

REGULATORY AND OTHER COMMITTEE REPORT

NAME OF COMMITTEE:	Schools Forum
DATE OF MEETING:	5 October 2016
SUBJECT:	De-delegation of maintained primary school budgets 2017/18 & 2018/19
REPORT BY:	Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance – Children's Services)
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IS REPORT CONFIDENTIAL?	No

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the maintained primary school representatives' of the Forum to the Local Authority's (LA) proposals for the de-delegation of certain budgets in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

DISCUSSION

Background

The DfE introduced radical reforms to school funding arrangements in April 2013. Although LAs were required to delegate more budgets to schools as part of the reforms, they were permitted to seek de-delegation of some services for maintained schools.

Key features of these arrangements include:

- Only maintained schools can have funds de-delegated from their budget share. Academies are therefore unaffected and, for that reason, they are not permitted to vote on de-delegation matters.
- The decision to de-delegate funds for maintained schools should be considered and voted upon separately by each sector.
- Where there are no maintained school representatives on the Schools Forum for a particular sector, no decision can be made and de-delegation is therefore not possible.
- Should there be conversion of any more schools to academies, it will reduce the total sum de-delegated for a service, if the per pupil deduction remains unchanged.
- Any underspendings that arise on budgets de-delegated from maintained schools should, as a point of principle (i.e. fairness), be earmarked for the benefit of the maintained schools in that sector only.

De-delegations for 2016/17

For 2016/17 maintained primary schools agreed to de-delegate funding for:

- Contingency, i.e. termination of employment costs for schools in financial difficulty, and; exceptional unforeseen costs; and
- Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET) No funds were de-delegated for maintained secondary schools.

The report to the Schools Forum last year stated that the cumulative underspend at 31st March 2015 was estimated to be in excess of a £1.080m. The final reported underspend was £1.350m.

At the meeting 7th October 2015, it was agreed that:

1. Due to government regulations, the easiest way to return unspent funds to the maintained primary schools was to adjust the LA's proposed charges for the following year. It was accepted that as a consequence of this approach, the per pupil amounts de-delegated would vary from year to year.
2. To use the projected cumulative underspending reported at 31st March 2015 of £1.080m to reduce to £1.150m the net sum that would have to be recovered over the two years (i.e. £0.575m p.a. for 2015/16 and 2016/17).
3. To set the sums de-delegated for the next two years as follows:

Contingency ¹	£11.01 per pupil
Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)	£ 5.44 per pupil

Proposals for 2017/18

It was previously proposed that the charges for 2017/18 would revert back to the baseline amounts per pupil for the de-delegation budgets; as opposed to using cumulative underspends to part fund the 2015/16 and 2016/17 de-delegations.

The cumulative underspend reported at 31st March 2016 is £1.085m. This however is projected to fall to £0.551m by 31st March 2017 due to the reduced de-delegation rates being applied in 2016/17. This is based on the assumption that the budgets will be fully spent.

In light of the cumulative underspend, the LA propose to continue with the current de-delegation rates in 2017/18 for maintained primary schools with the remaining costs being met from cumulative underspend.

Contingency	£11.01 per pupil
Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)	£ 5.44 per pupil

¹ This includes the Termination of Employment costs, Interim headteachers and School Improvement

This would finance:

Termination of employment costs	£0.250m
Consultant headteachers	£0.292m
Exceptional unforeseen costs	£0.380m
Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)	£0.188m

Proposals for 2018/19

It is proposed that the charges for 2018/19 would revert back to the baseline amounts per pupil for the de-delegation budgets, which would be set at:

Contingency	£26.38 per pupil
Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)	£ 5.38 per pupil

These figures are indicative. They are based on the October 2015 census and 34,942 maintained primary pupils. The figures may change slightly due to the DfE's requirement for LAs to use the latest October census for the detailed calculations. The budget requirements will also be kept under review

Information regarding the current services is set out in Appendix 1.

Next Steps

The outcomes from the decisions made by maintained primary representatives on the Schools Forum will be reflected in maintained primary schools' future budgets.

RECOMMENDATION

That the maintained primary school representatives on the Schools Forum are asked to support the proposals for de-delegation of the budgets for the period 2017/18 and 2018/19, as set out above.

APPENDICES (If applicable) - these are listed below and attached at the back of the report.
Appendix 1 – Details of current service provision

BACKGROUND PAPERS			
PAPER TYPE	TITLE	DATE	ACCESSIBILITY
Report to Schools Forum	De-delegation of maintained primary schools budgets 2016/17 & 2017/18	8 th October 2015	County Offices, Newland, Lincoln, LN1 1YQ

Details of current service provision

Schools in financial difficulty and exceptional unforeseen costs

a. Schools in financial difficulty

The DfE reforms no longer permit the LA to hold a budget for school redundancies. Since 2013/14, Schools Forum representatives of maintained primary schools have voted to retain a budget for schools in financial difficulty. The LA's Staffing Reduction panel continues to meet to consider requests for redundancies and access to those funds. The LA's long established policy of charging schools for a share of redundancy costs remains in place. However, a tightening of those arrangements was introduced in 2013/14, such that a contribution from this budget will only be made for schools that are likely to overspend within the next two financial years if no action is taken. The costs incurred against this budget in recent years have been low and the budget has been reduced accordingly.

Since the reforms were introduced, a budget has not been held for maintained secondary schools. This was mainly because there were relatively few maintained secondary schools and several of them were considered unlikely to fall in to financial difficulty. It was therefore assumed that the sector would probably not be supportive of creating a de-delegated budget. Also, it was recognised that with so few secondary maintained schools, there would not be sufficient critical mass to operate an insurance type arrangement, as is possible with maintained primary schools.

b. Exceptional unforeseen costs

The DfE expects a de-delegated budget for exceptional unforeseen costs to finance those costs which it would be unreasonable to expect governing bodies to meet. In Lincolnshire, de-delegation was approved in 2013/14 to finance the long established school intervention work undertaken by CfBT, and the provision of the interim headteachers service. A budget was not de-delegated for maintained secondary schools, for similar reasons to those explained above.

Further detail on the use of the funds this year for:

- Consultant Head Teacher
- Primary Maintained School Intervention
- Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)

is set out below.

Consultant Head Teacher Deployment

With effect from 1st September 2016 there is a team of 6 Consultant Head Teachers: one permanent, full time team leader; 2 permanent team members (1 full time, 1 at 0.8 FTE) and 3 seconded team members at 0.2 FTE until 31st August 2017.

The 0.2 FTE posts are currently used to support and mentor all new head teachers, of maintained schools, in Lincolnshire. Each new head teacher has an offer of up to 6 days or 12 half days support. If significant issues emerge support then moves to the permanent team so that more time can be given to coaching whole leadership teams.

The permanent team: -

- work alongside head teachers in vulnerable schools
- provide part or full time Interim heads in schools where the head teacher is absent
- work alongside acting head teachers to coach and mentor them to enable them to quickly become skilled leaders
- are usually deployed in schools graded by OfSTED as Requiring Improvement or inadequate to support rapid improvement
- liaise with governors, teaching schools, neighbouring schools and Locality Leads to find longer term support for leadership teams where appropriate
- provide a rapid response to urgent requests for support
- spend varying amounts of time in each school as this is determined by the school's own capacity for sustaining the improvements.

The team is led by a Lead Consultant Head Teacher. She arranges deployment of the team and ensures that schools needing urgent support get it quickly.

In 2016/17 the total budget is £291,200. Currently, due to the flexibility of the temporary team, we have reduced transport costs as we have been able to employ experienced head teachers in different parts of the county.

Primary Maintained School Intervention 2015-16 Review

The purpose

The Intervention Funding budget supports schools to make rapid, identified improvements where school finances would otherwise prevent this from happening. The funding enables schools to continue to be good schools or to rapidly improve to become a good school.

Amount of funding received and spent

For the 2015-16 financial year the budget funded 29 different schools for specific issues. These were identified through a combination of Education Advisers, Consultant Head Teachers, governors and leadership teams.

In 2015-16 the Intervention budget was £364,904. Schools bid for specific amounts and send in plans which detail the amount, the reason and the expected impact of the additional funding. The school has to show that they do not have the funding in their own budget to enable them to make the necessary improvements or changes. Amounts in bids ranged from £1,200.00 to £26,000.00.

How funding was spent

The Intervention budget, as identified above, was spent on a combination of additional temporary staffing, curriculum resources, education consultants and health and safety advice. Schools were required to show that whatever was bid for was sustainable and would improve outcomes for pupils and students.

Outcomes

Where schools have been subject to HMI monitoring visits, these have been positive regarding support from the Local Authority.

Proposals for 2017/18

It is proposed that the budget allocated enables a similar level of engagement with vulnerable schools through the financial year 2017-18 to enable this work with schools to continue.

Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)

The Service Area

The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) was reconfigured in September 2011 to form the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET). The current team has a two tier structure that advises and supports schools to accommodate the needs of ethnic minority and Traveller children. The officers support schools to work with families and ensure that they are able to access services available to their children; particularly education. They support the integration of specific children as well as help schools to develop and maintain systems that are needed to provide a fully inclusive and safe environment for these particular groups of young people. The team leaders are able to offer the more specific advice required by schools to support children with English as an additional language (EAL). The service was part of two internal audit processes in 2015, both concluding that the service provides effective support.

Background to need

- There are 9,372 pupils in Lincolnshire schools that have English as an additional language. Of these around 3,460 have either been in the country for less than 2 years or have started in reception as an EAL learner. Of those EAL learners, 50% are in maintained schools, 39% in academies and the remainder in special and free schools. More than 80% of the new EAL learners are in the primary schools. EMTET will work with those schools that either lack knowledge or experience of good practice in support Ethnic Minority, Travellers or pupils with English as an additional language or where the school has tried all its strategies and seeks specialist support for further advice. There is a growing demand for support in relation to communication with parents, children with special needs and integration of Traveller children.
- Ofsted East Midlands identified a number of key priorities for future inspections; one of which is support for children and young people at the early stage of learning English as an additional language. Ofsted intend to rigorously inspect the support provided and the extent to which providers are ensuring pupils are reaching their potential. In addition to this from Autumn 2016 and then annually, as part of the schools census, schools will need to indicate a pupil's proficiency in English where the pupil's language is 'other than English'. It is important that an experienced service remains available to all schools to provide specialist support and assurance of appropriate provision.
- With an increase in population movement across Europe due to political instability, it is possible that Lincolnshire will receive refugees and asylum seekers from unknown cultures and linguistic backgrounds. A centre service is necessary to be flexible enough to meet diverse needs.

The purpose of the Service

The overall aim of The Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team is to provide a service to schools and families that support the following objectives:

1. Improving the safety and well-being of Ethnic Minority and Traveller children (supporting families to find a school place and settle into education)
2. Improving access to learning particularly those with EAL (advising schools on good EAL practice through training and consultancy)
3. Supporting transition (supporting family's knowledge of school admissions, school systems, transport, free school meals etc.)
4. Improving conditions for learning that reflect culture and lifestyle and value diversity (training and workshops to school staff and young people, working with parents to improve integration)

Budget received/ spent

The service is funded, in part, by a de-delegated contribution (from the Dedicated Schools Budget) of £188k. At the start of the 2013/14 financial year, this was £110k short of the previous year's contribution and the budget needed to run the current service, due to the per-pupil apportionment of the original budget to Academy schools. During 2013/14 the service undertook a number of measures to ensure that it operated within its budget for the financial year for 2014/15 including re-structuring the service and its delivery.

As a consequence, the service reduced to 1.8fte team leaders and 4.6fte officers both on 38 week contracts. To part-mitigate the annual budget reduction the service introduced elements that are income generating for this financial year.

The £188K currently funds 78% of the total service cost. It is the intention of this paper to seek resolution from the Forum as to the commitment to the service to enable longer-term planning.

Outcomes for the Service

The service engaged with more than 200 schools in 2015/16 which involved:

- Supporting approximately 96 children per year, through a single child referral process (this may lead to impact on wider family and/or whole class/school).
- Support to develop and improve current practice for supporting Ethnic Minority and Traveller families.
- Training and consultancy advice for schools and school staff on supporting pupils with English as an additional language and cultural awareness.
- School visits to offer or complete evaluation audit identifying good practice and areas for improvement.
- Supporting the admission of ethnic minority and Traveller families into school, particularly reception.
- Workshops with young people around cultural and language awareness and understanding equality. 83 workshops delivered.
- Coordinating racial incident reporting and assisting schools to deal with racist related behaviour.
- Exploring opportunities through communities, that impact on pupil's progress and integration e.g. supporting 13 supplementary schools across Lincolnshire.

Future Developments

- Training programme for teachers/ support staff on the teaching and learning of EAL including assessment and EAL children with special needs.
- Partnership working with early years sector to support school readiness
- Continued engagement with supplementary schools and scoping potential for interpreters and supportive resource
- Development of workshops to improve cultural awareness related to identified current issues e.g. Islamic Cultural Awareness, Learning in another language