

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL SCHOOLS FORUM

Report Title: Maintained Schools De-delegation 2024/25

Meeting date: 2 November 2023

Report of: Dan Barton, Assistant Director, SEND, Education & Inclusion

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 In July 2023 the DfE confirmed that de-delegation will continue to be an option for maintained schools in 2024/25. The Schools Forum representatives for maintained schools are required on an annual basis to decide on the de-delegation options and are asked to vote on the options for 2024/25 separately, by primary and secondary phase.
- 1.2 The proposed de-delegation budgets are fixed amounts and therefore the primary and secondary per pupil rates for each authority are indicative as they have been based on October 2022 census pupil numbers. These will be updated in January 2024 to reflect October 2023 census pupil numbers.

2.0 Link to Council Plan Priorities

- 2.1 Ensuring that maintained schools have access to services provided centrally is supportive of the Council Plan “to improve the health and wellbeing of its residents” and the priority to “address inequalities and enable its residents to access opportunities that will empower them to achieve their goals.”

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Schools Forum representatives for maintained schools are recommended to continue to agree on behalf of the schools that they represent to de-delegate budget in 2024/25 for the services in paragraph 4.5.

4.0 Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendation

Background

- 4.1 De-delegated services are for maintained schools only, funding of these services must be allocated through the Schools Block via the school funding

formula but can be passed back (de-delegated) for maintained primary and secondary schools with Schools Forum approval. The DfE confirmed in July 2023 that de-delegation will continue to be an option for maintained schools in 2024/25.

- 4.2 The services under the de-delegated budgets also impact maintained PRUs, special schools and nursery schools and therefore in Cumberland an element is centrally retained in both the Early Years and High Needs Block for these services, although there is no de-delegation process for these two areas. The split of these budgets across the blocks is based on pupil numbers.
- 4.3 The current de-delegated services for 2023/24 as agreed last year are set out below:

De-delegated Service	Primary	Secondary
Contingencies	√	√
Staff Costs	√	√
Library Services	√	X
Insurance	√	√
School Improvement	√	X

- 4.4 A breakdown of the services provided under these headings is at Appendix 1 to this paper. Contingencies include exceptional unforeseen costs, schools in financial difficulties and costs relating to new, re-organised or closed schools. The staffing costs include teacher maternity and union duties reimbursements.

Proposed De-delegated Budgets 2024/25

- 4.5 It is not anticipated that there will be any change from the 2023/24 budgets as shown in the below table:

	Schools Block	High Needs Block	Early Years Block	Total 2023/24	Proposed Total 2024/25	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Contingencies	0.348	0.005	0.025	0.379	0.379	0.000
Insurance	0.373	0.005	0.027	0.405	0.405	0.000
Staff Costs	0.517	0.008	0.037	0.562	0.562	0.000
Library Services	0.250	0.005	0.023	0.277	0.277	0.000
School Improvement	0.311	0.006	0.028	0.344	0.344	0.000
Total	1.799	0.029	0.140	1.967	1.967	0.000

- 4.6 No schools have converted to academy status this year to date although one school has a provisional conversion date of 1 November and the de-delegated budget associated with this school is £0.015m but it is not proposed to change the value of the de-delegated budgets as a significant majority are linked to staff pay and therefore it is recommended that they continue, as in previous years, at the same level to allow for pay inflation and other cost pressures due to rising prices.
- 4.7 The figures in the table above are indicative figures only, final de-delegated budgets will be confirmed in January 2024 and the split between blocks will be based on the October 2023 census pupil data.

Insurance Arrangements

- 4.8 The Council’s current insurance contracts with Zurich (property and vehicle insurance) and Maven Public Sector (liability and fidelity guarantee insurances) commenced on 1 April 2023 and is for a period of 3 years ending 31 March 2026. As the Schools Forum representatives for maintained schools agreed to continue to de-delegate for insurance in 2023/24 the next opportunity to consider new insurance options for maintained schools will be 2026.
- 4.9 Therefore, maintained school representatives are asked to vote separately for the primary and secondary phases on whether to also continue to de-delegated budget for the Contingency, Staffing, Library services and School Improvement in 2024/25. The decision is binding for all schools in that phase.
- 4.10 It should be noted if Schools Forum do not agree the de-delegated budgets and/or propose revised de-delegated budgets there is a risk that this will impact on continuity of services for maintained schools who will need to seek alternative arrangements to continue to access the same level of services that they currently receive from these budgets.

5.0 Options

5.1 The Schools Forum representatives for maintained schools can:

- Confirm agreement to de-delegate in 2024/25 by voting separately for primary and secondary schools for the following services:

	Primary		Secondary	
De-delegated Service	De-delegated in 2023/24	De-delegate in 2024/25?	De-delegated in 2023/24	De-delegate in 2024/25?
Contingencies	Yes		Yes	
Staff Costs	Yes		Yes	
Library Services	Yes		No	
School Improvement	Yes		No	

and (subject to the above):

Option 1

- Agree the proposed 2024/25 de-delegated budgets as shown in table at para 4.5;

Option 2

- Not agree the proposed 2024/25 de-delegated budgets as shown in table at para 4.5

And

- Propose revised 2024/25 de-delegated budgets.

5.2 It should be noted that the budgets at para 4.5 are indicative and final budgets will be confirmed in January 2023 along with the per pupil funding rates.

6.0 Financial and Other Relevant Implications

6.1 Resource and value for money implications are considered throughout this report. No equality/legal/ implications have been identified.

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Appendices:

1. Cumberland De-delegated Budgets 2023/24

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