

TITLE	19-20 Centrally retained block report
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	School Forum on 16 January 2019
WARD	(All Wards);
DIRECTOR	Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

The Schools Forum are asked to support the proposed allocation of the 2019/20 Central Schools Services Block Budget (CSSB).

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Department of Education (DfE) has set a separate block within the Dedicated Schools Grant to support the local authority in delivering educational statutory duties. The grant is a contribution to the total cost of the central statutory service which is approx. £2m.

In 2018/19 the CSSB had a budget of £944k which has increased to £946k for 2019/20.

During the course of 2018/19 the DfE clarified that the Council now has to fund copyright licences from this block, placing additional pressure on already stretched resources. The funding available to fund the Council's statutory duties has therefore now been reduced by £129k to accommodate licence costs, with £817k therefore remaining to be allocated towards the cost of statutory duties for 2019/20.

The allocation proposed in this report therefore reflects contributions towards the overall cost of statutory duties funded by the Council, with reductions in CSSB funding from 2018/19 not reflecting any planned reduction in services provided.

2019/20 Central School Services Block (CSSB)

January 2019

.01 Purpose of the Report

This report is to ask the Schools Forum to support the Council's proposed allocation of the Central School Services Block as contributory funding for the statutory education functions that must be delivered for 2019/20.

.02 Recommendations

The Schools Forum is asked to support the proposed allocation of the 2019/20 Central School Services Block.

.03 Background

The Department of Education (DfE) introduced a new block known as the Central School Services Block (CSSB) in 2018/2019, to fund local authorities for the statutory duties they hold for both maintained schools and academies.

The CSSB brought together funding previously allocated through the retained duties element of the Education Services Grant (ESG) and funding for ongoing central functions, such as admissions, previously top-sliced from the schools block.

The DfE has confirmed that the Wokingham allocation for 2019/20 for the CSSB is £946k which is a small increase of £2k from the current year's level of funding.

This CSSB does not fund the full cost of the statutory services provided by the Council, which are approx. £2m. A significant proportion of costs (£1.2m, 60%) is therefore funded from the general fund (local taxpayers).

.04 2019/20 Proposed Budget Allocation

The Council proposes to use the CSSB to fund statutory services largely in line with that approved by Schools Forum for the current financial year.

The main change to the 2018/19 budget arrangements is in relation to copyright licences. As previously reported to Forum the DfE expect this to be funded from the CSSB, which was not identified at the time of 2018/19 budget setting.

While the overall level of the CSSB block funding has therefore remained fairly static year on year, the inclusion of licences from the funding reduces the 2018/19 budget level for other services by £129k.

The proposed allocation of the CSSB is included in Appendix A. Given there is a reduced level of funding available, and the figures do not represent the full cost of each service, the table represents an internal allocation of contributions only. The council are not proposing to reduce the service offered to schools in relation to statutory duties for 2019/20.

There are many education services offered to schools like educational psychology, various therapies and other services which were previously funded by the Education Support Grant, that the Council continues to provide without any additional funding from the DSG.

School improvement is not included in the arrangements set out above. Local authorities receive a separate grant covering their statutory intervention functions and monitoring and commissioning of school improvement support. This grant is expected to continue into 2019/20 although individual LA allocations have not yet been confirmed. The Grant last year did not cover the full cost of this service.

.05 **Summary**

The Central School Services Block (CSSB) covers funding allocated to LAs to carry out central functions on behalf of pupils in both maintained schools and academies.

The 2019/20 allocation for Wokingham is £946k, a £2k rise on that received for 2018/19, and it is proposed to allocate on a similar basis, while recognising the additional cost pressure of licences. This provides an additional pressure on the Council's General Fund, to ensure teams providing statutory duties are maintained.

Coral Miller
Interim Senior Financial Specialist – Education
January 2019

Bob Watson
Lead Specialist – Finance (deputy s151)
January 2019

Appendix A

Responsibilities held	Description of Service	Budget 2018/19 £000	Proposed Budget 2019/20 £000
Statutory & regulatory duties	Director of Children's Services, education staff and planning for the education service as a whole.	230	208
	Revenue budget preparation, preparation of information on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education. Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares. Formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula. Internal audit and other tasks related to the authority's Chief Finance Officer's responsibilities under Section 151 of LGA 1972 except duties specifically related to maintained schools.	120	119
	Health & Safety	13	12
	Standing Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs).	7	7
	Provision of information to or at the request of the Crown other than relating specifically to maintained schools.	72	62

Responsibilities held	Description of Service	Budget 2018/19 £000	Proposed Budget 2019/20 £000
Education Welfare	<p>Functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision of education to excluded pupils.</p> <p>School attendance.</p> <p>Responsibilities regarding the employment of children</p>	141	119
Asset Management	<p>Management of the Local Authority's capital programme including preparation and review of an asset management plan, and negotiation and management of private finance transactions</p> <p>General landlord duties for all buildings owned by the local authority, including those leased to academies</p>	68	40 10
Other ongoing	Copyright licences	0	129
	School Forum servicing	4	4
	School Admission - duties relating to the admissions process	289	236
TOTAL		944	946

