

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 6th October 2022

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT, MONITORING AND BROKERAGE GRANT – REQUEST FOR CONSULTATION FOR DE-DELEGATION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose and seek Schools Forum's views on the consultation process in respect of the de-delegation of funding to mitigate the reduction in the School Improvement, Monitoring and Brokerage Grant (SIMBG) received by the Wirral Council.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The SIMBG has been allocated to local authorities since September 2017 to allow them to continue monitor performance of maintained schools, broker school improvement provision and intervene as appropriate. The grant allocation was based on the number of maintained schools within the area and replaced the previous Education Services Grant (ESG) at a significantly reduced funding value.
- 2.2 The Council received £333k for SIMBG for the financial year 2021/22 and the grant is used to fund service provision for core school improvement activities for maintained secondary, primary and special schools in Wirral.
- 2.3 In October 2021, Department for Education (DfE) launched the consultation "Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded" and its outcome was published in January 2022, which confirmed that the grant payment to local authorities that funds the provision of school improvement services to local authority maintained schools would reduce by 50% in 2022-23 and be removed entirely in 2023-24.
- 2.4 As per the DfE "Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded – Government consultation response – January 2022" the DfE have stated:
- "As such, we will (1) reduce the grant by 50% for the FY 2022-23 and bring it to an end in FY 2023-24 and (2) include provision in Part 7 of Schedule 2 to the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations for FY 2022-23 which would allow councils to de-delegate for all improvement expenditure, including all core improvement activities."
- 2.5 In line with the guidance issued by the DfE in the consultation response document, this report is seeking Schools Forum's views on schools to de-delegate funding in the financial year 2023-24 to recoup the loss of income from maintained.

2.6 Due COVID and school closures which impacted on delivering school improvement services 2020-21 and 2021-22, the unspent SIMBG was carried forward to 2022-23. This has assisted with the funding needed for 2022/23 in continuing to provide school improvement services and there was no need for the request for de-delegation for 2022/23.

3.0 CONSULTATION: MODELS FOR THE DE-DELEGATION

3.1 To recoup the loss of the income in 2023-24 at the same level with the 2021-22 SIMBG, two models for the de-delegation are proposed: a tiered funding model and a per pupil model

3.2 The tiered funding model is to group the maintained schools into 4 groups by their pupil numbers using the October 21 census. 4 groups and each tier's contribution rate are proposed as the table below:

	Rate per school
For Schools with 199 pupils or less	£2,200
For Schools with 200-399 pupils	£3,400
For Schools with 400-699 pupils	£5,700
For Schools above 700 pupils	£12,000

3.3 The alternative model is the per pupil model, which is proposed to be £13.00 per pupil as the de-delegation rate.

3.4 The DfE schools' revenue funding operational guidance states that de-delegation does not apply to special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), where de-delegation has been agreed for maintained primary and secondary schools, the DfE presume that the local authority will offer the service on a buy back bases to those establishments that are not covered by the de-delegation.

3.5 The consultation paper will be distributed to the maintained secondary and primary schools on 10 October 2022. Schools will be consulted on their preferred model for the de-delegation and their views will be sought. The results of the consultation will be reported back to Forum at the November meeting.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 That Schools Forum note the report.

4.2 That Schools Forum note the plans for the consultation process with schools and that the outcome will be reported to the November meeting (paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5).

Simone White
Director of Children, Families and Education