

SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action



For Information



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

This report asks the Schools Forum to review the position of Central Schools Services Block, Schools Block and Early Years Block central funds and de-delegated items for the 2023/24 financial year.

Members representing Maintained Primary Schools are asked to decide on de-delegation in 2023/24 for the purposes of purchasing subscriptions to Fischer Family Trust.

Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum

A final report on centrally managed funds to be held across the Schools, Central Schools Services and Early Years Blocks in the 2022/23 financial year was presented to the Forum on 12 January 2022.

The Schools Forum, in a separate report to this meeting, is asked to agree the publication of the primary and secondary consultation document, which asks for feedback on the continuation in 2023/24 of Schools Block de-delegated funds. This consultation also asks for feedback on the Growth Fund and on the Falling Rolls Fund. Feedback from the consultation will be considered by the Forum at the next meeting in December.

In making recommendations, back in 2017/18, secondary phase representatives agreed the cessation of de-delegation for the Maternity / Paternity 'insurance' scheme, Fischer Family Trust, Exceptional Circumstances and School Staff Public Duties and Suspensions from the secondary phase. Members are reminded that the de-delegated fund for Minority Ethnic School Support ceased on 1 May 2016 and the DSG's Contribution to School Improvement (our 'historic commitment') ceased at 1 September 2017. De-delegation from the primary phase for behaviour support ceased at 1 September 2018.

Background / Context

Forum Members are reminded that the Central Schools Services Block was established within the DSG framework at April 2018. Some centrally managed funds, previously held within the Schools Block, have now been transferred into this Block. As such, these funds should no longer be seen as 'top-slices' from primary and secondary formula funding. They are allocations via a national DSG formula to support the statutory functions authorities hold for all schools and academies. The table below summarises the centrally managed funds that were agreed from the 2022/23 DSG (excluding monies allocated from brought forward balances and funds held initially and then delegated during the year within the Early Years Block e.g. EYPP and EYIF).

Fund	Schools Block	Central Schools Services Block	Early Years Block	Total
Copyright Licences	n/a	£367,500	£32,981	£400,481
Growth Fund (net of recoupment)	£1,051,498	n/a	n/a	£1,051,498
Falling Rolls Fund (Primary)	£0	n/a	n/a	£0
Schools Forum costs	n/a	£11,000	n/a	£11,000
Pupil Admissions	n/a	£931,300	n/a	£931,300
Statutory & Regulatory Duties	n/a	£1,559,343	n/a	£1,559,343
Education Access Officers	n/a	£472,000	n/a	£472,000
Education Planning & Early Years	n/a	£140,000	£100,000	£240,000
Early Years PVI Area SENCOs	n/a	n/a	£204,000	£204,000
DD - FSM Eligibility Assessments	£47,047	n/a	n/a	£47,047
DD - Fischer Family Trust	£27,229	n/a	n/a	£27,229
DD – School Improvement	£133,000	n/a	n/a	£133,000
DD - School Maternity / Paternity	£476,746	n/a	£73,254	£550,000
DD - Trade Union Facilities Time	£134,335	n/a	£15,647	£149,982
DD - Trade Union Health and Safety	£20,528	n/a	£2,391	£22,919
DD - Public Duties & Suspensions	£21,844	n/a	£3,356	£25,200
DD - Re-Org: Safeguarded salaries	£14,842	n/a	n/a	£14,842
DD – Re-Org: Deficit Budgets	£0	n/a	n/a	£0
DD - Exceptional Costs & SIFD	£61,300	n/a	n/a	£61,300
Totals	£1,988,369	£3,481,143	£431,629	£5,901,141

Background / Context (continued)

The table below summarises the per pupil contributions from the Early Years Block and from maintained schools within the Schools Block to the funds marked as 'de-delegated' ('DD') in the previous table.

2022/23 De-delegated Funds	Early Years £app	Primary £app	Secondary £app
Fischer Family Trust	n/a	£1.16	n/a
Schools Improvement	n/a	£4.29	£4.29
School Maternity / Paternity	£20.29	£20.29	n/a
Trade Union Facilities Time	£4.33	£4.33	£4.33
Trade Union Health and Safety	£0.66	£0.66	£0.66
Public Duties & Suspensions	£0.93	£0.93	n/a
Re-Org: Safeguarded salaries	n/a	£0.59	£0.14
Re-Org: Deficit Budgets (paused)	n/a	£0.00	n/a
Exceptional Costs & Schools In Financial Difficulty	n/a	£2.61	n/a
Total £app maintained schools	£26.21	£34.86	£9.42
FSM Eligibility Assessments (Per FSM Ever 6)	n/a	£5.80	£5.14

Appendix 1 provides a summary of the comparison of our funds versus those held by other local authorities in the 2022/23 financial year.

Details of the Item for Consideration

The information contained in this report is presented to initiate the School Forum's annual review of centrally managed and de-delegated funds held within the Central Schools Services, Schools and Early Years Blocks. Forum will be required to make its recommendations and take its decisions on 2023/24 financial year funds on 11 January 2023. An update to this report will be presented to the Forum in December. **In particular, at this stage, Forum Members are asked to consider whether / what further information is needed. Owing to timescales set by Fischer Family Trust, it is necessary to ask Members representing Maintained Primary Schools to decide at this meeting on de-delegation in the 2023/24 financial year for the purposes of purchasing subscriptions to Fischer Family Trust.**

General Parameters and Expectations for 2023/24 Financial Year Funds

It is anticipated that:

- Forum will not wish to revisit decisions that have been made in previous years to cease specific centrally held and de-delegated funds.
- Forum will wish to continue the general framework of de-delegation from maintained schools, as is currently agreed, whilst further considering the values of de-delegated funds that are held in 2023/24.
- Forum will continue to agree to the apportionment, across the blocks on the basis of pupil numbers, of the DfE-set copyright licences cost.
- Forum will agree to continue the 'pass back' of funds already allocated to the Authority within the Central Schools Services Block, as a result of Forum decisions taken in previous years.
- Forum will agree to uplift, for pay award / inflation, Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) funds and centrally managed funds within the High Needs Block (HNB) and Early Years Block (EYB). The uplifts in CSSB funds will be afforded by the CSSB settlement (not by transferring funds from other DSG blocks).
- Forum will continue the policy of managing any overall over-spending in CSSB budgets, initially, by writing this off from the value of CSSB surplus balance previously transferred into the Schools Block.
- Forum will support continuing to charge a proportion of the cost of centrally managed high needs services, relating to early years aged children, to the Early Years Block, whilst further considering the value of this charge in 2023/24.
- The Schools Block Growth Fund for 2023/24 will be set at a value sufficient to cover anticipated costs. It is anticipated that no new budget will be taken for the cost of new growth at September 2023 in the primary phase, with ring-fenced Schools Block brought forward surplus balance being available.
- The primary phase Falling Rolls Fund will continue within the Schools Block, but will be financed from the ring-fenced brought forward balance rather than by taking new budget from the 2023/24 DSG allocation.
- The remaining costs of safeguarded salaries, incurred by the re-organisation of maintained schools, will continue to be funded via de-delegation within the Schools Block on an actual reducing costs basis.
- As Forum has recently reviewed the Authority's Trade Unions Facilities Time arrangements, these arrangements will continue in 2023/24 at the existing agreed rate of per pupil contribution.
- Forum will continue to support the retention of a de-delegated fund to meet any cost of deficit balances held by maintained primary schools that convert to academy status under sponsored arrangements.

Details of the Item for Consideration (continued)

- Forum will support the retention of a de-delegated fund to replace the ceased School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant (SIMB), whilst further considering the value of this fund in 2023/24.
- The Forum will not wish to newly de-delegate from the Schools Block for the purposes of subscribing all maintained primary and secondary schools en-mass to the DfE's Risk Protection Arrangement.
- The surplus balance of de-delegated funds carried forward will continue to be ring-fenced and will be deployed in support of managing the annual costs of these funds, as well as in reducing the value of the on-going (new-year) contributions that are required from maintained schools. A total balance of £1.106m across the Schools and Early Years Blocks was brought forward from 2021/22. The total balance forecasted to be held at the end of 2022/23 will be presented to the Forum in December.

Central Schools Services Block 2023/24

The Authority's Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) DSG allocation is increasing by 2.23% per pupil in 2023/24. Our historic commitments lump sum however, is reduced from £225,150 to £180,115. The net total of our CSSB allocation for 2023/24 is currently estimated to be £3.543m, subject to October 2022 pupil numbers.

The table below shows the values of the commitments that are present within the CSSB, as a result of decisions taken previously by the Forum, and that are carried forward into 2023/24. The values of the funds shown below for 2023/24 include estimated increases for pay award / inflation, which will be funded from the CSSB settlement. The cost of copyright licences is estimated and will be confirmed by the DfE in December.

Commitment Heading	2022/23	2023/24	Difference
Copyright Licences	£367,500	£378,525	+ £11,025
Schools Forum costs	£11,000	£11,600	+ £600
Pupil Admissions	£931,300	£978,000	+ £46,700
Statutory & Regulatory Duties	£1,559,343	£1,532,211	- £27,132
Education Access Officers	£472,000	£496,000	+ £24,000
Education Services Planning	£140,000	£147,000	+ £7,000
Total Central Schools Services Block 2023/24	£3,481,143	£3,543,336	+ £62,193

As a reminder, in 2022/23, the Forum increased the CSSB budget for Pupil Admissions and also agreed a new contribution to Education Services Planning. All other CSSB budgets were simply adjusted for inflation / pay awards, to the extent that this was affordable within the 2022/23 CSSB settlement. The Authority anticipates that, for 2023/24, the Forum will agree to continue the 'pass back' of the funds that are set out above and that are already allocated to the Authority. The Authority proposes that, as in 2022/23, the full value of the CSSB settlement is allocated to CSSB activity. Prior to 2022/23, we transferred a small value of CSSB funding to the High Needs Block, in support of pressures within this Block. However, due to the limited 2023/24 settlement, the continuing reduction in historic commitments funding, and the impact on CSSB income of reducing numbers of pupils in mainstream schools and academies, our CSSB is under greater and increasing financial pressure. This can be seen simply in the table above, in the necessity to reduce the CSSB budget for Statutory and Regulatory Duties in 2023/24 in order to avoid overspending against the estimated £3.543m CSSB allocation that will be available to us. We carried forward £0.231m of surplus balance within the CSSB at the end of the 2021/22 financial year. Subject to the spending position in 2022/23, we are likely to propose that a proportion of this balance is allocated in support of the 2023/24 CSSB budget. We will discuss this further with the Schools Forum in December / January.

Also for the Forum's awareness, as we raised at the Forum's 14 September meeting, there currently is no increase in CSSB funding specifically in response to the new statutory attendance responsibilities that are being placed on local authorities. The absence of additional monies here is a particular point of concern, and we are aware that representations are currently being made to the DfE on this in relation to "new burdens".

Maintained Schools De-Delegated Funds - Introduction

De-delegation is a mechanism through which contributions, for centrally managed funds and services, can be collected from all maintained schools within a specific phase. The cessation of de-delegation would not itself prevent the existence of centrally managed services. Where buy in by academies remains strong, and would be strong from maintained schools, services could continue on a traded services model.

Members are reminded that the Schools Forum has previously established the principle that the values of contributions per pupil to some de-delegated funds will not be increased in value on the previous year simply to compensate for the loss in budget resulting from the conversion of maintained schools to academy status i.e. all things being the same, as schools convert to academies, the cash values of de-delegated funds will reduce, with any gap in funding as a result of this reduction being recovered through the trading of services. This principle affects the following funds that are currently de-delegated from primary & secondary phases: Trade Union Facilities Time, Trade Union Health and Safety Rep Time and FSM Eligibility Assessments.

Details of the Item for Consideration (continued)

We have previously highlighted to the Schools Forum that the rate of conversion in Bradford of maintained schools to academy status may be such that consideration may need to be given, at an appropriate time, to whether de-delegation remains effective and efficient. The Authority would generally expect, and recommend, the Forum to continue de-delegation in 2023/24 where there is still evidenced value for money, critical mass (a sufficient number of maintained schools) and / or where the framework is already in place for academies to buy into centrally managed arrangements, such as for FSM eligibility assessments and for trade union facilities time. For the 2023/24 financial year, de-delegation cannot be applied to a school that has converted to academy before 2 April 2023. In addition, de-delegation must cease, from 1 September 2023, for any school that converts between 2 April and 1 September 2023. So, there is both a year on year impact as well as an in year impact on the values that can be taken to continue to support the cost of de-delegated funds.

In terms of the Authority's recommendations to the Schools Forum for the 2023/24 financial year:

De-Delegation: FSM Eligibility Assessment

The Local Authority recommends that de-delegation is continued from both the primary and secondary phases for Free School Meals (FSM) Eligibility Assessment, at the existing 2022/23 per FSM values, with contributions continuing to be taken using FSM Ever 6 data.

De-Delegation: Trade Unions Facilities Time

As the Forum reviewed in some detail (in 2018) the Authority's Trade Unions Facilities Time arrangements, and as buy into these arrangements from academies remains strong, the Authority recommends that de-delegation continues from all phases in 2023/24. The per pupil cost of these arrangements in 2021/22 was reduced by 5%, from £5.26 in total (for both facilities and health and safety time) to £5.00. The Authority expects to continue charging at the reduced rate of £5.00 per pupil in 2023/24.

De-Delegation: Maternity / Paternity 'Insurance' Scheme & Suspensions / Public Duties

The Local Authority recommends that the de-delegated fund for maternity / paternity insurance is continued for maintained nursery schools and for the primary-phase in 2023/24, with contributions set at a value to meet anticipated costs. Further work is taking place, but it is currently estimated that the price of the scheme will be in the region of £26.40 per pupil (compared with £20.29 in 2022/23). This price is after the release of £0.10m of carry forward balance and will provide a total estimated budget of £0.75m. The cost of this scheme is estimated, and will be substantially affected by both the pay awards as well as by the number of claims.

In recent years, whilst the total cash cost of the scheme has reduced, part of the reason for the increasing per pupil charge is that the cost has not reduced at the same rate as the loss of contribution from primary schools that have now converted to academy. Members representing maintained primary schools will be aware of the warnings that have been given previously about the viability of current arrangements for supporting maternity / paternity costs. We have warned, as happened in the secondary sector, that we may be moving towards the position where arrangements are no longer financially efficient or viable. This is due to the growth in costs at the same time as a reducing number of maintained primary schools. It is recommended that the maternity / paternity scheme does remain in place in 2023/24, because we still have 'critical mass' and also because we have a ring-fenced brought forward balance available to support the scheme's overall costs. However, the continuation of the scheme after 2023/24 will need to be reviewed.

The Authority recommends that de-delegation also continues in 2023/24 from maintained nursery and maintained primary schools for the suspensions / public duties fund, at the current per pupil value of £0.93.

De-Delegation: Exceptional Circumstances, SIFD and Academy conversion (deficit budgets)

De-delegation continued in 2022/23 to provide a fund to support maintained primary schools that may face exceptional circumstances. This fund is allocated according to criteria that are agreed with the Schools Forum. The Authority recommends that de-delegation for this purpose continues for the primary phase in 2023/24. This will be necessary, in particular, where the Authority / Schools Forum wishes to use the existing criteria to support maintained primary schools that are resolving exceptional budget issues related to under-subscription.

Primary maintained members established in 2017/18 a de-delegated fund to be available specifically to meet the cost of any deficit balances held by maintained primary schools that convert to academy status under sponsored arrangements. The first (and only) allocations against this fund were presented to the Forum in May 2019. The Authority has subsequently recommended, since 2020/21, that the de-delegation of additional funds for this purpose be paused. This continues to be the Authority's recommendation for 2023/24. The ring-fenced de-delegated fund carry forward balance would be used, if necessary, to meet any deficit costs.

Details of the Item for Consideration (continued)

De-Delegation: Fischer Family Trust Subscription (FFT)

In 2022/23, the Authority has continued to facilitate the subscription of the primary phase to FFT. The secondary phase, and other phases, are already required to subscribe to FFT directly, rather than purchasing through the Authority. Maintained primary schools have been charged £1.16 per pupil via de-delegation. Primary academies have also been able to subscribe to FFT via the Authority, on an individual optional basis, charged by invoice at the same £1.16 per pupil.

De-delegation for the purposes of subscribing all maintained primary schools to the FFT software has previously been established in recognition of the value of this software and of the significant savings (and value for money) that collective purchasing has delivered, when the engagement with the software is high. The usage of the FFT software however, has changed in recent years, and most recently has also been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is appropriate that the Schools Forum now reviews de-delegation, and whether the Authority should continue in 2023/24 to facilitate a District-wide primary-phase subscription, with this financed in the majority via de-delegation from the maintained primary phase.

It is important to emphasise that, was the Schools Forum to decide not to continue de-delegation in 2023/24, the Authority would cease to facilitate subscription to FFT. This would mean that all schools and academies that wished to subscribe would do so directly. The Authority does not financially benefit from facilitating subscription. The Authority's view therefore, focuses on value for money for maintained schools and academies.

Owing to timescales set by Fischer Family Trust, it is necessary to ask Members representing Maintained Primary Schools to decide now on de-delegation in 2023/24 for the purposes of purchasing subscriptions to Fischer Family Trust on behalf of all maintained primary schools.

We have sent relevant members, prior to this meeting, some further information to help them take their decision. Please note that some of this is commercially sensitive and is not therefore, set out in this report.

School Improvement (SIMB Grant Replacement and School Improvement Support for Maintained Schools)

Since 2017, local authorities have received from the DfE a School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant (SIMB), to support their "core" school improvement activities, with the amount received calculated to be proportionate to each authority's number of maintained schools. The DfE is ceasing this Grant at March 2023, with the value allocated in 2022/23 already reduced by 50%. In 2021/22, the Authority received £285,854 in SIMB Grant. So far in 2022/23, we have received £51,275, and we estimate we will receive a further £65,000 for the period September 2022 to March 2023. A total of £116,275.

The DSG Regulations have been adjusted to permit local authorities to fund all improvement activities, including the core improvement activities previously funded by the SIMB Grant, via de-delegation of funds from maintained schools' budget shares, with the agreement of their Schools Forum or with the agreement of the Secretary of State, in instances where the Schools Forum does not agree. Effectively, authorities are required now to charge maintained schools for their school improvement support, with the DfE's view being that this approach brings maintained schools in line with the academies sector.

With the agreement of the Schools Forum, we initially de-delegated a sum of £133,000 from maintained primary and secondary schools for the 2022/23 financial year, with contributions taken at £4.29 per pupil. Adjusting for the conversion of maintained schools up to September 2022, the final sum de-delegated in 2022/23 is £122,060. Added to the SIMB Grant, a total of £238,335 (still estimated) is available to the Authority in this current financial year.

Within the 2023/24 DSG budget setting cycle, we will need to agree the value of de-delegation for school improvement support, in the context of the full cessation of the SIMB Grant. On current estimates, inclusive of academy conversions up to 1 October, retaining a contribution of £4.29 per pupil would only produce a budget of £112,000 in 2023/24, with this split £89,000 primary and £23,000 secondary. We would expect that this budget would reduce further following additional academy conversions between now and September 2023.

The Local Authority has a programme of monitoring, intervention and support. In 2022/23, the Authority is using the 50% reduced SIMB Grant, combined with the replacement 50% monies available following new de-delegation, to continue this programme for the period April 2022 to March 2023.

Without the continuation of funds via de-delegation, the Authority will not have the resources on an on-going basis to continue to financially support school improvement in maintained schools, as it does currently. In this context, whilst the decision on de-delegation is one for the Schools Forum, was the Forum to not approve any de-delegation, it is very likely that the Authority would need to consider an approach to the Secretary of State. We anticipate however, that the discussion with the Forum will more focus on funding the right quantity and type of school improvement support, and reviewing the impact and value for money of this support.

Details of the Item for Consideration (continued)

A large proportion of the Authority's current programme allocates monies to reimburse schools that provide peer-to-peer school-led support for maintained schools. A good proportion of the programme also provides maintained schools with support for governance. Key activities are:

- Induction of new headteachers (support for each new headteacher of a maintained school from an experienced and success Headteacher Partner).
- Support for interim / acting headteachers (support for each new headteacher of a maintained school from an experienced and success Headteacher Partner).
- Curriculum support for middle leaders in primary schools and subject heads in secondary schools.
- Support to Schools Causing Concern, with the support model activities split between the Local Authority and a partner school.
- Leaders of Governance support schools where governance needs development, challenge and modelling of good practice.
- Advice to governing bodies in difficulty.

The Authority's published Schools Causing Concern (intervention) guidance is at the base of the Authority's approach here. Further information on this is published on Bradford Schools Online and Forum members are recommended to review this: <https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/Schools/CMSPage.aspx?mid=3527>

In terms of allocation, the Authority's academic year SIMB programme has previously typically estimated the following:

1. Induction of new headteachers – 5 days support for each new headteacher of a maintained school, from an experienced and successful headteacher partner. Estimated at 6 schools at £2,500 per school. Total of £15,000 per year.
2. Support for interim or acting headteachers – 5 days support for each interim or acting headteacher of a maintained school from an experienced and successful headteacher partner. Estimated at 3 schools at £2,500 per school. Total of £7,500 per year.
3. Support to bring about rapid improvements in maintained schools causing concern. The model for each school will be bespoke, but typically will include leadership support, teaching support and mentoring and support for governance, delivered by a partner school, and additional monitoring by an Authority advisor and support from other consultants (such as early years), with monitoring through school review days. Allocation is decided against a costed improvement plan, which is submitted to Authority's Schools Causing Concern Group and which is then monitored through the Authority's Scrutiny Group meetings that take place with the school's headteacher and chair of governors. Estimated at 10 schools at c. £15,000 per school. Total of £150,000 per year. This is the largest single area of use of funding.
4. Additional support:
 - a. Delivered by Leaders of Governance, to support schools where governance requires support, challenge and modelling of good practice. Estimated at up to 1 year's support (for 8 meetings) for 10 schools at £2,400 per school. Total of £24,000 per year.
 - b. Additional advice to governing bodies in difficulty. Estimated at £1,000 per school for 10 schools. Total of £10,000 per year.
 - c. Core governance support (proportion of governance officer salary to support the delivery of the School Improvement Support programme). Estimated at £25,000. Total of £25,000 per year.
 - d. Curriculum support for middle leaders in primary schools and for subject heads in secondary schools. Estimated at £25,000 for primary-phase and £25,000 for secondary-phase. Total of £50,000 per year.

To its fullest extent, this programme would cost c. £282,000. However, the programme is based on estimates of delivery. But, even not at its fullest extent, this current programme would cost substantially more than the funds that would be generated by continuing de-delegation in 2023/24 at £4.29 per pupil.

The Schools Forum has previously requested that the Authority provides further information on the impact of this school improvement support programme. This assessment, alongside further information on the actual cost (rather than planned) of the programme in 2021/22, and anticipated cost for 2022/23, will be presented to the Forum in the December meeting. The primary purpose of this report is to remind Forum members of the requirement to decide on these arrangements within the 2023/24 DSG cycle, and to give members the opportunity to ask further questions or to ask for additional information.

Details of the Item for Consideration (continued)

Early Years Block - Central Funds Annual Review

We have previously presented benchmarking information to the Schools Forum, which has evidenced that we are a relatively low central retainer of funds within the Early Years Block, when we compare ourselves with other authorities and with relevant averages. Forum members will also be aware of the regulatory restriction within the Early Years Block, which requires that a minimum 95% of 3&4-year-old entitlement funding be delegated to providers, via our Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) and Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund (EYIF), meaning that a maximum of 5% of such funds can be spent otherwise, including on centrally managed services that support the delivery of the entitlements, and on supporting rates of funding for the 2-year-old entitlement.

As we reported to the Forum in January, 97.2% of our estimated 2022/23 3&4-year-old entitlement funding (excluding the allocation of brought forward balances) will be passed-through to providers; meaning that we are well within the 95% requirement. The latest Early Years Block benchmarking for 2022/23 has just been published, and we will assess and present this in December, as part of the further information that will support our annual review of Early Years Block centrally managed funds. Our initial assessment is that we continue to be a low central retainer. In the context of the current financial climate, including the significant budget challenge that faces the Local Authority, we wish to ensure, whilst being very aware of the need to maximise the funding rates for entitlement providers, that the Early Years Block appropriately contributes to the Authority's early years function, especially where the Authority's non-DSG budget currently supports this function, in addition to DSG funds. We wish to discuss this further with the Schools Forum within the 2023/24 DSG cycle, and will present a further report in December. We also expect to present our consultation on the 2023/24 EYSFF to the Schools Forum in December, which will set out proposed provider rates of funding. The Authority is currently reviewing whether the contribution that the Early Years Block makes to the cost of the Authority's early years and entitlement support function should increase in 2023/24, using some of the flex (between 97% and 95%) to do so. In 2022/23, we agreed a new contribution to the Authority's function, of £0.100m. We are reviewing whether to propose that this contribution is increased.

The table on the first page of this report shows the funds that have been held centrally within the Early Years Block in the 2022/23 financial year. A total of £0.432m. Prior to April 2021, the costs of the Area SENCOs (supporting Private, Voluntary and Independent providers), and of the contribution to early years SEND support services, were charged to the Early Years Block. In seeking to protect the Early Years Block, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we transferred these costs on an exceptional basis to be met by the High Needs Block, with the intention to transfer the costs back at an appropriate time. Within the 2022/23 planned budget, we transferred the cost of the Areas SENCOs (£0.204m) back to the Early Years Block, but the cost of the contribution to early SEND support services continued to be met by the High Needs Block. In support of managing the financial pressure that is now increasing within the High Needs Block, subject to affordability, we are minded to return the contribution to early years SEND support services (£0.332m) to the Early Years Block in 2023/24. We will discuss this further in a report to the Forum in December.

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 in 2023/24.

Recommendations

- (1) The Forum is asked to review the position of Central Schools Services Block, Schools Block and Early Years Block central funds and de-delegated items, to indicate what further consideration should be given / review work should take place, in advance of making final recommendations for 2023/24 at the January 2023 meeting.**
- (2) Members representing Maintained Primary Schools are asked to decide on de-delegation in 2023/24 for the purposes of purchasing subscriptions to Fischer Family Trust.**

List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)

Appendix 1 – Benchmarking of Funds

Contact Officer (name, telephone number and email address)

Andrew Redding, Business Advisor (Schools),
01274 432678
andrew.redding@bradford.gov.uk