

## **SCHOOLS FORUM**

**Meeting date: 18 January 2022**

**From: Dan Barton  
Assistant Director – Education & Skills**

## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUNCTIONS 2022/23**

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 *On 11 January 2022 the DfE published the outcome of their consultation on reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded.*

1.2 *As a result of the consultation the LA level School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant will reduce by 50% from financial year 2022/23 and be removed entirely from 2023/24. Instead, the Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations 2022 will allow LAs to deduct funding from maintained school budget shares with the approval of their Schools Forum maintained school representatives.*

1.3 *Approval is sought from the maintained Schools Forum representatives to de-delegate £0.130m from maintained school budgets in 2023/23 to support the local authority's core school improvement functions.*

### **2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

2.1 *Ensuring that Cumbrian schools are funded appropriately is supportive of the Council Plan outcome that 'People in Cumbria are healthy and safe.*

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 *The Schools Forum is asked to note:*

- *the changes to the way that local authority school improvement functions are funded;*

3.2 *The Schools Forum representatives for maintained schools are recommended to approve:*

- *the de-delegated School Improvement budget of £0.130m.*

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The DfE launched a consultation seeking views on a proposal to remove the LA level School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant (SIMBG) and instead allow local authorities, with the approval of their maintained schools representatives to replace the funding for this function by deducting funding from maintained schools' budget shares so that LAs are not negatively impacted by the change.
- 4.2 The outcome of the consultation was published on 11 January 2022 when it was confirmed that the SIMBG would reduce by 50% in financial year 2022/23 and be removed entirely from 2023/24. The Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations 2022 will be amended to allow LAs to deduct funding from maintained school budget shares so that they can continue to carry out their core school improvement functions.
- 4.3 Schools Forum were made aware of the implications of this proposal and potential request to de-delegate this function in 2022/23 at its meeting on 22 November 2021.

## **5.0 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET 2022/23**

- 5.1 The 50% reduction in the SIMBG in 2022/23 is estimated to be £0.416m. This has been calculated using the September 2021 to March 2022 allocation of grant which was £0.485m, as follows:

$$£0.485m \times 12/7 \text{ months} \times 50\% = £0.416m$$

- 5.2 Although the grant is estimated at £0.416m for 2023/23 there is currently £0.286m of SIMBG held in earmarked reserves which can be used to support the budget in 2022/23. Therefore, it is estimated that the shortfall in funding will be £0.130m.
- 5.3 The regulations allow for LAs to deduct the funding from maintained schools budget shares as an Education Function for services relating to maintained schools only in much the same way as for de-delegated services. If the maintained schools' School Forum representatives agree that this funding can be deducted from school budget shares the cost to schools will be £3.57 per pupil in 2022/23. The per pupil rate will be the same for both primary and secondary schools, in accordance with the guidance issued.
- 5.4 As with the de-delegated services, any under or overspend at the year-end will transfer to the DSG earmarked reserves. It is estimated that for 2023/24 when the SIMBG grant is removed entirely that the budget required will be £0.831m which would equate to £22.87 per pupil but this is subject to any changes in the number of schools maintained, October 2022 pupils numbers and a review of how school improvement functions are delivered.
- 5.5 It should be noted that if the Schools Forum maintained schools representatives do not approve to de-delegate funds for this function that the Secretary of State retains the power to approve the de-delegation contrary to the decision of the Schools Forum if it is deemed necessary to ensure that

the local authority is adequately funded to exercise its core school improvement functions.

## **6.0 OPTIONS**

6.1 The maintained schools representatives of the Schools Forum can:

- Note the changes to the way local authority school improvement functions are funded;

and

- Approve the deduction of £0.130m from maintained school budget shares to fund the local authorities school improvement functions;

Or

- Not approve the deduction from maintained school budget shares.

## **7.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Resource and value for money implications have been considered throughout this report.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

8.1 This paper informs the Schools Forum of the proposal to de-delegate a budget of £0.130m from maintained schools for LA School Improvement functions in 2022/23.

8.2 The Schools Forum is asked to note the information presented in this report and the maintained school representatives are asked to decide on the options presented at section 6 of this report.

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*13 January 2022*

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