

Wiltshire Council

Schools Forum Finance & SEN Working Group 17 June 2024

Schools Forum 27 June 2024

Annual Schools Consultation

- *De-Delegation of Central Expenditure 2025-26*
- *De-Delegation for School Improvement Functions 2025-26*

Purpose of report

1. To brief Schools Forum and agree a set of questions to be sent out to all schools in the Autumn of 2024.

Background - De-Delegation of Central Expenditure

2. In order to give schools greater choice over how to spend their budgets, Local Authorities are required to work on the basis that services within the notional Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block, and the funding for them, should be delegated to schools in the first instance.
3. This means that a number of DSG funded budgets that have previously been retained centrally must now be delegated to schools. There are a number of exceptions to this and there are also a number of budgets that maintained primary and/or secondary schools can agree to *de-delegate* so that the services they support can continue to be provided centrally.
4. De-delegation cannot be applied to amounts delegated to academies or to special schools. Delegation or de-delegation cannot be agreed on an individual school basis for maintained schools but can be agreed by phase so a different outcome can be agreed for primary and secondary schools. Approval for de-delegation is by the relevant phase members of Schools Forum following responses to this consultation.
5. A consultation document will be issued to all maintained schools in the autumn to seek views on the delegation of central budgets. The budgets/services being consulted on are as follows:
 - Free School Meal Eligibility Service
 - Licences (Access Budget Planning)
 - Trade Union Facilities costs
 - Maternity costs
 - Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
 - Travellers Education Service
 - Behaviour Support Service

6. There are a number of outcomes that could flow from the proposals to delegate the budgets. These include:
 - a. Following consultation, maintained schools agree that budgets should be de-delegated and retained centrally by the LA with services provided to all maintained schools
 - b. Schools agree that budgets should be delegated, and schools make/purchase their own provision as appropriate
 - c. Schools agree that budgets should be delegated, and they then cluster together to purchase or deliver services.
7. Under scenario (a) the LA would be able to retain a level of service to provide to maintained schools, gaining from the economies of scale through this arrangement. The size of the service may need to be scaled back over time as the number of maintained schools convert to academies. *(at the time of this report there 103 maintained primary and secondary schools)*
8. Under scenarios b and c, the LA would not be able to continue to deliver a service unless there is sufficient buy back on a traded basis from schools (maintained or academy) to enable retention of sufficient staff. This will be difficult to predict, and the LA will need to decide whether it can afford to continue to deliver services centrally on a fully traded basis with full cost recovery. This would require a risk assessment.
9. **Appendix 1** to this report lists the consultation questions.

De-Delegation for School Improvement Functions

10. The DfE have removed the Local Authority Monitoring and Brokering Grant (LAMB) in full, from the 2023-24 year. Local authorities do have the opportunity to fund improvement services through either de-delegation or on a traded basis.
11. A local consultation exercise was undertaken in advance of the 2024-25 year to determine whether maintained schools would elect to de-delegate funding from their budgets to support the loss in the LAMB grant.
12. The annual grant had stood at £459,000 in the 2021-22 year and was reduced by 50% in 2022-23 and fully removed in 2023-24. In 2022-23, maintained schools de-delegated funding of £9.39 per pupil, in 2023-24, this was £19.63 per pupil and in 2024-25, this was £21.08 per pupil.
13. The new Head of the School Improvement team has been working with Primary and Secondary school leaders regarding the delivery of the service, in order to understand the most appropriate route to fulfil their needs.

Proposals

14. That Schools Forum decide on the consultation questions for maintained schools around delegation/de-delegation of budgets for central services and School Improvement within the schools' block. Appendix 1 & 2.

Report author:
Grant Davis, Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager
01225 718587
grant.davis@wiltshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – De-Delegation Questions

If you would prefer to that these services are provided centrally through de-delegation from your school budget, please place a tick in the De-Delegate box.

If however, you'd prefer to have the funding in your budget and procure your own services, please place a tick in the Don't Delegate box

DfE Heading	Wiltshire Budget	Don't Delegate?	De-Delegate?
Free school meals eligibility	Free School Meals Eligibility Service		
Licences/subscriptions	Access Budget Licence		
Staff costs – supply cover	Trade Union Duties		
	Maternity Costs		
Support for minority ethnic pupils and underachieving groups	Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS)		
	Traveller Education Service		
Behaviour support services	Primary Behaviour Support Service		

Appendix 2 – De-delegation for School Improvement Functions Questions

Please rank your preferred options below in order of preference, where 1 is your preferred option and 5 is your least favoured option? (Schools are currently funding at the 100% rate for the 2024-25 year)

<u>Options</u>	<u>Impact in School Effectiveness</u>	<u>Cost to Schools</u>	<u>Amount per pupil</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Schools don't fund any loss of LAMB	Reduction in Services - £459k	£0	£0	
Schools fund 50% loss of LAMB	Reduction in Services - £229.5k	£229,500	£11.13	
Schools fund 75% of LAMB	Reduction in Services - £114,8k	£344,250	£16.70	
Schools fund 87.5% of LAMB	Reduction in Services - £57.3k	£401,625	£19.48	
Schools fund 100% of LAMB	Existing service maintained	£459,000	£22.27	

Amount per pupil to be updated based upon maintained pupil numbers – June 2024