



Notes of the Maintained Schools Committee

Date: 30th November 2023

Present: J Freeman (Chair) - Kings Wood School, K Shabbier – Cressex School, E Stewart – Stoke Mandeville Combined School, J Smith – Castlefield, R Fearon – Dropmore, N Mulholland – Cottlesloe, S Parkinson – Booker Park, T Marshall – Burford School, J Allison – Chalfont St Giles Village School, M Peters – Roundwood, S Fogden – Head of Finance (Children’s Services), G Drawmer – Head of Achievement and Learning, J Carter – Schools Accountant.

1. De-delegation to fund School Improvement Activities

- 1.1. The committee considered proposals for the de-delegation of funding from maintained schools to cover School Improvement activities following the cessation of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage Grant from April 2023.
- 1.2. The report identified core school improvement activities that had previously been funded from the grant. The report presented was aligned with the funding approach agreed at School Forum in January 2023.
- 1.3. The approach agreed at Schools Forum was to fund a service of £542,500, funded partly from reserves £406,600 and partly from de-delegation £135,500 at a rate of £4 per pupil.
- 1.4. The committee resolved to remove the funding for Liaison Group Projects – this is set out in the paper as a full value of £70,000 with the 25% recovery from schools this year being equivalent to a value of £17,500 and to therefore reduce the de-delegation to schools by £0.52. A vote was taken on this decision, out of 8 eligible members, 3 voted for this proposal and 2 against.
- 1.5 Removal of this element of the Side by Side strategy would result in this being funded directly from reserves. The implication of this would be that reserves would be unable to support the level of school improvement activity as identified in the paper and reduce the period of transition that the reserves are able to cover.

2. Contingency Fund

- 2.1. The committee reviewed the sums carried forward from 2022-23 and the budget available for the current year against levels of spend in previous years.

- 2.2. It was agreed that there should be no further de-delegation from schools for the contingency fund in 2024-25 as there is sufficient funding available to cover future bids against this fund.
- 2.3. It was agreed this should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that a level of funding is retained to support schools in deficit.

3. Contingency – deficits for closing schools

- 3.1. It was agreed that, based on the potential conversions in the next financial year, there should be no de-delegation of funds for deficits in closing schools in 2024-25. It was agreed that this should be reviewed on an annual basis based on risk.

4. Trade Union Facilities

- 4.1. The committee reviewed the sums carried forward. There was no de-delegation for 2023-24
- 4.2. The committee also considered a more detailed report detailing the purpose and utilisation of TU facilities funds, which requested a de-delegation of £0.70 per pupil.
- 4.3. The committee recognised the need to continue to ensure that there is funding to enable backfill for TU reps and agreed a de-delegation of £0.50 per pupil.

5. Cover for small schools

- 5.1. Expenditure in previous years was reviewed and it was agreed to recommend to Schools Forum that no funding is de-delegated in 2024-25 as funding will be rolled forward from previous years. This is to be reviewed on an annual basis.

6. Finance Support for Schools in Financial Difficulties

- 6.1. It was agreed to recommend de-delegation at £2.75 per pupil in mainstream schools and £11 per place for special schools and PRUs. This is in line with 2022-23 de-delegation levels.

7. Educational Visits

- 7.1. It was agreed to recommend that de-delegation for the Educational Visits Service increased to £1.22 for primary and secondary from £1 per pupil (not increased since 2022-23) and £4.88 per pupil Special and PRU.

