

TITLE	2023/24 Final Central School Services Block Budget
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Schools Forum on 11 January 2023
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This reports forms part of regular reporting to Schools Forum, informing areas of statutory decision making and improving visibility and consultation on wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial matters.

RECOMMENDATION

Schools Forum is asked to note the final 2023/24 budget allocation for the Central School Services Block (CSSB).

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Department of Education (DfE) has set a separate block within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to support the local authority in delivering educational statutory duties. The grant is a contribution to the total cost of the central statutory services operated by the Council.

At the December 2022 meeting of Schools Forum approval was given on the planned allocation of the block, based on provisional block figures available at that time. Following receipt of the 2023/24 DSG Finance Settlement and updated national licence costs, figures have been revised in line with the approach agreed.

The final Central Support Services Block allocation for 2023/24 is £1.039m – an increase of £44k (4.4%) on the current year's allocation of £995k. Within that, nationally arranged licences, where costs are charged to individual LA's CSSB, have increased from £142k to £164k (15%).

The net impact of the above, is a small increase of £9,800 available funding on the provisional figures discussed at the December meeting of Schools Forum, and in line with approval given this has been adjusted within Statutory & Regulatory Duties.

2023/24 Final Central School Services Block (CSSB)

January 2023

.01 Purpose of the Report

This report is to update Schools Forum on the final allocation of the Central School Services Block (CSSB) as contributory funding for the statutory education functions that must be delivered by the local authority for 2023/24.

.02 Recommendations

Schools Forum is asked to note the final 2023/24 budget allocation for the Central School Services Block (CSSB) of £1,039,200.

.03 Background

The Department of Education (DfE) introduced a new block in the DSG allocation known as the Central School Services Block (CSSB) in 2018/19, 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 former Education Services Grant (ESG) and funding for ongoing central functions, such as school admissions, previously top-sliced from the Schools Block.

The provisional CSSB allocation for 2023/24 of £1.015m was discussed at December Schools Forum, with approval given on both planned allocation and approach to take should final figures vary from the planning assumptions made.

The CSSB provides a contribution to the full cost of the statutory services provided by the Council, costing around £2m, and consequently a significant proportion of the cost is funded from general fund budgets raised through local council tax collection.

.04 2023/24 Final Budget Allocation

At the December 2022 meeting of Schools Forum approval was given on the planned allocation of the block, based on provisional block figures available at that time. Following receipt of the 2023/24 DSG Finance Settlement and updated national licence costs, figures have been revised in line with the approach agreed.

The final Central Support Services Block allocation for 2023/24 is £1.039m – an increase of £44k (4.4%) on the current year’s allocation of £995k. Within that, nationally arranged licences, where costs are charged to individual LA’s CSSB, have increased from £142k to £164k (15%).

The net impact of the above, is a small increase of £9,800 available funding on the provisional figures discussed at the December meeting of Schools Forum, and in line with approval given this has been adjusted within Statutory & Regulatory Duties.

The final allocation of the CSSB is included in Appendix A. The figures do not represent the full cost of each service, the table represents an internal allocation of contributions only.

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.

.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 final Central Support Services Block allocation for 2023/24 is £1.039m, an increase of £44k (4.4%) on the current year’s allocation of £995k.

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	Description of Service	Budget 2022/23 £'000	Budget 2023/24 £'000
Statutory & regulatory duties	Director of Children's Services, education staff and planning for the education service as a whole.	162	187
	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.	117	117
	Health & Safety	12	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.	150	150
	Education Welfare	Functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision for education to excluded pupils. School Attendance Responsibilities regarding the employment of children	117

	Description of Service	Budget 2022/23 £'000	Budget 2023/24 £'000
Asset Management	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	39	39
	General landlord duties for all buildings owned by the local authority , including those leased to academies	10	10
Other ongoing	Copyright Licences	145	164
	School Forum servicing	4	4
	School Admission – duties relating to the admissions process	232	232
TOTAL		995	1,039

*** Contribution towards total annual cost of statutory services, circa £2m.*

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