



INFORMATION ITEM EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12TH MARCH 2024

SUBJECT: EDUCATION BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24 (PERIOD 9)

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform Members of the projected 2023-24 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 2023-24 (full details attached in Appendix 1).

2.2 In summary the current projected outturn position for Education is an underspend of £0.010m.

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 2023-24 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 December 2023, 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 underspend of £0.010m is currently forecast for Education, details are outlined below.
- 5.4 The larger variances in Education relate to the following:

	£'m (Under / (Over))
Home to School / College Transport	(0.950)
Pension Costs School Based Staff	0.179
Management & Support Service Costs	0.150
Vulnerable Learners	0.134
Early Years Central Team	0.267
Adult Education	0.105
Youth Service	(0.074)
Net Other (Details in Appendix 1)	0.199
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Total	0.010 Underspend

- 5.4.1 The projected outturn position for Home to School Transport continues to represent the worst-case scenario based on current contracts. This area of service remains the significant financial pressure in the current financial year. The projection is an increase on the £0.899m reported at period 7. This increase is largely due to the additional costs linked to the necessity to re-tender a small number of bus routes. A significant pressure relates to special education transport provision across all sectors of education. Further work is to be undertaken to review this area of service and the associated financial implications.
- 5.4.2 Over the last 2 financial years there has been an underspend on the budget for the Authority's on-going pension liability linked to pension costs for school-based staff. This position is linked to budget growth for schools as part of the Authority's budget planning and additional grant funding from Welsh Government. Whilst this underspend position is expected to continue in this current financial year, it is expected that this budget is unlikely to be sufficient as we move into future financial years and the number of posts in schools reduce. Any reductions in staffing numbers would be linked to reducing pupil numbers and or budget pressures.

- 5.4.3 The variance against Management & Support Services relates largely to in-year salary savings, one linked to a secondment to the end of the financial year and one due to a delay in recruitment as the requirements of the post were reviewed. This variance also includes additional grant income of £42k that has been received to support work linked to the ALN Reform, this funding ends in 2023-24.
- 5.4.4 A small variance of £0.134m (circa 1.09%) against the Vulnerable Learners budget relates largely to our EOTAS (Education Other Than at School) provision. This provision is currently under review with the development of provision at the old Pontllanfraith Comprehensive site, as part of the Authority's Sustainable Communities for Learning Strategy.
- 5.4.5 The underspend in our Early Years Team is directly linked to staff time supporting the grant funded areas of Flying Start, Early Years Expansion and the Childcare Offer. This variance relates to an opportunity to fund some of our staff costs from these grants in 2023-24.
- 5.4.6 In reference to the variance on our Adult Education provision, this is largely due to capacity through in year grant funding and some small savings across the service.
- 5.4.7 The projected overspend with regards to the Youth Service relates primarily to costs associated with Crumlin Institute, the Authority continues to work towards agreeing and executing a legal surrender of the lease with the landlord.
- 5.4.8 It is important to note that the financial projections in this report exclude a forecast outturn position for our schools.

5.5 **Conclusion**

- 5.5.1 The projected outturn position for Education is currently an underspend in 2023-24 of £0.010m
- 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 December 2023, 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 underspend for Education of £0.010m.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 In 2023-24 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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Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion and ALN
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Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
Cllr Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities
Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance
Cllr Teresa Parry, Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Brenda Miles, Vice Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Dave Roberts, Interim Finance Manager
Julie Baker, Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Nicola Hooper, Senior Accountant Education
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Officer
Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Projected Revenue Outturn Figures 2023-24