TUESDAY 14 MAY 2019

BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT 2018-19 AND BUDGET UPDATE 2019-20

The final outturn for 2018/19 showed there was an in-year surplus of £308,000 and the deficit carried forward was reduced to £2.723m. The reason for the reduction was there was £751,000 of uncommitted Early Years block funding, £454,000 of unused Growth funding transferred to 2019-20, and a reduction in the costs, compared to projected, of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) of £400,000. The agreed contribution to the Early Help Service had not been taken.

Additional agreements for special schools and costs relating to out of borough placements added to the pressures on the budget. However, the forecast budget deficit for 2019-20 has increased from £3.6m to £4.3m. The projected in-year deficit of £372,000 has increased to £1.6m. This is due to the inclusion of the contribution to the Early Help service, the previous underspend on growth, an increase in EHCPs and the additional costs of out of borough placements. There may also be additional pressures for Resourced Units, the Pupil Referral Unit and for International New Arrivals.

Social Finance continue to work on the High Needs Block issues and will contribute to the proposed Recovery Plan which is to be ratified at the next meeting of the Schools Forum on 11 June 2019. There were concerns that there had been agreement from schools to transfer 1% from the Schools Block for one year, and that it was now being proposed for three years.

The criteria and allocation of the Growth fund is being reviewed.

SCHOOL BALANCES 2018-19

There has been an increase in the surplus balances of maintained schools and in the number of schools with a surplus. Members attributed this increase to the future funding uncertainty. The Local Authority are working with the schools with surplus balances and are not proposing to claw the surplus back from the schools.

SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

There have been some changes to the wording of the Scheme for Financing Schools.

FORWARD PLAN

The next meetings of the Schools Forum are on Tuesday 11 June, Wednesdays 11 September, 27 November 2019 and 15 January 2020.