

Report for Schools Forum
16th January 2018

Central School Services Block

Date of meeting:	16 th January 2018
Time of meeting:	6.15 pm
Venue:	City Hall

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform Schools Forum of the Local Authority's Central School Services block allocation for 2018/19
- 1.2 To seek Forum's approval for the proposed use of the Central School Services block funding for 2018/19.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Schools Forum approves the proposed use of the Central School Services Block funding in 2018-19 for:
 - a. LA Core Functions £0.912m;
 - b. School Admissions £0.461m;
 - c. Schools Forum £0.023m;
 - d. Combined Services £0.599m..
- 2.2 That Schools Forum notes that the licences it is required to pay on behalf of all local schools is £0.267m.
- 2.3 That Schools Forum notes that the LA is seeking advice over the Prudential Borrowing sum allocated.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Central School Services Block (CSSB) of the DSG has been introduced for the first time for 2018-19 as part of the implementation of the National Funding Formula.
- 3.2 The purpose of the CSSB is to provide funding for the statutory duties 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

3.3 What has not changed is that the LA must still seek Schools Forum approval for Central Services spend, even though now this is no longer a top-slice from Schools Block.

4. Detail

4.1 The provisional CSSB allocation for 2018-19 is £2.828m. This total is composed of two distinct components: on-going functions (£1.663m) and historic commitments (£1.165m)

Table 1: Composition of Central School Service Block Allocations 2017/18 and 2018/19 and proposed allocation for 2018/19

Type of funding	Component	Comparable 2017/18 DSG amount £'000	DSG Allocation 2018/19 £'000	Proposed 2018/19 budget £'000
Formulaic	LA Core functions	849	912	912
Formulaic	School Admissions	461	461	461
Formulaic	School Licences	247	267	267
Formulaic	Schools Forum	23	23	23
Historic	Combined Services	599	599	599
Historic	Prudential Borrowing"	566	566	0
Total		2,745	2,828	2,262

4.2 The context of this is that the local authority's funding to provide services to support education across the City has been squeezed from a number of quarters. For instance, the Authority has lost £2.5m of the previous £3.6m Education Services Grant with only the LA Core Functions element and the School Improvement Grant available as on-going funding. Schools Forum decided in November to discontinue the de-delegation arrangements for Teaching and Learning Consultants. The Early Years National Funding Formula arrangements have introduced a cap on central spending which limits spend to 5% of the funding received for 3 and 4 year old pupils. And the High Needs Block savings plan includes target reductions for local authority services.

4.3 The Service Director for Education and Skills has initiated a review of the provision of services across Education, including a consideration of the future model of Trading with Schools. This will take account of the existing and future statutory duties of a local authority with respect to Education and the Council's aspirations, within available resources.

- 4.4 At this point in time, therefore, plans about how funding should be best used for services are in flux and Schools Forum's support is sought in maintaining the level of resource from the Central School Services Block for 2018/19, pending the outcomes of the review in the next few months. It is expected that the outcomes of the review could be reported back to Schools Forum in the summer term.
- 4.5 **LA Core Functions £0.912m.** Appendix 1 sets out the breakdown of the budget that was approved for 2017/18, with the additional £63k that is available in 2018/19 allocated at this stage on a percentage uplift basis. Officers expect to refocus the use of this allocation to be more explicitly aligned to the most important core statutory functions of the Local Authority, linked to those services that the DfE indicated as being funded from the former Education Services Grant. This may, for instance, result in more focus on the attendance and school improvement responsibilities and may result in some of the other elements shifting elsewhere.
- 4.6 **Admissions £0.461m.** There is no proposed change to this budget, but the needs of this service will be included in the overall review. Given that pupil numbers are increasing, it may be necessary to reconsider the resource available to the admissions function.
- 4.7 **School Licences £0.267m.** The DfE requires the Authority to pay licences on behalf of all maintained schools, academies and free schools in Bristol, to avoid the administration of delegating funding to and recovering the money from each school. The amount for 2018/19 has been advised as £0.267m. There is no requirement for Schools Forum to specifically approve this line of the budget.
- 4.8 **Schools Forum £23k.** This funding is used to support the writing of papers, clerking and hosting the meetings. It is proposed that this allocation remain at the 2017/18 level.
- 4.9 **Combined Services £0.599m** The LA is proposing to use the funding provided under Historic Commitments to continue funding Combined Services as in 2017-18. A summary of how this is used is in Appendix 2. This historic budget line is problematic in that the DfE expect the funding to taper off over time and disappear. The Authority may only spend the funding on the same commitments as in the previous year and the amount may never increase. If the authority were not to budget for this line, the funding would revert to the ESFA, rather than be available to other activities in the CSSB or elsewhere in the DSG. In effect, this funding is also supporting core functions in the local authority and it may prove to be difficult to reduce this activity without creating a budget

pressure elsewhere. This will be a consideration in the review of Education Services referred to earlier.

4.10 Prudential Borrowing Nil. The costs of prudential borrowing were £0.566m, but the payments cease at the end of 2017/18, so there are no commitments for 2018/19. Officers are clarifying whether the £0.566m allocation for 2018/19 will be recovered when the LA indicates in the Section 251 Statement that it is not to be used, or if they will only recover it in a future year. There is a low probability that the funding can be allocated elsewhere in the DSG, but an update will be provided at a later meeting once the position is known.

**CABINET REPORT ON DSG
APPENDIX A.3.1**

**Analysis of Core Statutory Education Functions
proposed to be supported by £15 per pupil**

Service Area	Allocation 2017/18	Proposed allocation 2018/19
Early Years sufficiency & quality duties	296	321
School Partnerships: Sufficiency & quality duties	163	177
Education Psychology	154	167
SEN Parent Support/Mediation	17	19
Special Schools sufficiency & quality	15	16
Attendance	109	118
Fair Access	23	25
HR (statutory)	2	2
Finance (statutory)	27	29
Governors (statutory)	7	7
SACRE	3	3
Equalities	15	16
IT (statutory returns etc)	12	12
TOTAL	843	912

**CABINET REPORT ON DSG
APPENDIX A.3.2**

Combined Services Budget 2018/19

Service	Total 2017/18 £'000	Total 2018/19 £'000
Director of Education and Skills	122	122
Equalities	45	45
Governor Support	21	21
HR	25	25
Primary Services	178	178
Pupil Census	35	35
School Place Planning	90	90
Secondary Services	83	83
Grand Total	599	599