| West Berkshire Schools' Forum |  |
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| Title of Report: | Individual School Budgets 2015-16 |
| Date of Meeting: | $13^{\text {th }}$ July 2015 |
| Contact Officer(s) | Claire White |

## For Discussion

1. Summary
1.1 Appendix A shows the budgets submitted by maintained schools for 2015-16, alongside their closing balance 2014/15, budget share and pupil numbers.
1.2 Of the 74 budgets submitted:

|  | Number of <br> schools | \% of total | $2014 / 15$ <br> number |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Surplus budget | 54 | $73 \%$ | 56 |
| Balanced budget <br> (contingency nil or less than <br> $£ 2 \mathrm{k})$ | 16 | $22 \%$ | 15 |
| Deficit budget | 4 | $5 \%$ | 3 |

1.3 The schools with deficit budgets are:

|  | Opening <br> balance | Closing deficit <br> budget |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| John O'Gaunt Secondary | $-605,233$ | $\mathbf{- 9 6 7 , 0 3 0}$ |
| Long Lane Primary | 19,537 | $\mathbf{- 1 5 , 6 6 0}$ |
| Kintbury Primary | 26,913 | $\mathbf{- 3 , 0 1 0}$ |
| Purley | 9,039 | $\mathbf{- 2 4 , 0 6 0}$ |

## 2. John O'Gaunt School

2.1 Although the school has now moved to an 11 - 16 school following suspension of the $6^{\text {th }}$ form, has made a number of cuts to staffing including the leadership team, and sought other non staff savings, it still has an on-going shortfall of about $£ 500 \mathrm{k}$ per annum based on its current costs.
2.2 The options for the future operation of John O' Gaunt school are now receiving careful consideration from the Council's Management Board.
3. Long Lane Primary School
3.1 Due to the agreement reached between the LA, Purley Infants and Long Lane that Purley would become a Primary School, Long Lane's pupil numbers have fallen and a program of reorganisation and restructuring is being undertaken over a period of time, resulting in the deficit.
3.2 The school has sought advice from the Schools Accountancy team with regard to the financial issues they have to address, and have submitted their deficit recovery plan.
4. Kintbury Primary School
4.1 The deficit is the result of falling number of pupils on roll, two very small cohorts ( 9 in Year 4, and 14 in Foundation) progressing through the school, falling Minimum Funding Guarantee, imminent transfer to secondary school of a proportionately large number of children with a high level of needs resulting in redundancy of support staff, and the associated redundancy costs as a result of identifying these issues and the need to have a staffing restructure.
4.2 The school is receiving advice from the Schools Accountancy team with regard to finalising their deficit recovery plan.
5. Purley
5.1 The transition of Purley from an infant school to a primary school started in September 2013. The first year intake to year 3 was very low (8 pupils). The admission number was amended from 17 to 15 the following year (though had previously had year groups of about 20) which has impacted on the school's ability to combine classes to save on costs. The school also reports a high level of low level special needs which has also impacted the budget.
5.2 By completing the transition to a full primary and the standardising of year intakes at 15 will provide the ability to combine year groups into a more cost effective class structure, which the school expects will help recover its financial position.
5.2 The school is receiving advice from the Schools Accountancy team with regard to finalising their deficit recovery plan.
6. Other Observations
6.1 A similar number of schools to last year are setting a budget with no contingency or a minimal amount of less than £2k (16 schools), making robust budget monitoring and forecasting a crucial requirement to avoid an in year deficit. Where schools are starting the year with a high carry forward balance, this is quickly being diminished as costs continue to rise, yet funding rates per pupil remain static.
6.2 An increasing number of schools are forecasting deficits in 2016/17 if no action is taken, and as always, this will be reviewed with each individual school during the Autumn term. 19 schools have forecast a year 2 deficit of greater than £25k, compared to 15 schools in 2014/15 (though 8 schools are still to submit a forward budget plan, which is due by the end of the Summer term). However, the number of schools who actually end up submitting a deficit budget tends to reduce significantly, as what usually occurs is either a turnover in staff resulting in a reduction of the forecast costs, or as a result of the deficit forecast the school will have taken positive action to reduce their costs.

## Appendices

Appendix A - School budgets 2015-16

Appendix A


