

Wiltshire Council

Schools Funding Working Group & SEN Working Group

8 January 2023

Schools Forum

18 January 2023

DEDICATED SCHOOLS BUDGET – CENTRAL SCHOOLS SERVICES BLOCK UPDATE 2023-24

Purpose of the Report

1. To update schools forum on issues relating to the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) budget for 2024-25 financial year and the decisions that will need to be made as part of the budget setting process.
2. Schools Forum will recall the budget proposal was approved in principle at the December 2023 meeting and the only change since this is the actual charge for copyright licences has been received from the DfE.

Main Considerations

3. As outlined in the funding settlement paper the DfE has allocated a CSSB allocation of £2.643 million for Wiltshire. This has been calculated using the national funding formula for the CSSB which applies a unit value of £38.32 to the pupil numbers from the October 2023 census. Funding for agreed historic commitments for 2024-25 is then added to the amount of funding generated by the formula to give the overall total CSSB.

Protection and Funding Changes

4. Schools Forum will remember that the DfE have been reducing historic commitments. Wiltshire has been allocated £0.188m for historic commitments based on those commitments agreed as eligible in 2023-24 reduced by 20% of £0.047m. The DfE apply a maximum per pupil reduction in funding for ongoing responsibilities of -2.5%. Permitted gains are capped at 5.51% for 2024-25.

Function of the CSSB

5. The CSSB allocates funding to the LA to carry out central functions on behalf of pupils of maintained schools and academies. Funding includes:
 - 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
6. The duties included within the CSSB are listed in Appendix 1 to this report.
7. Additional pension funding that local authorities have claimed for centrally employed teachers are now rolled into the ongoing responsibilities element of the CSSB. This funding has been added as a per-pupil amount to the relevant local authority's per-pupil rate.
8. The decisions that schools forum is required to make in relation to the central schools block are listed below. These are in relation to the duties that local authorities have towards all schools.

9. Schools Forum approval is required on a line by line basis for this group of services which are funded from central schools block. The tables show each line, the base and the proposed 2024-25 budget.
10. Local authorities can fund services previously funded from the general funding rate of the ESG (for maintained schools only) from maintained school budget shares, with the agreement of maintained school members of the schools forum.
11. The relevant maintained schools members of the schools forum (primary, secondary, special and pupil referral units (PRUs), should agree the amount the local authority will retain.
 - If the local authority and schools forum are unable to reach a consensus on the amount to be retained by the local authority, the matter can be referred to the Secretary of State.
12. Local authorities should set a single rate per 5 to 16-year-old pupil for all mainstream maintained schools, both primary and secondary; in the interests of simplicity, this should be deducted from basic entitlement funding.
13. Many schools forums have agreed a top slice of schools funding to meet this shortfall. Wiltshire's schools have benefitted from taken the decision to treat the reduction in ESG funding as part of the general austerity reductions when setting the Council's medium-term financial plan. This has allowed the Council to fund business plan objectives and local priorities. The Council has deliberately selected to offer a level of protection for our school effectiveness services and have managed to avoid seeking approval from Schools Forum to date.
14. Assuming the proposed budget is accepted by schools forum, an amount of £0.025m unallocated CSSB is estimated to transfer to fund high needs pressures.

	23-24 Adjustments		24-25	
	Budget Estimate	& Inflation 2023/24 &	Budget Estimate	
Central Licences	457,200	53,500	510,700	DfE still in negotiations with the copyright licencing agency*
Central Provision (Former ESG)	1,297,900	115,600	1,413,500	Statutory / regulatory duties
Admissions	473,500	28,900	502,400	
Servicing of Schools Forums	3,400	300	3,700	
Central Provision within Schools Budget	2,232,000	198,301	2,430,300	
Education Services to CLA	103,000	-	103,000	No increases permitted
Child Protection in Schools & Early Years	56,200	-	56,200	No increases permitted
Prudential Borrowing	75,900	- 47,011	28,889	Elect to reduce in line with DfE reduction
Historic Commitments	235,100	- 47,011	188,089	20% year on year DfE reduction
Central School Services	2,467,100	151,290	2,618,389	
Transfer HNB	133,076	- 107,792	25,284	Balancing figure reduces in line with pressure / inflation
Reconcile to DfE Allocation	2,600,176	43,497	2,643,673	

Proposals

1. Schools Forum is asked to note the changes in the table above and the consider the required decisions in relation to the central schools block budget for 2024-25 itemised in Appendix 2.
 - i. Section A – central copyright licences - consult only (although the DfE have confirmed they are still negotiating rates with the copyright licencing agency.)
 - ii. Section B – central functions - approve on a line-by-line basis

- iii. Section C – historic commitments - approve on a line-by-line basis
 - Including the transfer of surplus CSSB grant to support the high needs block
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Documents relied upon for this report

[DSG: technical note 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Central school services block national funding formula, 2024 to 2025: technical note \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Report Author: Marie Taylor,

Head of Finance, Children and Education

Tel: 01225 713676

e-mail: marie.taylor@wiltshire.gov.uk