Review of the de-delegation budget

Agenda Item 7 – Review of the De-Delegation Budget

**Date Prepared: 25 September 2024**

**Date to present the paper to Schools Forum: 9 October 2024**

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**Details on who has been consulted with on this paper to date: Sara Walsingham**

**Executive Summary**

This report sets out how the de-delegated services for the financial year 2024-2025 is managed and a range of options to consider in advance of a decision for the 2025-26 funding year.

**Details of recommendations and timescales for decisions:**

Schools Forum is asked to:

1. Note the contents of this report

**1 Background**

1.1 At budget setting time each year, Schools Forum is asked to approve the de-delegation of funding for centrally provided support in the following areas:

* Contingency Fund
* Free School Meals (FSM) Eligibility Assessment
* Trade Union Facilities Agreement (TUFA) Time
* Behaviour Support
* Additional School Improvement

1.2 De-delegation is agreed by Schools Forum as a contribution from maintained schools to fund the aforementioned centrally supported activities based on a per pupil formula, which is considered by the DfE to be a fair way of accounting for the size of the school and its budget.

**2 Forecast of De-Delegated Items for 2024-2025**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Amount** |
| **Per Pupil Rate**  **Total Amount De-delegated**  **Projected Expenditure**  **Projected Expenditure Includes:**   * Schools Sustainability Group external consultancy fees * Early retirement ongoing costs (pension strain) * Professional fees - post 16 review   **Projected Overspend / (Underspend)**  The contingency fund provides for unforeseen expenses in schools during the year. Without a central fund, individual schools facing an unforeseen significant cost may find themselves unable to operate within their delegated budgets. Individual schools may not by themselves be able to build up sufficient contingency to cover this. | £16.19  £439,607  £231,927  (£207,680) |

2.1 **Schools Block Contingency (Not Growth Fund)**

2.2 **Free School Meals (FSM) Eligibility Assessment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Amount** |
| **Per Pupil Rate**  **Total Amount De-delegated**  **Projected Expenditure**  **Projected Expenditure Includes:**   * SLA with the Council’s Housing Benefit Service   **Projected Overspend / (Underspend)**  The service assesses pupils’ eligibility for free school meals and notifies individual schools on a regular basis of their pupils’ eligibility.  Providing this service centrally means that efficiencies can be gained. Administration at individual school level would be burdensome as entitlement checking would have to be done manually. The service also conducts campaigns on behalf of schools, resulting in increased take up. | £4.18  £113,500  £113,500  £nil |

* 1. **Trade Union Facilities Agreement (TUFA)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Amount** |
| **Per Pupil Rate**  **Total Amount De-delegated**  **Projected Expenditure**  **Projected Expenditure Includes:**   * Backfill cover for TUFA   **Projected Overspend / (Underspend)**  The TU Facilities Agreement ensures that representatives are available to enable Schools to participate in collective bargaining and consultation processes. By accompanying staff to formal meetings enables Schools to progress formal actions under HR Procedures.  Holding the budget centrally enables schools to share the costs of supply cover to support the TU facilities time agreement. | £5.33  £144,725  £144,725  £nil |

2.4 **Behaviour Support Services**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Amount** |
| **Per Pupil Rate – Primary Schools**  **Per Pupil Rate – Secondary Schools**  **Total Amount De-delegated**  **Projected Expenditure**  **Projected Expenditure Includes:**   * SLA to Behaviour & Attendance Support Service (BASS)   **Projected Overspend / (Underspend)**  The service offers a wide range of advice, assessment, guidance and training which is designed to support schools to develop and deliver their statutory responsibilities for promoting positive behaviour and reducing risk of suspension for vulnerable groups.  Providing this service centrally means that efficiencies can be gained. | £4.48  £7.71  £151,600  £151,600  £nil |

2.5 **Additional School Improvement**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Amount** |
| **Per Pupil Rate**  **Total Amount De-delegated**  **Projected Expenditure**  **Projected Expenditure Includes:**   * SLA with Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP)   **Projected Overspend / (Underspend)**  The additional de-delegation of the School Improvement Service followed the phasing out of the Schools Moderation and Brokering grant. The grant was previously allocated to local authorities to allow them to monitor and support performance of maintained schools, broker school improvement provision and provide intervention to raise standards. | £6.20  £168,349  £168,349  £nil |

**3. Consultation and Next Steps**

* 1. At the Schools Forum meeting held in January 2024, it was agreed that the de-delegation contribution rates for special schools and alternative provisions for 2024-25 would be agreed at their next Special Schools Consultative meeting, which took place on 24 January 2024.
  2. The proposal was to extend the same services to these settings (excluding Behaviour Support) and the contribution would be based on the mainstream rate multiplied by number of places x 3 as recommended by DFE for special schools.
  3. The Consultative Group agreed to all rates except:
* Phoenix School should not be based on 3 x places because the numbers are like a small secondary mainstream school
* FSM Eligibility should not be based on 3 x places for all special school and alternative provision settings

3.4 Schools Forum did not accept the position of Phoenix School at its meeting in July 2024 and are invited to further consider the proposals for the Special Schools and Alternative Provisions charging contributions to de-delegated services.

3.5 A consultation email will be sent to schools in October with the de-delegation options which will include proposals for de-delegation for 2025-2026.

3.6 The minutes of this Schools Forum meeting will be used to determine the wishes of schools and Schools Forum with regards to the Special Schools and Alternative Provision proposal.