

Agenda Item 8: Central School Services Block 2019/20

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is to consult and decide on the services provided by the local authority to schools and academies in relation to central services and de-delegation for 2019/20.

2. Background

- 2.1 Forum members will recall as part of the introduction of the National Funding Formula, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has established a Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) to fund local authorities for the statutory duties and other commitments they hold for both maintained schools and academies. The CSSB brings together:

- funding previously allocated through the retained duties element of the Education Services Grant (ESG)
- funding for ongoing central functions, such as admissions, previously top-sliced from the Schools Block
- residual funding for historic commitments, previously top-sliced from the Schools Block.

3. Schools' Forum approvals for centrally held funding

- 3.1 A number of the services that are covered by funding that is held centrally are subject to a limitation of no new commitments or increases in expenditure from 2018/19:

- this limit does not now apply to admissions or the servicing of schools forums
- Schools Forum approval is required each year to confirm the amounts on each line
- the level of approval required for each service and for funding of brought forward deficits are detailed in **Appendix 1**. The services pertinent to the local authority (LA) are highlighted in **bold**.

- 3.2 When using centrally held funding, local authorities must treat maintained schools and academies on an equivalent basis.

4. Central Schools Services Block

4.1 This block funds ongoing responsibilities and historic commitments, as well as the retained element of ESG.

4.2 Historic Commitments

Included in this block of funding are the following budgets:

Historic Commitments	£m
School Meals	0.154
Vulnerable Pupils	0.102
Space to Learn	0.101
Licences	0.077
Termination of Employment costs	0.031
Total	0.465

4.2.1 Schools Forum will recall that of the above services School Meals (£0.154m), Vulnerable Pupils (£0.102m) and 7/12ths of Space to Learn (£0.059m) were not agreed and the budgets added to the Schools Block for 2018/19. The remaining £0.042m of Space to Learn will be added to the Schools Block for 2019/20. Therefore, for historic commitments decisions are only required in relation to Licences and Termination of Employment Costs.

4.2.2 Licences

Historically all expenditure in relation to licences used to deliver education services were recorded on a specific 'Licences' line on the Authority's s251 statement. In 2013/14 when the Schools Block was introduced, this line, amongst other lines (see paragraphs 4.2 and 4.9), was recorded by the EFSA as 'Centrally Retained Combined Budgets'.

4.2.3 In recent years the LA has procured its licences from Capita. The Capita licence expired in September 2018 and the LA introduced a new solution called EYES to support the following areas

- Data Team
- Attendance Team
- School Improvement Team
- Governors Support Team
- Virtual School
- SEND Team
- NEET/September Guarantee/Raising the Participation Age
- Childcare Placements – 15hrs and 30hrs
- Home to School Transport
- Education Psychology
- Alternative Learning provision
- Groupcall – data transfer

- Schools Portal which is a secure means of communicating information between the LA and schools.

4.2.4 The introduction of this system has produced savings; therefore, the LA is seeking Forum approval to contribute £0.067m towards the costs of these licences, effectively transferring the savings of £0.010m made back to the Schools Block. The LA will be seeking funding from other Council teams as required, such as the Early Years function of the Council to fund the Childcare module.

4.2.5 Termination of Employment Costs (Brierton)

This budget covers the ongoing termination costs for ex-Brierton staff. This historic pension commitment will only diminish on the death of the ex-employees.

4.3 Ongoing responsibilities

The table below details the ongoing responsibilities.

Ongoing Responsibilities	£m
Retained Education Services *	0.216
Admissions	0.132
Copyright licences*	0.067
Servicing Schools' Forum	0.036
Total	0.451

*these figures are subject to pupil number changes and will be updated in December 2018

4.3.1 Retained Education Services

Details regarding this element of funding are covered in a separate report on the agenda.

4.3.2 Admissions

The LA is not proposing to increase the charges for the provision of the Admissions service. Further details are shown in **Appendix 2**.

4.3.3 Copyright Licences

The ESFA has negotiated copyright licences for schools with most copyright holders. The licences are purchased by the ESFA, who charge the local authority by way of a reduction in DSG. In 2018/19 the reduction is £0.067m. The reduction for 2019/20 will not be known until the ESFA confirm the final cost later in the year. It is likely to be in the region of £0.070m. The list of current licences procured on behalf of schools is as follows:

- Christian Copyright Licensing International
- Copyright Licensing Agency
- Education Recording Agency
- Filmbank Distributors Ltd. (for the public video screening licence)
- Mechanical Copyright Protection Society
- Motion Picture Licensing Company

- Newspaper Licensing Authority
- Performing Rights Society
- Phonographic Performance Limited
- Schools Printed Music Licence.

4.3.4 Servicing Schools' Forum

This should reflect the costs of delivering Schools Forum including the preparation and attendance of at least four meetings per year. This includes staff costs for preparation of reports. The budget was set in 2012/13 at £35k per annum. The local authority is proposing a minimal increase of 2% (£700) in 2019/20 to cover the cost of the annual pay award.

5. **Recommendations**

5.1 Schools' Forum are recommended to

- a) note the contents of the report
- b) consult those schools that individual members of the Forum represent with a view to deciding on the following:
 - i. agree the Historic Commitments as detailed in paragraphs 4.2
 - ii. agree the Ongoing Responsibilities as detailed in paragraphs 4.3

Voting: All Schools' Forum members may vote on these recommendations

ESFA Guidance on approvals required

Centrally retained service	Approval required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high needs block provision • central licences negotiated by the Secretary of State 	<p>Schools forum approval is not required (although they should be consulted)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement • back pay for equal pay claims • remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies • places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils • admissions • servicing of schools forum • contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools • contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for maintained schools (voted on by relevant maintained school members of the forum only) • de-delegated services from the schools block (voted on by the relevant maintained school members of the forum only) 	<p>Schools forum approval is required on a line-by-line basis</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • central early years block provision • any movement of funding out of the schools block • any deficit from the previous funding period that reduces the amount of the schools budget • any brought forward deficit on de-delegated services which is to be met by the overall schools budget 	<p>Schools forum approval is required</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital expenditure funded from revenue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • projects must have been planned and decided on prior to April 2013; no new projects can be 	<p>Schools forum approval is required on a line-by-line basis. The budget cannot exceed the value agreed in the previous funding period, and no new commitments can be</p>

Centrally retained service	Approval required
<p>charged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of the remaining costs should be presented • contribution to combined budgets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where the schools forum agreed prior to April 2013 a contribution from the schools budget to services which would otherwise be funded from other sources • existing termination of employment costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • costs for specific individuals must have been approved prior to April 2013; no new redundancy costs can be charged • prudential borrowing costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the commitment must have been approved prior to April 2013 • details of the remaining costs should be presented 	<p>entered into.</p> <p>Read establishing local authority DSG baselines for more information.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy • funding for good or outstanding schools with falling rolls where growth in pupil numbers is expected within three years 	<p>Schools forum approval is required on a line-by-line basis, including approval of the criteria for allocating funds to schools</p>

School Admissions Service

Centrally Retained

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to ensure that admission arrangements are compliant with the Admissions Code (2014). Local Authorities are expected to incur costs for requirements in relation to admissions and retain central DSG funding which contributes towards a team which comprises of an admissions manager, two admissions officers, one admissions assistant for these responsibilities:

- Devise, consult, determine and publish admission arrangements
- Produce composite prospectus
- Set Admission Number (PAN)
- Devise co-ordinated admissions scheme
- Produce application packs for entry into Reception and Year 7 admission rounds
- Produce reminder letters
- Ranking of application forms for entry into Reception and Year 7 admissions rounds
- Process application forms for entry into Reception and Year 7
- Reallocation of places following national offer days (primary and secondary)
- Produce and present school appeals cases for own admission authority schools and schools which converted to academy status prior to 2013/14 (this includes, legal and democratic services officer time)
- Produce and maintain waiting lists
- Complete DfE statistical returns (eg sufficiency survey/schools adjudicator report, national offer day report, appeals report)
- Development of Admissions Service - changes within Admissions Code
- Process in-year transfer requests (which can be quite complex and can include LAC, SEN, Asylum Seekers, Out of Area and Overseas pupils)
- Purchase, maintenance and development of IT software (parent online application portal)
- Process in-year fair access applications

- Dissemination of admissions information and daily support to parents, schools and other agencies
- Process Managed Move requests
- Attendance at and produce reports for Admissions Forum
- Attendance at Behaviour & Attendance Partnership
- Attendance at Vulnerable Pupils Meetings
- Respond to freedom of information and data requests