

### **Dedicated Schools Grant Consultations 2025-26**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Schools Forum with the results of the recent Autumn consultations relating to.
  - De-delegation of central services - Maintained Schools only
  - De-delegation in support of former LAMB grant – Maintained Schools only

The consultation regarding the transfer of funds from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for all schools is subject to a separate report.

2. The survey results will help Schools Forum decision making for the 2025-26 year.

#### **De-Delegation of Central Services Consultation Responses**

3. Under the funding formula, all funding should be fully delegated to all schools, however certain centrally provided services can be 'de-delegated' for maintained schools only, with approval of the respective maintained Schools Forum representatives.
4. The funding regulations require that all maintained schools are consulted and given the opportunity to express their preferences for the services which can be de-delegated. The services being consulted as part of the 2025-26 consultation process were:
  - Free School Meal Eligibility Checks
  - Access Budget Planning Software Licence
  - Trade Union Facilities Costs
  - Maternity Costs
  - Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
  - Traveller Education Service
  - Behaviour Support Service
5. The consultation regarding de-delegation took place through Right Choice during the Autumn term, to enable maintained schools to consider their responses. The consultations closed on 15 November 2024. Schools Forum members can see the questions and results of the consultation, detailed in Appendix 1.
6. A total of 50 responses were received, 46 responses from Primary Schools and 4 from Secondary Schools. This compares more favourably than the last year where 25 responses were received. This is a significantly higher response rate than in previous year however, it is widely known that the majority of maintained schools rely on their Schools Forum colleagues to make the appropriate decisions on their behalf.
7. The results received were overwhelmingly in favour of retaining the de-delegated services in both the Primary and Secondary schools which will inform eligible Schools Forum representatives when voting on the school budgets for 2025-26.

## De-Delegation – School Improvement Services 2024-25 (LAMB Grant)

8. The Local Authority Monitoring and Brokering (LAMB) Grant had been provided to local authorities since 2017, to help fulfil their core improvement activities. Funding was based on the number of maintained schools and the Department for Education (DfE) reduced the grant by 50% in 2022-23 and removed it fully in 2023-24.
9. Local authorities can fund improvement services through either de-delegation or on a traded basis. Historically, maintained schools' members of Schools Forum agreed to fund the loss of the LAMB grant through de-delegation and for the 2024-25 year, agreed to fund the full removal of the LAMB Grant.
10. In order to provide Schools Forum with a steer for the 2025-26 year, a local consultation was arranged to provide maintained schools with the opportunity to express their preference regarding continuing a contribution to support the loss of LAMB Grant funding. A copy of the consultation is held at Appendix 2.
11. The consultation was open to all maintained schools and a total of 35 responses were received (up from 14 responses in 2024-25), which can be broken down as follows.
  - 4 secondary schools
  - 31 primary schools
12. Of the schools that responded, the results can be summarised as below.

All Schools						
Option	Impact	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Schools don't fund any loss of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €453k	10	1	0	0	24
Schools fund 50% loss of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €229.5k	1	10	0	24	0
Schools fund 75% of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €114.8k	1	0	33	0	1
Schools fund 87.5% of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €57.3k	1	23	0	11	0
Schools fund 100% of LAMB	Existing service maintained	22	1	2	0	10

Primary						
Option	Impact	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Schools don't fund any loss of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €453k	6	1	0	0	24
Schools fund 50% loss of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €229.5k	1	6	0	24	0
Schools fund 75% of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €114.8k	1	0	29	0	1
Schools fund 87.5% of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €57.3k	1	23	0	7	0
Schools fund 100% of LAMB	Existing service maintained	22	1	2	0	6

Secondary						
Option	Impact	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Schools don't fund any loss of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €453k	4	0	0	0	0
Schools fund 50% loss of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €229.5k	0	4	0	0	0
Schools fund 75% of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €114.8k	0	0	4	0	0
Schools fund 87.5% of LAMB	Reduction in Services - €57.3k	0	0	0	4	0
Schools fund 100% of LAMB	Existing service maintained	0	0	0	0	4

13. This data will inform the decision making around the 2025-26 budget for school improvement services. The key points from the consultation are.
- ✓ 22 of the 35 respondents supported continuing to fund at the 100% level
  - ✓ 22 of the 31 primary school respondents supported continuing to fund at the 100% level
  - ✓ Only 6 primary schools set their first preference as being not to fund at all
  - ✓ All 4 of the secondary schools have expressed a preference to source their own school improvement support.
14. The DfE have confirmed that any commitment to fund School Improvement services will come under the de-delegation methodology and will be subject to annual agreement.
15. As with the centrally de-delegated services, it is widely recognised that the majority of maintained schools rely on their Schools Forum colleagues to make the appropriate decisions on their behalf.
16. It is allowable within the funding regulations to differentiate the de-delegation for School Improvement services between primary and secondary schools. The value of de-delegation for school improvement services for secondary schools in 2024-25 was £67,284 and therefore the remaining £391,716 related to primary schools.

## **Proposals**

17. Schools Forum is asked to note the local consultation responses in relation to the schools delegated budget for the 2025-26 financial year.
18. Schools Forum is asked to make 'in principle' decisions in accordance with the consultation responses as below.
- **De-delegation** of central services for Maintained schools
    - FSM – primary and secondary
    - Licences – primary and secondary
    - Trade Union – primary and secondary
    - Maternity – primary and secondary
    - Ethnic Minority Support – primary only
    - Traveller Education – primary only
    - Behaviour Support – primary only
  - **De-delegation** of funding to support school improvement services for maintained primary schools. To continue to fund at the rate of 100% loss in funding for primary schools only (£391k), recognising that secondary schools would prefer to source their own support.

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## Appendix 1 – De-Delegation Consultation

### Questions

DfE Heading	Wiltshire Budget	Delegate?	Retain Centrally?
Free school meals eligibility	Free School Meals Eligibility Service		
Licences/subscriptions	HCSS Licence		
Staff costs – supply cover	Trade Union Duties		
	Maternity Costs		
Support for minority ethnic pupils and underachieving groups	Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) – Primary		
	Traveller Education Service – Primary		
Behaviour support services	Primary Behaviour Support Service		

### Results

A summary of the results is set out below.

PRIMARY	FSM	Licences	Trade Union	Maternity	EMAS	Traveller Education	Behaviour Support
Delegate	0	0	1	1	6	6	2
De-delegate	46	46	45	45	40	40	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>

SECONDARY	FSM	Licences	Trade Union	Maternity	EMAS	Traveller Education	Behaviour Support
Delegate	0	0	0	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
De-delegate	4	4	4	4	N/a	N/a	N/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>N/a</b>	<b>N/a</b>	<b>N/a</b>

## Appendix 2 – Consultation – Loss of LAMB Grant

Please rank your preferred options below in order of preference, where 1 is your preferred option and 5 is your least favoured option?

<b><u>Options</u></b>	<b><u>Impact in School Effectiveness</u></b>	<b><u>Cost to Schools</u></b>	<b><u>Amount per pupil</u></b>	<b><u>Rank</u></b>
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	£16.69	
Schools fund 87.5% of LAMB	Reduction in Services - £57.4k	£401,625	£19.48	
Schools fund 100% of LAMB	Existing service maintained	£459,000	£22.26	