Education Budget Monitoring Q1

Report being considered by: Schools' Forum

Date of Meeting: 12th October 2026

Report Author: Mollie McQuade

Item for: Discussion/Comment **By:** All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide an overview of the Education budget forecast reported for Quarter 1.

2. Recommendation

2.1 No decision to be made, no recommendation.

Is the Schools' Forum required to make a decision as part of this report or subsequent versions due to be considered later in the meeting cycle?	
Yes: ☐	No: ☒

3. Introduction and Background

3.1 The Q1 Education forecast shows net expenditure of £11.27m, resulting in an adverse variance of £1.8m against budget.

Net			
	2026/27 Budget **£m**	**Current Quarter Forecast** **£m**	**Variance to Budget** **£m**
Home To School Transport	5.43	5.72	0.29
Disabled Children	0.07	0.07	-
Mental Health & Behaviour Support Services	1.17	1.35	0.18
School Improvement & SEN services	2.23	3.00	0.77
Early Years Provision	0.09	(0.00)	(0.09)
Management & Strategy	0.67	1.15	0.48
Trading Services	(0.18)	(0.01)	0.17
Total	**9.47**	**11.27**	**1.80**

Table 1 Key:( ) Surplus or Income

3.2 Home to School Transport adverse variance of +£0.3m, primarily driven by an increase in Special Education Home to Schools transport costs.

3.3 School Improvements and SEN Services adverse variance +£0.8m: Broken down by i) Special Needs Assessment Team +£0.1m due to use of agency over and above planned establishment ii) +£0.4m School Improvement Team and Special Needs Assessment team as a result of investment in the local outcomes framework, and iii) Elective Home Education +£0.1m, salary transfer from DSG.

3.4 Management and Strategy adverse variance of +£0.5m, driven primarily by a capital salaries recharge reduction, based on a reassessment of allowable capital recharging in the team.

3.5 Traded Services adverse variance of +£0.2, +£0.1 due to the cessation of the Education Psychology buy back service and Emotional Health Academy buy back service. As well as +£0.1 due to a reduction in school Improvement buy-in from Schools.

4. Conclusion

4.1 At Q1 the Education service is forecasting a total adverse variance of £1.8m.The variance is primarily driven by increased SEN transport costs, investment in School Improvement and SEN services, reduced capital salary recharges, and lower traded service income.

5. Appendices

5.1 None