

Oxfordshire County Council
Schools Forum – 4 February 2019

Schools Forum Budget for 2018-19

For Information and Decision

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To advise the Schools Forum of the budget for 2018-19, expenditure to date and projected carry forward at year end.

2. Recommendations/Actions/Decisions for Schools Forum

Schools Forum is asked to:

- 2.1 Note this report.
2.2 Forum members are asked to submit for payment all travel and expenses claims as soon as possible.

3 Expenditure projected to year-end (as at 22 January 2019)

3.1 The table below sets out the Schools Forum budget for 2018-19 and expenditure that has been incurred. It is, however, expected based on available information and few remaining meetings to be held that the budget will spend as shown. An underspend of £11,854 is projected for the financial year 2018-19.

	Budget £	Actual £	Commitments to year end £	Notes
Supply Cover	13,730		9,975	Supply cover for headteacher attendance [based on up to 7 Forum, 6 Working Group and 2 training meetings assuming 1 day for attendance at Forum and ½ day attendance for other meetings including contingency days. Daily rate £285].
Members expenses	4,700	279	650	Travel, child minding and incidental expenses for Forum members.
Supporting the Schools Forum	4,000	1,421	1,300	Includes clerking costs [basis 2 days per month].
Meeting expenses	3,000	3,584	937	Venue and catering costs [based on number of meetings and two ½ day training sessions].
Conferences	2,100		200	Attendance fees [assumed up to 8 conference days].
Training provision	2,000			Expenses relating to the training need of Forum members.
Consultancy	1,000			Specific project work undertaken

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	Budget £	Actual £	Commitments to year end £	Notes
				by outside agency.
Contingency	200	500		Forum elections, F40 subscription contribution
DSG Income	30,730cr	25,583cr	5,117cr	
Total Budget for 2018-19	0	19,799cr	7,945	
Underspend from 2017-18 ¹				
TOTAL	0	19,799cr	7,945	
Projected Carry Forward		11,854cr		

- 3.2 The budget plan for 2018-19 has been calculated to reflect the maximum number of, and attendance at, Forum and Sub-committee meetings expected in the financial year. Meetings have been generally budgeted at half day duration, though the two Forum meetings usually arranged to consider the schools funding model and associated approvals are expected to be of a day duration each and budgeted for accordingly. No inflation has been anticipated but both teaching and non-teaching staff received pay awards of between 1.5 and 3.5%. The increase in attendance and administrative costs will be borne by the Forum's budget. This is consistent, in the main, with general schools funding.
- 3.3 With effect from 1 April 2018 the funding for Schools Forum activities is no longer provided by specific contributions from the original three Dedicated Schools Grant's (DSG) blocks (Schools block, Early Years block and High Needs blocks). Schools Forum budget previously identified as falling under the Statutory function commitments category of funding items that the local authority, has with other similarly identified expenditure been transferred to a new specific DSG block called Central Schools Services block. Further detail of this new DSG block can be found in paper 4 of Forum meeting held on 22 November 2017.
- 3.4 With the increasingly shortening time scales between the issue of national funding information and the deadline for formula related decisions and recommendations to be made, it has been noted that is becoming difficult for headteachers to find sufficient time to read, digest and consult (preparation time) colleagues prior to full Forum meetings.

¹ Underspend from prior years £113,913 subject to separate discussions by Schools Forum.

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Therefore, at Schools Forum's November 2018 meeting it was agreed that a further half day attendance funding, to provide for staff cover, preparation time (reading, digesting and consulting) be included as part of the amounts claimable Forum headteachers attending full Forum meetings. The budgetary impact will be managed within the overall funding envelope available to the Schools Forum Budget. This change of reimbursement arrangement will be backdated to the start of this financial year. The Schools Forum expenses guidance has been updated accordingly.

- 3.5 The underspend from 2017-18 of £113,913 has been, with prior agreement of Schools Forum, carried forward and the potential use or uses of the surplus is was subject to separate on-going discussion at the Schools and High Needs Sub-committee. For clarity the prior years underspend has been removed from the above statement.
- 3.6 The Schools Forum budget will be reviewed annually. Budget plan for 2019-20 was agreed at 7 November 2018 meeting.
- 3.7 Further guidance on the use of this budget is given in Annex 1. The Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2010 require that "the authority must reimburse all reasonable expenses of members in connection with their attendance at meetings of the forum and charge expenses to the schools budget". The guidance has been amended to provide clarification (amendments and additions are underlined). The Schools Forum Chair remains arbitrator of any disputed claim.
- 3.8 As always with this paper, Forum members are asked to submit their travel and other expenses claims to the clerk as soon as possible.

4. Contact Details of Lead Officers/Authors

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact:

Nick Baggett, Education Finance Manager
Telephone Number: 07584174692
Email Address: nick.baggett@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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Annex 1

Schools Forum Expenses

This statement covers expenses incurred by members of the Schools' Forum and, where appropriate, individuals who may be co-opted onto the Forum, or any Sub-Committee set up by the Forum.

Travel: expenses for members of the Forum will mirror that for employees of the County Council. The current approved rates are as follows:

Car - 45 pence per mile for the first 10,000 miles, reducing to 25 pence per mile over 10,000 miles

Motorcycles - 24 pence per mile.

Bicycles - 20 pence per mile.

Car parking fees will be reimbursed.

Bus, train and other public transport fares will be reimbursed.

Actual cost of parking, with proof of parking fee paid, will be met.

Subsistence (overnight accommodation) will not be paid unless Forum member is attending an out-county meeting or conference on behalf of the Forum.

Supply cover costs: The cost of supply cover will be reimbursed to the school for attendance at Forum meetings, of nursery, primary, secondary and special headteachers. The reimbursement rate will be £285 per full day. For Schools Forum meetings of less than a full day's duration, reimbursement will be at the rate of one full day. All two-hour committee meetings will be reimbursed at ½ day rate unless meeting is longer and then reimbursement will be for a full day. Reimbursement will be based on attendance listing for each meeting and transfer made to school at year-end.

Loss of earnings: An allowance will be paid. Entitlement to this allowance is subject to the respective member incurring any loss of earnings or any individual expenses.

Observers will look to their nominating body for reimbursement of any expenses, which will not be rechargeable to the Forum.

Child care arrangements: Care costs will be reimbursed subject to a maximum of £10.00 per hour per dependant.

Elderly or dependant relatives care arrangements: Care costs will be reimbursed subject to a maximum of £10.00 per hour per dependant.

Other costs: Members may claim reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred when carrying out their duties, including telephone charges, photocopying, stationery, subsistence, printing costs (3 pence per sheet) and any other justifiable expenses.

Claims should be submitted to the Schools Forum Clerk.
The Schools Forum Chair will arbitrate any disputed claim.