

## SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action

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For Information

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### **Brief Description of Item** (including the purpose / reason for presenting this for consideration by the Forum)

This report asks Forum members to further consider the Authority's proposals for retention of Schools, Central Schools Services and Early Years Block central and de-delegated items in the 2022/23 financial year, following the initial discussion had in the last Forum meeting and in advance of the 12 January meeting.

In addition to the continuation of existing funds, this report asks the Schools Forum to consider additional budget, funded from Central Schools Service Block and from the Early Years Block headroom, to be allocated in support of service pressures.

Also, in addition to the continuation of existing de-delegated funds, this report presents new information on the DfE's intended action (a consultation was published on 29 October and closed on 26 November), to reduce, by 50% in 2022/23, and then to cease at April 2023 the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant (SIMB) that is currently received by the Authority in support of maintained schools. Within the consultation, the DfE has put forward the view that local authorities should use de-delegation from maintained schools to replace the SIMB monies that are being reduced in 2022/23 and then removed from April 2023. This will represent a new de-delegated item from April 2022, which the Authority now must ask the Schools Forum to consider as part of the 2022/23 DSG budget setting round.

### **Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum**

An initial report on funds proposed to be held in 2022/23 was presented to the Schools Forum at the last meeting (13 October 2021, Document NM). From this report:

- Members representing maintained primary schools decided that de-delegation for the purposes of subscribing to Fischer Family Trust should continue from the Schools Block in 2022/23.
- Members did not request the review of any of the centrally managed funds presented in Document NM.

The Authority has requested feedback from schools and academies, on centrally managed funds, within the autumn 2021 consultations, including on the criteria / methodology for the allocation of Growth Funding, Falling Rolls Funding and de-delegated funds for maintained schools. Feedback on these consultations is reported back to this meeting under separate agenda items.

### **Background / Context**

Please refer to Document NM 13 October 2021, which was written to initiate consideration of centrally managed funds to be held in the 2022/23 financial year. Within this document, the Authority stated that we would like to have further conversations with the Forum regarding the sufficiency of the Central Schools Services Block budget for the Pupil Admissions service, with a view to increasing this budget in 2022/23 and on an on-going basis in response to service demand pressure.

### **Details of the Item for Consideration**

Appendices 1 - 3 attached to this report set out for the Forum's review the Authority's indicative proposals for centrally managed funds to be held within the Schools Block, Early Years Block and Central Schools Services Block in the 2022/23 financial year.

- Appendix 1 – presents line by line information by block of the funds proposed to be held, the Authority's recommendation on the values of these funds and how the 2022/23 proposed arrangements compare with 2021/22. This appendix also shows the balances that are forecasted to be held in each existing fund at the end of the 2021/22 financial year.

### **Details of the Item for Consideration**

- Appendix 2 – presents more detailed information on the contributions (and changes vs. 2021/22) proposed for de-delegated funds held for maintained schools within the Schools Block for the 2022/23 financial year. This appendix also shows in more detail the balances that are forecasted to be held in each de-delegated fund at the end of the 2021/22 financial year.
- Appendix 3 – lists for clarity the purposes for which the Authority can retain Central Schools Services Block monies for the former Education Services Grant funded statutory responsibilities the Authority holds in respect of all state funded schools and academies.

Within Appendices 1 and 2 are four recommendations for substantially adjusted or new funds in 2022/23, that were not presented to the Schools Forum at the last meeting. In summary, these are:

1. Schools Block – new De-Delegation from mainstream maintained primary and secondary schools for the purpose of directly replacing the grant monies that will be lost to the Local Authority as a result of the DfE's intended reduction of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant (SIMB). The total value of de-delegation in 2022/23 is currently estimated at £133,000, which represents an estimated new contribution per pupil of £4.29. Although the DfE has still to announce the outcomes of its consultation, we must currently plan on the basis that the DfE will go ahead. Should the DfE not go ahead with its proposal, we would not enact this de-delegation.
2. Early Years Block – a new contribution, at an initial value of £100,000 in 2022/23, for the purpose of increasing the Local Authority's capacity that is available to support the delivery of the early years function and entitlements, focusing, in particular, on communication, provider sustainability, quality, compliance and on the processes that are required for the effective delivery of the Early Years Single Funding Formula. This contribution is funded from the Early Years Block settlement. Including the £100,000, the total value of budget in 2022/23 that is proposed to be held within the Early Years Block for central support services is £304,000. This compares with £365,000 held in 2020/21.
3. Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) – we propose to increase the existing CSSB budget for the Pupil Admissions Service by £150,000 (on the 2021/22 budget base of £737,000) to secure additional capacity that is essential for the Local Authority to deliver effectively its statutory admissions function on an on-going basis. The £150,000 is funded from the budget headroom that is available within the CSSB settlement, when the full value of the monies that were added to the CSSB in 2021/22, for the former Teacher Pensions Grant for centrally employed teacher, is retained within the CSSB, rather than transferred into the High Needs Block (as it was in 2021/22).
4. Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) – we propose to fund a new budget of £140,000 in 2022/23 from the CSSB in support of the Local Authority's statutory education services planning (places planning) and consultation function. The £140,000 is funded from the budget headroom that is available within the CSSB settlement.

These four proposals are discussed individually in more detail in Appendix 4.

### **Implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (if any)**

Recommendations will have direct implications for the distribution of the Central Schools Services Block, Schools Block and Early Years Block.

### **Recommendations**

- (1) **Members are asked to note the information provided in the report.**
- (2) **Members are asked to consider whether any further information is needed to enable final recommendations and decisions to be taken / made on 12 January 2022 on the funding of centrally managed and de-delegated Early Years, Schools and Central School Services Block items in 2022/23.**

**List of Supporting Appendices / Papers** (where applicable)

Appendix 1 – Detailed Summary of Schools, Early Years and Central Schools Services Block funds.

Appendix 2 – Analysis of Per Pupil Contributions to Schools Block De-Delegated Funds & Forecasted carry Forward Balances.

Appendix 3 – Description of Statutory Duties permitted by the funded by the transferred ESG Centrally Retained Duties grant.

Appendix 4 – Further Information on the 4 new recommendations for 2022/23.

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