Meals' Strategy, LAA
2	Access & Provision	The temporary accommodation for the new PS7 school in Oakhurst is required to enable the school to open in September 2009. There will be a requirement to purchase furniture and equipment prior to September to ensure the temporary accommodation is fit for purpose. The accommodation is expected to be in place by the beginning of July 2009. It is estimated that £70k will be	One off	£70k	School Organisation Plan, Children's Services Strategic Plan

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Karen Murray on 01793 465794 or Email kmurray@swindon.gov.uk.

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		required for the furniture/equipment.			
3	Schools & Learning	There is an increasing level of concern for children in care that experience turbulence in their lives with the knock on result that their educational provision may be put at risk. There have been a number of incidents in the last academic year where such episodes have placed untenable pressure on school placements and also in turn foster placements. The result of this has been in some cases that children have had to be transferred out of Swindon. This is hugely disruptive and upsetting to our most vulnerable children and deeply distressing to all of the professionals involved. Placements away from Swindon at times of personal crisis can cost thousands of pounds a week for one child. Following senior management level discussion regarding appropriate strategies that could be put in place on a proactive basis to minimise such circumstances it was agreed that appropriate staff support if put in place quickly could go a long way in addressing this issue. The proposal therefore is to appoint two key workers based within the Secondary Behaviour Support Team at Stratton Education Centre. These colleagues would work in close partnership with the Looked After Children Education Service with the key aim of maintaining Children in Care	Ongoing	£50K	Children's Services Strategic Plan Community Strategy CYPP 2008-11

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		in school, reducing fixed term exclusion and avoiding placement breakdown. The emphasis would be on proactive intervention and support. The total costs would be £50k, this would not only support the 2 key workers but would also allow some capacity for service delivery.			
4	Strategy & Commissioning	As mentioned earlier in the report one of the reasons the DSG allocation increased was due to an increase in the number of early years within the PVI section. During the recent funding review the Schools Forum agreed to fund the PVI section on a unit cost of £3.59 per hour. This means that the current budget allocation for the PVI section needs to be increased as the pupil numbers have increased. The financial impact would be (£3.59 x 12.5hrsx 38 weeks x 53.8) £92k.	Ongoing	£92k	
5	Schools & Learning	There are increasing numbers of children arriving in Swindon schools who have English as an Additional Language. An independent review, due to report in October 08, has been commissioned to assess those activities of the local authority, which are deliberately designed to raise standards for BME groups. The reviewer will be asked to offer advice on what more might be done by the local authority, and by schools, to improve the outcomes for BME groups and secure	Ongoing	£96k	Children's Services Strategic Plan Community Strategy CYPP 2008-11 LAA

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		greater value for money. The reviewer will be asked to make recommendations for how the strategy on raising achievement for these groups might be improved as well as options on where resources should be targeted. The recommendations are bound to have financial implications and it is anticipated that there will be a move towards pooled funding to enable the schools to commission the provision in future. If the final outcome is to move to a pooled arrangement the recommendation to the Forum is that an allocation totaling the same level as the current allocation devolved to schools for BME will be earmarked from this surplus (£80K), in addition to this if the outcome of the review incorporates the youth provision a further £16k will be required.			
6	Group Director & Schools & Learning	The Group Director Children has been working closely with the secondary heads to work on a policy of alternative provision. A consultant has been employed to carry out a review on the current provision within Swindon. It is proposed to target some of the surplus allocation to support this consultant as well as help implement a revised and more effective provision. The first phase of this project would focus on the secondary section only, however, once this provision has been implemented then the intention would be to roll this provision out into the primary section.	One off	£20k	Children's Services Strategic Plan Community Strategy CYPP 2008-11 LAA

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		<p>In order for this review to be successful and to free up the current system, there will be a requirement to invest some resources into this project. The current out of borough budget is under considerable pressure, 10 clients from Sept are at high risk of being placed in an out of borough provision. The estimated educational cost could be in the region of £560k. Work is ongoing to attempt to place support packages around these individuals to enable them to stay within the borough. This pressure has been reported in the monitoring report.</p>	Ongoing	£100k	
		<p>Linked to the above, two new projects are beginning from this September in Swindon. The Youth Education Project (YEP) is an exciting development that combines the best of two alternative education provisions to deliver a joint Youth Curriculum and Educational Attainment to a group of up to 35 vulnerable pupils at KS4 that have been referred by schools across Swindon. These young people include some at risk of permanent exclusion, some with identified SEN and some with significant social challenges. The aim is to support these young people to achieve their potential and to ensure that they are not NEET (not in education employment or education) when they leave school. To increase the</p>	Ongoing	£35k	

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		<p>impact of this provision for the young people involved it is proposed to support two week-long residential experiences. Each young person will also be offered an individual support plan or personalised educational package that may involve work experience/college based courses or training experiences. In order to support all of the above and to ensure that finance is not a barrier to providing high quality individual and group support to these vulnerable young people £36k is requested.</p> <p>In addition and separate to this an exciting proactive project aimed at significantly reducing permanent exclusion at KS3 is planned to begin with its first course in November 2008. This project based on a hugely successful model in place in Slough consists of a four-week intensive full-time course delivered to 12-14 pupils at risk of exclusion nominated by their secondary schools six times a year. Staffing and premises structures for this project are in place. The cost of placing a pupil on this course for a school has been agreed as £500. To support schools and the Local Authority graduated response in relation to pupils with Behaviour Emotional and Social Development difficulties it is proposed that the cost of the course is supported by £200 per pupil with a school contribution being £300 per</p>	Ongoing	£14k	

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		<p>pupil. Overall cost would be £14k each year.</p> <p>To place a pupil with SEN out of Swindon in a therapeutic residential setting can cost up to £160k a year (range between £120k – £160k). If we were able to provide therapeutic support within the Borough particularly for pupils with BESD, significant savings could be made and could also result in improved inclusive outcomes for this small vulnerable group. The allocation of £40k to support the purchase of therapeutic interventions for such pupils managed between St Lukes Special School and Stratton Education Centre could serve to reduce the rising trend in out borough placement and the related costs.</p>	Ongoing	£30k	
7	Chair Schools Forum	<p>The Swindon Forest School initiative began in 2004 with the aim of increasing physical activity by 1% pa. This activity is currently supported by sponsorship from Nationwide as well as training support provided by Great Western Community Forest. The current level of funding is just enough to keep Forest School to run a basic service.</p> <p>Currently 28% of all Swindon schools have qualified or training Forest School Leaders as well as many other qualified individuals that support this activity. There are</p>	Ongoing	£45k	

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		many outcomes that have a positive contribution to students including increased self-esteem, confidence, team building and communications just to name a few. The recommendation to Schools Forum is to bid for £45k each year for the following 3 years to support the expansion of this already successful project, thus enabling young people and schools in Swindon to benefit.			
8	Group Director	<p>The Swindon Young People's Empowerment Programme (SYEP) aims to train dispirited young children to be good human beings and engage in positive behaviour and learning. A review of the service has been carried out by an external evaluator from Worcester University who has stated that this service "turned around vulnerable children and young people, some of whom have now reached university, as self understanding which led to motivation that earned qualifications beyond their initial aspirations and expectations". Further details can be found at appendix b.</p> <p>The reason for this proposal is that the Tudor Trust currently support 50% of the costs of running the current level of service until April 2010, we are bidding for the</p>	Ongoing	£40K	

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		<p>other 50% (£40k) to ensure sustainability, so that these programmes reach the neediest children and are ultimately accessible to all children, teachers and parents.</p> <p>If the proposal is approved by the Forum, we will expand the scheme in at least 50% of Swindon schools by April 2010 via facilitator training programmes. Progress will be monitored in each school and the impact of the approach will be measured in 3 key areas (improvement in self worth, increased engagement in learning and positive behaviour and a desire to make a positive contribution in service to the community). If the Forum agrees to this funding, we will provide regular progress reports, if however, the funding is not approved we will have to consider closing this service before the end of the year.</p>			
9	Schools & Learning	<p>The SENRAP budget, as reported at the last Schools Forum meeting, is under considerably budget pressure due to the increase in the number of children who have Statements. The recommendation is to increase the budget by a further £80k.</p> <p>The SENRAP budget is used to specifically target</p>	Ongoing	£80k	Children's Services Strategic Plan Community Strategy CYPP 2008-11 LAA

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		<p>additional resources and support early intervention.</p> <p>The advantages of early intervention include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes through improved access to the curriculum. • Addressing problems earlier and more effectively thus preventing the need for many children and young people to go through the Statemending process. • Reducing the likelihood of the need for costly Out Borough placements. 			
10	Access & Provision	<p>Health & Safety on school sites is a key priority for both schools and the Local Authority, particularly bearing in mind relevant Health & Safety legislation and the recent Manslaughter Act. Health & Safety briefing sessions were held for all Head Teachers in June 2008 and feedback from those sessions identified the need for further briefings/training for Head Teachers, other relevant school staff and school Governors. A letter was sent to all Head Teachers in September 2008 as a follow-up to the Health & Safety briefings, identifying a range of issues, including events planned for late Autumn 2008 for School Premises Managers (or</p>	One off	£20k	Health and Safety legislation, Council's Health and Safety Policies, Children's Services Strategic Plan

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		<p>equivalent) and in Spring 2009 for Head Teachers.</p> <p>It is essential that these are effective, well-attended and well-presented events and are part of an ongoing programme of Health & Safety training. It is considered that these events should be delivered by a well-respected, external organisation that specialises in Health & Safety and work is currently going on to identify potential providers. There will obviously be a cost involved and the Authority does not have resources set aside for this purpose. There are two options that can be considered for funding these events, as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A charge is made to each school Funding is provided from the surplus DSG identified in this report.</p> <p>These two options have been assessed and there is concern about Option 1 that, apart from the administration involved, not all schools would necessarily be prepared to fund the charges involved. In addition, this would be an unsatisfactory option, where the Local Authority is requiring Head Teachers and other staff of Community and Voluntary-Controlled schools to attend such events.</p> <p>Bearing in mind the importance of Health & Safety on</p>			

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		school sites, Option 2 is the preferred way forward and this approach is strongly recommended. It is proposed that a sum of £20K is set aside to fund these two events.			
12	Schools	To delegate the balance to schools using the same method as the 2007/08 under spend or;	Ongoing	£214	
12	Schools	To delegate the surplus to schools using FSM as a method of allocation. This will contribute to the level of budget the DCSF expect local authorities to spend on deprivation	Ongoing		
Total				£961k	

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