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| Report to: | Schools' Forum |
| Date of meeting: | Friday 13 January 2023 |
| Report By: | Alison Jeffery |
| Title: | School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant |
| Purpose: | To provide an update on the proposals for managing the removal of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant in East Sussex from 2023/24. |

Recommendations:

1. Schools' Forum are asked to approve the proposal for a 'headteacher partnership contribution' to cover the costs of facilitating collaborative working, and to advise on which of the two options presented in 2.4 is preferred.
 2. Schools' Forum are asked to note that further savings will be made to the resource allocation for the Primary and Secondary Boards and within the Education Division to cover the loss of the school improvement monitoring and brokering grant.
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1. Background

1.1 The school improvement monitoring and brokering grant has been allocated to local authorities since September 2017 to support local authorities in fulfilling their school improvement duties, including monitoring the performance of maintained schools, brokering school improvement provision, and intervening as appropriate. In the financial year 2022/23 East Sussex local authority received a grant of £217,200.

1.2 In January 2022 the Department for Education published a response to their consultation on removing the grant, ['Reforming how local authority school improvement functions are funded'](#). This response confirmed that the grant would be removed in full from financial year 2023/24 and that in future these functions will be funded from maintained school budgets through de-delegation.

1.3 A paper was presented to Schools' Forum in January 2021 about the proposed changes and advising that a further report will be brought to Schools' Forum setting out proposals for how the removal of the Grant from 2023-24 financial year will be managed.

2. Proposal

2.1 The Education Division leads for the local authority on our school improvement functions. The service has a range of responsibilities and is supported by funding from different sources, including government grants and local authority funding.

2.2 The local authority has worked with schools to develop a school-led system for improvement which sits alongside the delivery of the local authority's statutory school improvement duties. The EIPs and Area Groups, supported by the Boards, are the key mechanisms for schools to work together on improving practice and raising standards. We have started discussions with the Primary and Secondary Boards about the resources and capacity required to sustain the school-led system. Discussions in both phases are taking

place in January to scope out the delivery model for September 2023 and ensure that this can deliver sustained improvement in pupil outcomes. The school-led system in East Sussex is inclusive of local authority-maintained schools and academies.

2.3 These discussions sit alongside consideration of the government's ambition for all schools to become academies by 2030. Whilst the education white paper has now been withdrawn, discussions are continuing locally about the role that strong families of schools can play in ensuring that schools in East Sussex have a strong, sustainable future. We continue to work in a school system that is characterised by overlapping responsibilities and increasing pressure on resources. In this landscape, our partnership structures play an important role in holding the system together, avoiding further fragmentation and navigating future developments. Bringing school leaders together, by phase, across the academic year provides an important forum for shaping and delivering our shared ambitions for children's education.

2.4 The local authority recognises the financial challenges facing schools at this current time and is bringing forward a proposal to cover the loss of the £217,200 grant that does not request de-delegation from schools for the full amount. Schools are being asked for a contribution to cover a total of **£43,500**.

2.5 There are a range of costs associated with facilitating the school-led system and providing opportunities for school leaders to collaborate with each other and hear from expert speakers. The costs for this activity have been remodelled so that the following functions can be delivered for approximately £43,500 per annum:

- Chairing the Primary and Secondary Boards
- Chairing the 11-19 Headteacher meetings and Primary Headteacher meetings
- Venue and speaker costs for Primary Leadership conferences
- Venue and speaker costs for 11-19 Headteacher meetings

2.6 It is proposed that schools are asked to contribute to cover these costs through a 'headteacher partnership contribution'. There are two options for the cost per school:

- A flat fee of £250 per primary, secondary and all-thorough school
- A fee of £500 per secondary and all-thorough school and £200 per primary school in recognition of the larger budget shares of secondary and all-thorough schools.

The fee that each school would be charged under each option is attached at Appendix 1.

2.7 This model represents good value for money for school leaders and mirrors arrangements in other local authority areas for headteacher associations. It is proposed that the agreed amount is de-delegated from local authority maintained schools and that academy schools are asked to contribute through purchasing a 'headteacher partnership contribution' as a traded service through Services to Schools. There is a risk that not all academy schools make this purchase, and a review each year would be needed to assess the future sustainability and fairness of this model. Further discussion will be taken forward with Special School headteachers; we have not included special schools here but need to ensure that we maintain good collaborative working.

2.8 If this proposal for schools' contribution is agreed, the local authority would be required to make savings of £173,700 to cover the loss of the grant. These savings would be achieved through:

- efficiencies in the resource allocated to the Primary and Secondary Boards (to be agreed with school leaders for September 2023)
- savings within the Education Division on spend on project activity

3 Recommendations

3.1 Schools' Forum are asked to approve the proposal for a 'headteacher partnership contribution' to cover the costs of facilitating collaborative working, and to advise on which of the two options presented in 2.4 is preferred.

3.2 Schools' Forum are asked to note that further savings will be made to the resource allocation for the Primary and Secondary Boards and within the Education Division to cover the loss of the school improvement monitoring and brokering grant.

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