

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: RATIONALE/IMPACT OF THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM SB TO CSSB

DATE: 11 December 2024

RECIPIENT: School's Forum

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

1. The Central School Services Block (CSSB) was set up following the discontinuation of the Education Services Grant (ESG). The retained funding is to support the Local Authority's (LA) statutory duties for all schools.
2. The CSSB provides funding for local authorities to carry out central functions on behalf of maintained schools and academies, comprising two distinct elements:
 - a. Historic commitments - DSG MASH Contribution (Preventative Social Care) is a historic commitment. The EFSA have reduced the funding for historic commitments each year since 2021-22 by 20%.
 - b. Ongoing responsibilities – these include admissions, National Copyright Licences and Statutory and Regulatory duties including education welfare and attendance. A detailed list of retained responsibilities for Statutory and Regulatory Duties funded from the CSSB is shown in Appendix A
3. In January 2022 the Schools Forum it was first proposed to transfer funds from the Schools Block to the CSSB to reflect the reduction in funding to the CSSB. The Forum voted to transfer £0.103M to the CSSB; this decision was made as if the shortfall in the CSSB was not supported by schools in 2022-23, it would impact the ability of the Education team to continue to assist schools.
4. For 2023/24 funding for the CSSB reduced by a further £0.083M, with a cumulative reduction in funding of £0.186M to avoid a reduction in the level of provision of Education support services.
5. Funding for the Central School Services Block for 2024/25 reduced by a further £0.050M. The cumulative reduction increasing from £0.186M to £0.236M. In January 2024 Schools Forum agreed to a block transfer of £0.220M to avoid a reduction in the level of provision of Education support services. This transfer was to be ring fenced and released in tranches subject to proposed re-structuring of the Education service.
6. The revised funding for the central school services is summarised below

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Description of Movement	Sum of Movement (£M)
Central school services allocation	1.610
Block Transfer from schools block	0.220
Central school services block funding	1.830

7. The budget for the schools admissions and the schools copyright licences are held within the CSSB.

Service	£M
Admissions	0.422
Schools Copyright Licences	0.152
Central Schools Services Block	0.574

8. The Admissions service and Schools Copyright licences are directly allocated against the CSSB grant. In addition to this contributions from CSSB are made to the Early Help service within social care and the Education Service as summarised in the following table

Allocation of CSSB Resource	£M
Admissions	0.422
Schools Copyright Licences	0.152
Contribution to Early Help	0.504
Contribution to Education Statutory & Regulatory Services	0.752
Total allocation	1.830

9. The block transfers has maintained the level of provision for the following activities

- Planning for the education service as a whole (Sch 2, 15b)
- Revenue budget preparation, preparation of information on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education (Sch 2, 22)
- Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares (Sch 2, 15c)
- Formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula (Sch 2, 15d)
- Standing Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs) (Sch 2, 17)

Education welfare

- Functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision of education to excluded pupils (Sch 2, 20)
- School attendance (Sch 2, 16)
- Responsibilities regarding the employment of children (Sch 2, 18)

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Other ongoing duties

- Licenses negotiated centrally by the Secretary of State for all publicly funded schools (Sch 2, 8); this does not require school's forum approval
- Admissions (Sch 2, 9)
- Servicing of school's forums (Sch 2, 12)
- Writing to parents of year 9 pupils about schools with an atypical age of admission, such as UTCs and studio schools, within a reasonable travelling distance (Sch 2, 23)
- Contribution to combined budgets (Sch 2, 2(c))

10. To illustrate, the sum of £0.220M funds the equivalent of:

- 5 Education Welfare Officers or;
- 5 Admissions Officers or;
- 5 Inclusion Services Officers.

11. The Education service is currently undertaking a redesign of its services, which will be implemented from April. Further detail can be shared with the Forum from January 2025.

12. It is likely that there will be a proposal to the Forum for a further block transfer in 2025/26 to enable the proposed redesigned service to be delivered within the current budget envelope. Any reduction in the contribution to the statutory and Regulatory Services would need to be mitigated; an outline of the consequential reduction in the service can be presented to the Forum to inform their decision.

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Central School Services Block – Statutory and Regulatory Duties

Responsibilities held for all schools

Statutory and regulatory duties:

- Director of children's services and personal staff for director (Sch 2, 15a)
- Planning for the education service as a whole (Sch 2, 15b)
- Revenue budget preparation, preparation of information on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education (Sch 2, 22)
- Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares (Sch 2, 15c)
- Formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula (Sch 2, 15d)
- Internal audit and other tasks related to the local authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under Section 151 of LGA 1972 except duties specifically related to maintained schools (Sch 2, 15e)
- Consultation costs relating to non-staffing issues (Sch 2, 19)
- Plans involving collaboration with other LA services or public or voluntary bodies (Sch 2, 15f)
- Standing Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs) (Sch 2, 17)
- Provision of information to or at the request of the Crown other than relating specifically to maintained schools (Sch 2, 21)

Education welfare

- Functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision of education to excluded pupils (Sch 2, 20)
- School attendance (Sch 2, 16)
- Responsibilities regarding the employment of children (Sch 2, 18)

Asset management

- Management of the LA's capital programme including preparation and review of an asset management plan, and negotiation and management of private finance transactions (Sch 2, 14a)
- General landlord duties for all buildings owned by the local authority, including those leased to academies (Sch 2, 14b)

Other ongoing duties

- Licenses negotiated centrally by the Secretary of State for all publicly funded schools (Sch 2, 8); this does not require school's forum approval
- Admissions (Sch 2, 9)
- Places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils (Sch 2, 10)
- Remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies (Sch 2, 11)
- Servicing of school's forums (Sch 2, 12)
- Back-pay for equal pay claims (Sch 2, 13)
- Writing to parents of year 9 pupils about schools with an atypical age of admission, such as UTCs and studio schools, within a reasonable travelling distance (Sch 2, 23)

Historic commitments

- Capital expenditure funded from revenue (Sch 2, 1)
- Prudential borrowing costs (Sch 2, 2(a))
- Termination of employment costs (Sch 2, 2(b))
- Contribution to combined budgets (Sch 2, 2(c))

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Responsibilities held for maintained schools only

Statutory and regulatory duties

- Functions of LA related to best value and provision of advice to governing bodies in procuring goods and services (Sch 2, 58)
- Budgeting and accounting functions relating to maintained schools (Sch 2, 74)
- Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure in respect of schools which do not have delegated budgets, and related financial administration (Sch 2, 59)

- Monitoring of compliance with requirements in relation to the scheme for financing schools and the provision of community facilities by governing bodies (Sch 2, 60)
- Internal audit and other tasks related to the local authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under Section 151 of LGA 1972 for maintained schools (Sch 2, 61)
- Functions made under Section 44 of the 2002 Act (Consistent Financial Reporting) (Sch 2, 62)
- Investigations of employees or potential employees, with or without remuneration to work at or for schools under the direct management of the headteacher or governing body (Sch 2, 63)
- Functions related to local government pensions and administration of teachers' pensions in relation to staff working at maintained schools under the direct management of the headteacher or governing body (Sch 2, 64)
- Retrospective membership of pension schemes where it would not be appropriate to expect a school to meet the cost (Sch 2, 77)
- HR duties, including: advice to schools on the management of staff, pay alterations, conditions of service and composition or organisation of staff (Sch 2, 65); determination of conditions of service for non-teaching staff (Sch 2, 66); appointment or dismissal of employee functions (Sch 2, 66)
- Consultation costs relating to staffing (Sch 2, 68)
- Compliance with duties under Health and Safety at Work Act (Sch 2, 69)
- Provision of information to or at the request of the Crown relating to schools (Sch 2, 70)
- School companies (Sch 2, 71)
- Functions under the Equality Act 2010 (Sch 2, 72)
- Establish and maintaining computer systems, including data storage (Sch 2, 73)
- Appointment of governors and payment of governor expenses (Sch 2, 74)

Education welfare

- Inspection of attendance registers (Sch 2, 80)

Asset management

- General landlord duties for all maintained schools (Sch 2, 78a & b (section 542(2)) Education Act 1996; School Premises Regulations 2012) to ensure that school buildings have:
 - appropriate facilities for pupils and staff (including medical and accommodation)
 - the ability to sustain appropriate loads
 - reasonable weather resistance
 - safe escape routes
 - appropriate acoustic levels
 - lighting, heating and ventilation which meets the required standards

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- adequate water supplies and drainage
- playing fields of the appropriate standards
- General health and safety duty as an employer for employees and others who may be affected (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974)
- Management of the risk from asbestos in community school buildings (Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012)

Central support services

- Clothing grants (Sch 2, 54)
- Provision of tuition in music, or on other music-related activities (Sch 2, 55)
- Visual, creative and performing arts (Sch 2, 56)
- Outdoor education centres (but not centres mainly for the provision of organised games, swimming or athletics) (Sch 2, 57)

Premature retirement and redundancy

- Dismissal or premature retirement when costs cannot be charged to maintained schools (Sch 2, 79)

Monitoring national curriculum assessment

- Monitoring of National Curriculum assessments (Sch 2, 76)