

Report to: Schools Forum

Date of meeting: 16 September 2022

Report By: Director of Children’s Services, Alison Jeffery

Title: De-delegating budgets for Primary and Secondary maintained schools

Purpose: To advise Forum which budgets were de-delegated by schools in 2022/23 and seek approval on de-delegated budgets for 2023/24.

Recommendations:

- 1. The Primary and Secondary maintained Schools Forum Representatives are asked to decide which services should be provided centrally by the Authority for 2023/24.**

1. Background

- 1.1 Since 2013/14 the Department for Education (DfE) has required that Schools Forum agree to de-delegate budgets for certain services provided centrally by the Local Authority (LA). The DfE have confirmed that this arrangement will continue for financial year 2023/24.
- 1.2 The funding is automatically delegated to Academies who can choose to access some of the services by purchasing from East Sussex Services to Schools or source services from other providers.
- 1.3 The services to be considered for de-delegation in 2023/24 are shown below and Schools Forum can agree to de-delegate a service in 2023/24 where it chose not to in 2022/23.
- contingencies
 - behaviour support services (please see appendix B)
 - administration of free school meals
 - jury service and union business

Please note Support for minority ethnic pupils is subject to a 2 year agreement from 2022/23 and therefore will not be reviewed until next year’s de-delegation.

- 1.4 For 2022/23, the following decisions were agreed at schools forum on de-delegated services.

	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
	De-delegated in 2022/23	De-delegated in 2022/23
Contingency	Yes	Yes
Behaviour support services	Yes	No
<i>Support for minority ethnic pupils*</i>	Yes	No
Administration of Free school meals	Yes	Yes
Jury service and union business	Yes	Yes

*subject to a 2 year commitment in 2021/22

- 1.5 Only members of the Schools Forum representing maintained primary and secondary schools are entitled to vote on the 2023/24 proposals. In accordance with regulations, representatives of each phase will vote separately, however it is possible that a decision not to de-delegate in one phase may affect the viability of provision overall and the withdrawal of the service for all phases.

2. The Services

- 2.1 Descriptions of the services which can be provided centrally to maintained schools are set out below in Appendix A and B.
- 2.2 The De-delegated funding for 2022/23 to schools and academies for these services is summarised in Appendix C.
- 2.3 The calculation of amounts to be de-delegated from each school must be linked to factors within the funding formula. The calculations, applied in 2022/23, will continue for 2023/24 using the following basis:

De-delegated Heading	Formula Factor
Contingency	Per Pupil Amount
Behaviour Support Services	20% Per Pupil Amount 11% Free School Meals 22% Free School Meal Ever6 22% IDACI 25% Prior Attainment
Free meal eligibility	Free School Meal Numbers
Support for Ethnic Minority Pupils	50% Per Pupil 50% Per EAL Pupil
Jury service and union duties	Per Pupil Amount

- 2.4 In January 2022, we reported to Schools Forum on the DfE's proposal to reduce and remove the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant and how this would be managed by the Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service in 2022-23. The 50% reduction of the grant for this year has been managed within the service's own resources. The grant will be removed completely from the start of the 2023/24 financial year in April 2023. School improvement in East Sussex is delivered in partnership with schools and we have worked with school leaders over several years to build capacity for school-led improvement through the Primary and Secondary Boards. The Boards are currently allocated resources by the LA to commission alliance partners/external advisers and specific projects to improve school performance.
- 2.5 During this term, members of the Boards will start to consider how they should be developed and resourced for the 2023/24 academic year onwards. This will need to take account of the reduced funding available from the local authority due to the removal of the grant.

2.6 A further report will be brought to Schools' Forum to set out proposals for how the removal of the Grant from 2023-24 financial year will be managed within this wider context and may include a request for de-delegated funds.

3 Recommendations

3.1 The Maintained Primary and Secondary representatives on the Schools Forum are requested to agree the services to be de-delegated in 2023/24, as per paragraph 1.3.

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Description of De-delegated services

Appendix A

The framework for de-delegated budgets is set within the principles of shared responsibility between schools for all children and mutual support across all schools. The model allows for all maintained schools to have certainty of access to support at the point of need from services that continue to operate and provide support in a well managed and cost effective way.

Contingencies

Contingencies can be held for a limited range of circumstances

- Exceptional unforeseen costs which it would be unreasonable to expect governing bodies to plan for
- Schools in financial difficulties
- Additional costs relating to new, re-organised and closing schools
- Managing extra ordinary personnel matters

It is recommended that maintained schools continue to fund a contingency which will be administered by the Local Authority for the approved purposes.

If schools decide not to have a central contingency, they will need to ensure that all schools are able to make any extraordinary payments this can put significant additional strain on individual school budget shares.

Administration of Free School Meals

The County Council's free school meals service enables schools to meet legal requirements relating to the provision of free school meals without the administrative burden.

The free school meals service is located within the Admissions and Transport Team and as a Local Authority, we have direct links with Government Departments (DfE and DWP). This enables us to determine eligibility for free school meals with one short telephone call from schools with the vast majority of individual applications only taking 30 seconds to process. Individual schools do not have access to the checking service meaning eligibility would need to be carried out at school level as a paper exercise.

We are able to give guidance on all aspects of eligibility and provide accurate data to support schools. Weekly changes are reported to schools securely and full entitlement reports are sent to individual schools. We will ensure that free schools meals data is accurate for the census returns.

NB Academies can buy into this service through Services to Schools.

Jury service and union business

This central budget currently pays for supply cover when members of a school's staff undertake Trade Union Duties or Jury Service. The amount each school may have to pay can vary significantly from year to year, whereas across the County the amount is more likely to be relatively stable. The benefit to maintained schools of pooling these budgets is that schools know exactly how much they will pay each year instead of facing the prospect of additional costs which are out of the schools control and which could present a significant budget pressure.

For primary schools, this budget also includes the costs of administering the County Funded Supply internal insurance schemes.

Behavioural Support – For discussions around these areas of de-delegation please see appendix B.