



EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – INFORMATION ITEM

SUBJECT: BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23 (PERIOD 3)

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform Members of the projected 2022-23 outturn position for the Directorate of Education based on the most recent information available.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The report identifies projected under / (overspends) currently forecast for 2022-23 (full details attached in Appendix 1).

2.2 In summary the current projected outturn position for Education and Lifelong Learning is an overspend of £655k. The projected outturn position for Corporate Services is an underspend of £69k, consequently overall the projected outturn position for Education and Corporate Services is an overspend of £586k.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To ensure that Members are fully informed with regards to the 2022-23 projected revenue spends position for Education.

4.2 The Council Budget is based on the achievement of both expenditure and income targets. To ensure that these are met, and that the Council's financial integrity is maintained Directors are required to review income and expenditure trends.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The report deals with the budget monitoring information for the Education

Directorate. The revenue position is summarised in Appendix 1, with a breakdown split across 3 areas, Schools Related, Education Related and Lifelong Learning (LL) related respectively.

- 5.2 The projected outturn position is based on actual income and expenditure details to the end of June 2022, together with data used to forecast income and expenditure. Account is also taken of the outturn position for previous years and information available following discussions with Managers.
- 5.3 A net overspend of £655k is currently forecast for Education & Lifelong Learning, details are outlined below. The projected outturn position for Corporate Services is an underspend of £69k, consequently overall the projected outturn position for Education and Corporate Services is currently an overspend of £586k.
- 5.4 The significant variances in Education relate to the following:

	£'000 (Under / (Over))
Home to School / College Transport	(460)
School Covid Related	(269)
Net Other (Details in Appendix 1)	74
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Total	(655) Overspend

- 5.4.1 The variance on the Home to School / College Transport budget is the consequence of the required procurement exercise to renew contracts on 98 of our bus routes. The previous contracts were awarded in 2017. The contract period for each of the routes is 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years. All offers received were evaluated in line with the advertised evaluation criteria determined by the most economically advantageous tender based on lowest cost to the Council by matching demand for transport with the most efficient use of resources to minimise the number of vehicles required for service provision. It is important to point out that this additional cost relates to the period September 2022 to March 2023 only. Over a full financial year, the additional cost is estimated at £689k, circa £230k a school term. As part of the 2021/22 budget process, growth of £500k was provided to support an estimated increase in the anticipated forthcoming renewal of contracts (taxis and buses). Whilst the taxi contracts were renewed for September 2021 the bus contracts were extended for a further year and have been renewed recently for September 2022. In 2021/22, the outturn position for this budget reported an underspend of £240k, consequently it is anticipated that there is some capacity within the existing budget provision to support some of this additional cost. At this point in time the "worse" case scenario is reported with further work required to review anticipated spend. The last 2 years have been particularly challenging in the transport field due to the impact of covid on the Transport Industry and this continues with the global fuel and associated inflationary cost increases. Certainly, the position with this budget requires further review not only for the current financial year but for next year and future years thereafter.
- 5.4.2 Until 31st March 2022, Schools were able to submit claims to Welsh Government (through the Education Finance Team) against the Covid Hardship Fund Grant to support additional costs linked to Covid-19, in line with Welsh Government guidelines. Since 1st April 2022 this funding source has ended for schools, however 2 issues were raised by Headteachers as we transition. One was in relation to the

additional mid-day clean in our schools (instigated in the recent 2 years due to Covid-19) and the other was in relation to supply cover costs relating to teaching staff who are 26+ weeks into their pregnancy, with guidance supporting a risk assessment for such staff members to work from home.

5.4.3 Following discussions with Headteachers and at a senior level within the Authority, schools were advised that the Authority would continue to support and fund the additional mid-day clean to the end of the summer 2022 term. Schools were also advised that if they wish to continue with this arrangement from September 2022 that this would need to be part of each individual school's financial planning. In July, Headteachers were advised that the guidance relating to the workplace and pregnancy had changed, in particular with regards to the rule of automatically working from home after the 26 weeks. Schools have been issued with appropriate guidance with employers required to adopt an individualised approach to support pregnant workers through the risk assessment process. Consequently, schools have been advised that the Authority will support supply cover costs for pregnant staff to the end of the summer term and then to the end of the Autumn Term, with each claim for cover costs during the Autumn Term needing to be supported by a risk assessment that supports this arrangement.

5.4.4 At this point in time, it is difficult to quantify the actual cost of supporting the pregnancy related supply cover costs to the end of the Autumn Term. The current Covid-19 cost projection includes an estimated cost of £118k for cleaning and £151k for supporting pregnancy related cover requirements. This figure will be updated over the coming budget monitoring reports. As part of the Authority's budget planning for the current financial year its Covid-19 Earmarked Reserve was topped up to £5m. Whilst this is a significant figure further discussions will take place with the Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer around capacity to support this schools related cost from this reserve against other competing pressures within the Authority.

5.4.5 It is important to note that the financial projections in this report exclude a forecast outturn position for our schools.

5.4.6 At this early point in the financial year, it is important to reference the fact that there are several areas of concern, where the potential financial impact is not currently quantified within this report. Further work needs to be undertaken to understand the potential impact and quantify, most notably the following:

- End of the Welsh Government Hardship Fund – uncertainty with regards to the potential impact of Covid-19 over the winter months.
- Increasing energy prices – a particular issue for our schools, the issue across the Authority is currently under review.
- Impact of free school meal numbers going forwards.
- Impact of the 2022 pay award for Teaching & Non-Teaching Staff – this is currently under review with the Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer. Both pay offers are more than the 3%.

5.5 Conclusion

5.5.1 The projected outturn position for Education is currently an overspend in 2022-23 of £655k.

5.5.2 Full details are contained in the body of this Report.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The projected outturn position is based on actual income and expenditure details to the end of June 2022, together with data used to forecast future income and expenditure. Account is also taken of the outturn position for previous years and information available following discussions with Managers.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An IIA is not necessary for this Information Only Report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In summary, based on information currently available there is projected revenue overspend for Education & Lifelong Learning of £655k.
- 8.2 The most significant variance relates to the increased costs associated with school bus contracts for September 2022.
- 8.3 Overall the current projected outturn position for Education & Corporate Services is an overspend of £586k.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 In 2022-23 the Directorate will continue with the strategy of prudent vacancy management.
- 9.2 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2000.

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Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance
Cllr Teresa Parry, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Jo Rao, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
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Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Projected Revenue Outturn Figures 2022-23