



North Tyneside Council

Briefing note

To: Schools Forum

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Date: 12 October 2016

Title of Briefing: Centrally retained and de-delegated items

Purpose

Since 2013/14 and the introduction of school funding reform, all Local Authorities have been required to consult with their Schools Forum and agree centrally retained and de-delegated budgets. As was discussed at the previous Schools Forum meeting, it had been expected that a new central items block would be introduced by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) for 2017/18 which would mean the centrally retained items discussion would not be required any further. However, as this new block has been deferred by the Government, it was agreed that a summary report would be presented to Schools Forum to give some background to the centrally retained items currently in place, together with the historic financial allocations, as well as the current level of de-delegated items.

A formal decision on these items is not required until the funding formula is agreed at the 11 January 2017 meeting, but to allow sufficient consultation to take place, it is beneficial for Schools Forum to consider the items earlier to give an indication of any potential change in funding allocation. This allows additional time for the Council to take into account any changes when it is completing their budget process.

This report is based on information previously presented to Schools Forum. The intention is that each item will be considered to see if further information is required, which will be presented at the November and/or December meetings if required.

Background

Centrally retained items

The Schools block (of the Dedicated Schools grant, DSG) is shared amongst mainstream schools, including academies, through the funding formula unless items have been agreed as "centrally retained".

Centrally retained items need to be agreed before setting the mainstream funding formula for the next financial year. These retained budgets are to be used in support of all North Tyneside children – academies and maintained schools alike.

In most circumstances the Local Authority proposes the retention and the Schools Forum decides. If there is any disagreement then the DfE adjudicates. No new centrally retained items can be introduced nor can the values be increased above historic levels without Secretary of State approval (although further guidance is due on the treatment of the former Education Services Grant (ESG) funding that will now come through the schools block).

De-delegated items

Some services can be “bought back on mass” by the Schools Forum for maintained schools, i.e excluding academies. The budget for these services is delegated to individual schools through the mainstream formula and then “de-delegated” (i.e. “handed back”) so the Local Authority can continue to provide the service.

Recommendation

Schools Forum are requested to consider the information contained in Appendices A, B and C to identify any items that require further briefing papers and/or presentations at future meetings.

Appendix A: Summary of Centrally retained sums from the DSG

Centrally retained items	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 Proposal £'000
Budgets historically used in support of early years	1,300	1,300	1,300	575	-
Learning Trust set aside	1,120	1,120	1,120	-	-
Budget to support the Early Years and School Improvement Service. This forms one part of the overall funding for these services and delivers a wide range of support and training to all schools including those causing concern. This supplements the income generated from the service level agreement to schools and the aspects of the service which are delivered over and above any statutory requirement for delivery by the Authority. For example; on call support to headteachers, inspection support, headteacher induction and the school development partner programme. It also includes an agreed contribution towards the SIMS refresh (£68k) – 2017/18 is the fourth and final payment.	653	653	653	653	653
Budget for ICT and City Learning Centre support	213	-	-	-	-
Budget to improve the quality of school meals	308	308	308	-	-
Over recent years the Schools Forum has provided a financial contribution to support the service provided at High Borrans. This has enabled the delivery of the high quality offer that all NT schools can access to ensure that the outdoor and adventurous, as well as residential opportunities our young people require as part of the national curriculum are met. After an initial period of review it was decided that a sub group be created with head teachers, governors and the LA officer responsible to monitor and review this provision. After two years it was decided last year to enable an initial 3 year offer with £95k funding each year. This was in order to enable the centre financial stability and have a longer term model by which we could work with in borough schools and develop our offer. This includes elements such as bespoke residential adventure, young leaders, primary enrichment, fieldwork and Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. At present the centre retains very high occupancy rates while maintaining outstanding standards such as LOTC (Learning Outside the Classroom) Gold accreditation. The contribution enables us to offer all schools a subsidised opportunity to attend rather than increasing costs to a significantly higher commercial rate.	135	110	95	95	95
Budget for the Education Improvement Partnership (secondary schools).	100	100	100	100	100
Budget to support vulnerable schools - this budget is held by School Improvement to support schools experiencing difficulties during the year and requiring additional advice and support.	52	52	52	52	52
Budget to support the cost of providing additional financial information and benchmarking to schools, as well as the cost of running the Schools Forum (meeting rooms and catering)	30	30	30	30	30
Collective contribution to the ongoing pension cost incurred from historic decisions to allow teachers to leave schools early. This budget cannot increase from the level set in 2012/13 so all exit costs arising after this point are allocated to individual schools, with only unavoidable redundancy costs being borne by the Local Authority.	625	625	625	625	625
Budget to pay for schools' carbon reduction commitment	164	-	-	-	-
Schools Admissions Service - funding to support the cost of delivering the admissions service. See Appendix C for further details	142	142	142	142	142
Costs associated with de-commissioned school buildings. See Appendix C for further details	45	30	30	30	30
DSG contribution to the Home to Schools Transport costs. See Appendix C for further details	100	100	100	100	100
Support to schools with falling rolls - funding allowed to support schools meeting the locally set criteria who have experienced substantial and short term falls in pupils that was due to exceptional circumstances. Please see note below re: the support for schools in financial difficulty and the suggestion for the funding formula Sub-group to consider the level of financial support.	-	-	250	250	250
TOTAL	4,987	4,570	4,805	2,652	2,077

Appendix B: De-delegation items 2016/17

De-delegated items	2016/17 allocation £'000	2016/17 rate per pupil £
Budget to support mainstream maintained schools in financial difficulty. This budget makes a small contribution towards the historic deficits currently being experienced. Given the level of deficits being experienced, Officers are recommending that the level of this contribution is revisited. To enable this consideration to be undertaken within the context of the wider funding formula discussion, it is recommended that the funding formula Sub-group consider what an appropriate rate of per pupil contribution would be, which will be reported to Schools Forum at the November meeting.	131	5.62
This service provides direct confidential help to Head teachers and/or Governing Body members when they are required to deal with a circumstance(s) that have the potential to de-stabilise the school. Support is provided on a confidential basis ensuring that the matter causing concern is managed and resolved effectively. The service provides for an enhanced level of intensive support, which will be directed/managed by the service manager for schools HR, is separate to the standard HR SLA and may be delivered via a combination of the schools HR Service Manager and/or the Business Partner.	38	1.64
Ethnic minority and traveller achievement service. Provides assessment, in school support and training to improve outcomes.	397	1,212.00
Funding to allow the administration associated with the assessment of free school meals to be undertaken. See Appendix C for further details	37	1.58
This service is provided in 2 parts and offers schools the ability to claim a refund or associated staff costs for approved absence: 1. Funded Special Leave – applies to teaching staff directly employed in schools that are approved for absence for Maternity, Paternity, Adoption Leave or Jury Service. 2. Funded Trade Union (TU)/Professional Association (PA) Facility Time for Schools – applies to staff directly employed in schools who undertake a role for a recognised TU/PA requiring them to be absent from work to support members of the same TU/PA who work directly in another school in North Tyneside.	575	24.73
TOTAL	1,178	

Appendix C: Supporting information

School Admissions

- The allocation of school places are subject to the following Statutory Regulations and Guidance:
 - Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA 1998).
 - School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements)(England) Regulations 2012 (hereafter the “School Admissions Regulations 2012”) New Code December 2014
 - The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012.
 - The School Admissions(Appeals)(England) Regulations 2012, New Code December 2014
- The purpose of the Code is to ensure that all school places for maintained schools and Academies (excluding maintained special schools) are allocated and offered in an open and fair way.
- The Code imposes mandatory requirements in relation to the discharge of functions relating to school admissions and there is a statutory duty to act in accordance with the Code.
- The Local Authority is responsible for the co-ordination and allocation of school places to all residents within the North Tyneside area. This includes all Voluntary Aided and Trust Schools even though the individual VA/Trust School are there own admissions authority. This process is ongoing throughout the academic year.
- Local Authorities have a key role in providing information to parents on admission arrangements and schools in their area and in co-ordinating school admissions for parents for all state funded schools.
- Local Authorities will also be notified and have oversight of the outcome of all in-year applications.
- The Local Authority will collate and publish all the admission arrangements in the area in a single composite prospectus.
- The admissions and appeals process is subject to statutory deadlines and timescales that must be followed and co-ordinated with neighbouring LA’s and Admission Authorities. This arrangement can be subject to statutory notices and publication.
- Section 88P of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA 1998) requires local authorities to make reports to the adjudicator about such matters connected with

relevant school admissions as required by the Code and include an assessment of the effectiveness of Fair Access Protocols and co-ordination in their area, how admission arrangements affect the interests of looked after children, previously looked after children and the number and percentage of lodged and upheld parental appeals.

- The report must be published by the LA locally. The Schools Adjudicator will report annually to the Secretary of State on Fair Access.
- Any decision of the Adjudicator will be binding on the admission authority. It will be for the admission authority to implement those decisions without undue delay.

Costs associated with decommissioned school buildings

- Budget previously reduced from £45k
- The buildings that are covered under this budget head are both current and planned and include / will include:
 - Former Shiremoor Middle – grounds maintenance
 - Dial Cottage
- Miscellaneous costs associated with new build and decommissioning of 'old' school sites including Marden High, John Spence, Longbenton, Whitehouse Primary and in going forward Backworth

Home to School Transport

- The Authority currently spends in excess of £2m per year on transport for children and this is increasing
- Mainly in support of children with SEN or disability. As at end of September the number of children supported was just under 600
- Of which just under 100 pupils are supported in attending Resource Provision across the borough
- This is a contribution to support travel arrangements in establishing Resource Provision across the borough.

Schools in Financial Difficulty

- Support for Schools with approved budget deficit
- Forum supported in decisions as result of work of Sub group
- Budget outside and separate to £250k falling rolls funding

Assessment of Free School Meal Eligibility

- Regular reports to schools to update your Free School Meal information in SIMS and maximise Pupil Premium income, issued at: The beginning of the academic year, every term & every half term
- Whenever we receive an application or re-check eligibility and it is unproven we work with the family and school to provide the evidence to ensure the family remain eligible
- By phone – A contact centre to handle applications. Consequently the ability to provide immediate decisions over the phone to families and schools (and start eligibility immediately with a school kitchen)
- Post and e-form – where eligibility is checked, a decision made and the system updated within 24 hours
- We process about 1600/1700 new claims each year for 2660 children eligible for Free School Meals per year; and in addition check and maintain eligibility for families already accessing Free School Meals
- Finally we support numerous individual queries and Free School Meal eligibility questions by schools, e.g. a pupil transferring from another school and whether they are entitled to FSM, or when you think a family is eligible and you are unsure if an application has been completed or where the family need extra help to apply.