

**Report to:** Schools Forum

**Date of meeting:** 10 Jan 2025

**Report By:** Carolyn Fair

**Title:** Central School Services Block (CSSB) 2025/26

**Purpose:** To provide an update on the CSSB allocations for 2025/26

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1) Schools Forum are asked to note and approve the proposals for the Central School Services Block for 2025/26.**

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### **1 Background**

1.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2025/26 will again be allocated by the Department for Education (DfE), into four notional blocks: Schools, High Needs, Early Years and Central School Services Block (CSSB). Each block is calculated on a different basis and subject to separate regulations as to eligible expenditure.

1.2 This paper specifically relates to the CSSB. This block includes funding that has been allocated to Local Authorities (LAs) to carry out functions on behalf of pupils in both maintained schools and academies and has two distinct elements:

- **Ongoing responsibilities** This comprises:
  - funds specified by the DfE and retained centrally (Admissions, Copyright Licencing Agency (CLA) Licence and Servicing Schools Forum); and
  - funds that were previously known as ‘Retained Duties Education Services Grant’ which, up to 2017/18, the LA received and held separately for its ongoing responsibilities to maintained schools and academies.
- **Historic Commitments** These are what were previously known as “Combined Services” and is funding for previously specified financial commitments.

### **2 2025/26 On-going responsibilities**

2.1 The DfE fund Ongoing responsibilities on a per pupil basis, using the October census, and have increased the funding rate for 2025/26 from £38.55 to £43.41 per pupil. The vast majority of this increase is because the DfE have now included funding for Centrally Employed Staff that was previously funded as a separate grant. Additional funding has also been provided for the cost of the Copyright Licencing. (The cost for the CLA Licenses are recouped, by the DfE, so a net nil effect).

2.2 As with 2024/25, the LA is asking to retain the full amount that the DfE is allocating for 2025/26.

2.3 Table 1 shows the 2025/26 proposals for the ‘Ongoing Responsibilities’ element of the CSSB which totals £2.72m. (Please note that this is separate funding from the Schools Block DSG which funds Maintained school budget shares / Academy General Annual Grants (GAGs).

**Table 1: Proposals for 2025/26 On-going Responsibilities**

Category	Responsibility	2024/25 Allocations	Additional Funds for 2025/26	2025/26 Proposed Allocations
Specified by the DfE	Admissions	£558,400	£16,400	£574,800
	CLA Licences	£426,800	£66,000	£492,800
	Schools Forum	£25,000	£700	£25,700
Statutory and Regularity Duties	Revenue budget preparation, preparation on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education. Formulation and review of the LA Schools Funding Formula	£148,700	£4,400	£153,100
	Leadership of Children's services and support staff / Planning for the Education Service as a whole.	£234,000	£6,900	£240,900
	Provision of information to or at the request of the Crown other than relating to specifically maintained schools.	£53,800	£1,600	£55,400
	Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)	£11,800	£300	£12,100
	Internal Audit and Chief Finance Officer / S151 Officer	£30,000	£900	£30,900
	Consultation Costs relating to non-staffing issues. Plans involving collaboration with other LA services or public or voluntary services	£39,400	£1,200	£40,600
Asset Management	Management of LA's capital programme including preparation and review of an asset management plan, and negotiation and management of private finance transactions	£109,400	£3,200	£112,600
Education Welfare	Functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision of education to excluded pupils. Responsibilities regarding the employment of children.	£135,300	£4,000	£139,300
	School Attendance	£350,000	£10,300	£360,300
Other Ongoing Duties	Places in Independent Schools for Non SEN Pupils	£202,400	£5,700	£208,100
	Employer Contributions for Centrally Managed Staff	£144,600	£126,600	£271,200
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,469,600</b>	<b>£248,200</b>	<b>£2,717,800</b>

### 3. Historic Commitments

3.1 The Historic Commitments are funded by the DfE as a lump sum amount and for 2025/26 the DfE are allocating £1.61m to ESCC for Historic Commitments. This is a reduction of £403k when compared to 2024/25.

3.2 The LA proposes to use these funds to offset High Needs Block 2025/26 spending pressures.

3.3 Table 2 is a summary of the proposals for 2025/26 funding for historic commitments.

**Table 2: Proposals for 2025/26 Historic Commitments**

<b>Historic Commitments</b>	<b>2024/25 Allocations</b>	<b>CSSB Changes</b>	<b>2025/26 Proposed Allocations</b>
	£2,016,900	-£403,400	£1,613,500
<b>*Total</b>	<b>£2,016,900</b>	<b>-£403,400</b>	<b>£1,613,500</b>

*\*Please note that the DfE reduce the Historic commitments value by 20% each year. This means that for 2025/26, the value has reduced by £403k.*

#### **4. Summary and Conclusion**

4.1 This report sets out the proposals for the retention of the £2.72m for 'on-going responsibilities' and the £1.61m 'Historic Commitments'. Schools Forum members are asked to approve these proposals.

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