

Report to: Schools Forum – Technical Group

Date: 15th December 2022

Report of: Terry Shaw, Schools Funding Manager, Fair Funding Team

Title: Central School Services Block Provisional Allocations 2023-24

Status: For Discussion

1. Purpose of the Report

The Central School Services block (CSSB) was established by the DfE in 2018/19 and created with the aim of funding LA's for statutory duties they hold for both maintained schools and academies. It brings together:

- Funding for ongoing responsibilities, such as admissions
- Funding previously allocated through the retained duties element of the education services grant (ESG)
- Residual agreed funding for historic commitments

A breakdown for the budget for CSSB for 2022/23 and the proposals for 2023/24 is provided in Appendix 1. Please note the CSSB does not include funding for any central front-line budgets and commitments held in the Early Years and High Needs blocks.

The aim of the CSSB is to improve transparency and recognise the continued need to use DSG funding (within laid out parameters) to fund centrally managed commitments supporting front line and support service functions.

2. CSSB Budget 2023/24

The provisional National Funding Formula 2023/24 allocation for Birmingham Council for the CSSB is estimated to be £8.222m – a reduction of £0.81m from the figure for 2022/23. The DfE has begun reducing the element of funding within the CSSB that some LA's receive for historic commitments made prior to 2013/14. This will reduce by 20% each year. The DfE does not believe it is fair to maintain significant differences in funding indefinitely between local authorities which reflect historic decisions.

This overall change disguises two important factors, regarding DfE's overall calculation:

- (i) In 2022/23 Birmingham Council is no longer receiving the additional funding of £10.0m relating to Equal Pay commitments which have now ceased, and have also had a reduction of another 20% of its funding for the remaining historical commitments for 2023/24.
- (ii) has gained 2.1% for its other responsibilities.

Therefore, funding for 2023/24 has been provisionally calculated by DfE as follows:

	£m	
2022-23 baseline for historic commitments	1.153	This shows the current year LA allocation for historic commitments.
20% reduction for historic commitments	(0.231)	This is a 20% reduction of the historic commitments after removing the equal pay.
2023-24 total funding for historic commitments	0.922	This shows what the LA will receive for its historic commitments in 2023-24.
2022-23 baseline for ongoing responsibilities	7.150	This shows the LA's allocation for ongoing responsibilities in the current year's DSG allocations.
2023-24 total funding for ongoing responsibilities	7.300	This shows what the LA will provisionally receive for ongoing responsibilities in 2023-24.
Percentage change in per pupil funding in 2022-23	2.10%	This shows the percentage change in what the LA will provisionally receive per pupil for ongoing responsibilities.
2023-2024 Overall Funding (Total historic commitments plus total ongoing responsibilities)	8.223	

Historic commitments refer to spend back to 2013/14, which are difficult to track back precisely, but seems to equate to equal pay (manual and non manual), plus school improvement, nursery redundancies and early help / brokerage.

The DfE have decided to reduce funding by 20% for historic commitments but there remains a £0.660m commitment for equal pay for manual staff in schools which covers a repayment period to 2031/32. We have written to DfE to request some protection against this and their advice is that our CSSB allocation cannot be protected until the historic commitments funding falls below the £0.660m. We estimate that this will not come into play until 2025/26.

Given the overall resources available within the CSSB allocation for 2023/24 it seems sensible to maintain existing budgets for historic commitments, in cash terms, with a view to taking a more considered approach moving forward as to how budget support for Early Help and Brokerage, School Improvement and Nursery Redundancies can be reduced. Finance will have

discussions with all relevant parties during the year with a view reaching an agreement about the best options available.

The funding for ongoing commitments within the CSSB allocation has been increased by 2.1% in 2023/24. In order to fund the remaining historic commitments at the same level as in 2022/23 we need to utilise £1.125m of the funding allocated for ongoing commitments.

There are provisionally two options that could be taken when allocating the remaining budget as follows:

1. Fund copyright licences in full at the amount notified by DfE in 2021/22 with an increase of 4% and all other remaining ongoing commitments are funded at the 2021/22 rate. This requires use of an amount of £0.046m from CSSB Reserves to fund the £1.125m needed for historic commitments by transferring from the ongoing responsibilities allocation.
2. Fund copyright licences in full at the amount notified by DfE in 2021/22 with an increase of 4% and all other remaining ongoing commitments are increased by 2.1%. This requires use of an amount of £0.156m from CSSB Reserves to fund the £1.125m needed for historic commitments by transferring from the ongoing responsibilities allocation. There is an expectation to use the CSSB Reserves fund to smooth the 20% loss in historic commitments going forward and provide some contingency against potential shortfalls in ongoing commitments as historically these budgets have not been increased for some time. Work will need to be undertaken during 2023/24 to review and validate spend in this area.

A potential third option is still to be considered prior to the Schools Forum meeting on 15th December 2022

Establishing a reserve to help smooth the future “20%” reductions, and provide some contingency for the future, as well as recognising inflationary pressures is good financial practice and hence the preferable option at this stage for the local authority is option 2.

3. Benchmarking

Appendix 2 sets out benchmarking information extracted from tables issued by the DfE using 2022/23 Section 251 statements. The columns set out the totality of what LA's could be budgeting and highlight those commitments applicable to Birmingham. Overall BCC compares well to neighbouring authorities.

4. Service / Commitment details

Supporting information is attached as Appendix 3, which gives further details of Admissions as well as Safeguarding and Early Help and Appendix 4 spend on statutory functions.

At last year's budget setting Schools Forum there was a discussion regarding the resources available and the commissioning of the school improvement contract. The recommendation there was that resources available remain at £1.000m (irrespective of the 20% reduction in

historical commitments) and the proposal for 2023/24 is the same. The tender documentation indicated that *“The Council is seeking a potential provider to drive improvement for all Birmingham pupils across all Birmingham schools. This will be achieved by delivering or brokering school improvement activity for maintained schools where required and taking a role in the co-ordination of school led improvement for city-wide standards”*. In keeping with the strategy outlined above, funding for the school improvement contract would need to be reviewed annually alongside other budget pressures given the DfE reduction in grant by 20% each year.

5. Recommendations / Discussion

The options are provisional allocations based on estimates. A revised paper will be produced in January 2023 showing recommendations and seeking a decision following publication of the 2023/2024 Dedicated Schools Grant allocation, which has historically been published in the third week of December of the prior financial year.

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Appendix 1

				Option 1	Option 2
Budget Area - Part 1 Historic Commitments	20/21 £m	21/22 £m	22/23 £m	23/24 £m	23/24 £m
Contribution To Combined Budgets:					
* Contribution to Children Services re Equal Pay	10.660	10.660	0.660	0.660	0.660
* Early Help & Brokerage Service	0.262	0.262	0.262	0.262	0.262
* School Improvement	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
* Nursery & Special Redundancy (only Nursery Redundancy from 2020/21 onwards)	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125
CONTRIBUTION FROM ONGOING COMMITMENTS			(0.894)	(1.125)	(1.125)
Sub Total	12.047	12.047	1.153	0.922	0.922
DfE Allocation	11.802	11.441	1.153	0.922	0.922
Over/(Under)	0.245	0.606	0.000	0.000	0.000
Budget Area - Part 2 Ongoing & Centrally Retained Duties					
Copyright Licenses	0.922	0.922	0.957	0.995	0.995
School Admissions – statutory service requirement.	1.618	1.778	1.853	1.893	1.932
Schools Forum	0.080	0.080	0.083	0.089	0.091
1. Strategic planning for the Education Service as a whole:					
*Corporate Director /AD's plus support	0.651	0.651	0.678	0.678	0.693
*School Places Planning	0.273	0.273	0.284	0.284	0.290
*Participation Team	0.303	0.303	0.316	0.316	0.322
*Finance Support	0.626	0.626	0.652	0.652	0.666
*Statutory Advice Council Religious Education	0.100	0.100	0.104	0.104	0.106
2. Education Welfare	0.271	0.271	0.282	0.282	0.288
3. Asset Management	0.721	0.721	0.751	0.751	0.767
4. Other as agreed by School Forum (13th June 2019)					
*Schools Financial services - financial advice to schools	0.058	0.058	0.060	0.060	0.062
*Schools Human Resources Services	0.110	0.110	0.115	0.115	0.117
5. Use of DSG Balances	(0.078)	(0.036)			
MONEY NEEDED FOR HISTORIC COMMITMENTS			0.894	1.125	1.125
SET ASIDE IN RESERVE/(USE RESERVE)			0.119	(0.046)	(0.156)
TOTAL CSSB DSG RESERVES BROUGHT FORWARD			1.595	1.714	1.714
TOTAL CSSB DSG RESERVES CARRIED FORWARD			1.714	1.668	1.558
Sub Total	5.655	5.857	7.150	7.300	7.300
DfE Allocation	5.921	6.842	7.150	7.300	7.300
Over/(Under)	(0.266)	(0.985)	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
TOTAL APPROVED	17.702	17.904	8.303	8.222	8.222
TOTAL DFE ALLOCATION	17.722	18.284	8.303	8.222	8.222
OVER/(SURPLUS TO BE ALLOCATED)	(0.020)	(0.380)	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)

Please note:

- 1) De Delegated budgets are still held in the Schools block**
- 2) Early Years and High Needs front line - Centrally managed front-line budgets are in their respective blocks and not the CSSB**
- 3) The £0.660m contribution to Children services re Equal Pay is for manual employees for 20 years 2012/13 to 2031/32) agreed by School Forum 6th October 2011**

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Central Services Block: Benchmarking Data 2022/23 on a Net per pupil basis

	1.4.1 Contribution to combined budgets	1.4.2 School admissions	1.4.3 Servicing of schools forums	1.4.5 Falling Rolls Fund	1.4.10 Pupil growth	1.4.11 SEN transport	1.4.14 Other Items	1.5.1 Education welfare service	1.5.2 Asset management	1.5.3 Statutory/ Regulatory duties
ENGLAND - Average (mean)	£7	£9	£1	£1	£15	£3	£6	£4	£2	£10
ENGLAND - Average (median)	£3	£8	£0	£0	£14	£0	£5	£3	£2	£9
ENGLAND - Maximum	£64	£39	£5	£40	£66	£50	£43	£15	£9	£95
ENGLAND - Minimum	-£9	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Average (median)	£4	£9	£0	£0	£11	£0	£5	£1	£2	£10
Maximum	£54	£18	£1	£5	£37	£20	£7	£8	£4	£26
Minimum	£0	£6	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£3
330 Birmingham	£54	£8	£0	£5	£5	£1	£4	£1	£3	£11
821 Luton	£0	£12	£0	£0	£11	£0	£6	£4	£0	£10
333 Sandwell	£8	£7	£0	£0	£20	£0	£0	£0	£0	£26
336 Wolverhampton	£7	£8	£1	£0	£9	£0	£0	£5	£4	£3
892 Nottingham	£19	£12	£1	£0	£24	£20	£6	£3	£3	£8
352 Manchester	£0	£18	£0	£0	£37	£5	£7	£0	£0	£12
335 Walsall	£0	£6	£0	£0	£1	£0	£5	£1	£0	£18
308 Enfield	£4	£11	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4	£7	£2	£9
831 Derby	£46	£7	£0	£0	£5	£0	£5	£0	£1	£9
320 Waltham Forest	£0	£17	£1	£0	£15	£0	£0	£1	£2	£14
380 Bradford	£0	£9	£0	£0	£28	£0	£5	£8	£3	£10
Difference from statistic neighbours average	£50	-£1	£0	£5	-£6	£1	-£1	£0	£1	£1

School Admissions

Introduction & Background

The School Admission and Fair Access Service provides the following key functions:

- Primary & Secondary normal admissions round (and year 2-3 and 14-19 transfers)
- In-year admissions
- Fair Access
- Appeals
- Admission arrangements
- Pupil tracking

The Council administers the appeals process for all council, community and voluntary-controlled schools and also provides a commercial service for academies and other schools. The budget for appeals is outside of this arrangements.

National and Statutory Context

All school admission services make an important contribution to the safeguarding of children and young people by ensuring that every child is offered a school place.

Birmingham and other local authorities, track children who are out of school because their parent/carer has refused a school place and take appropriate action.

The Admission Service provides and supports the provision of a range of statutory requirements as identified within the Schools Admission Code 2014 and pupil registration regulations 2006.

The Code applies to admissions to all maintained schools in England. It should be read alongside the School Admission Appeal Code and other guidance and law that affect admissions and admission appeals in England.

This Code imposes mandatory requirements and includes guidelines setting out aims, objectives and other matters in relation to the discharge of functions relating to admissions by the bodies listed below:

- a) **Admission authority of maintained schools** as defined in Section 88 (1) (a) and (b) of the SSFA 1998
- b) **Governing bodies and local authorities (when not admission authorities)**
- c) **School Adjudicators**

d) **Admission Appeal Panels**

These bodies have a statutory duty to act in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Code.

All Academy Schools (including those that are Free Schools), University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools are required by their funding agreements to comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions.

It is the responsibility of admission authorities to ensure that admission arrangements are fair and compliant with this Code. Where a school is the admission authority, this responsibility falls to the governing body or Academy Trust.

The table below identifies the types of school with related governance and admission authorities.

Type of school	Who is the Admission Authority	Who deals with complaints and arrangements?	Who is responsible for arranging/providing for an appeal against refusal of a place at a school?
Academies	Academy Trust	School Adjudicator	Academy Trust
Community Schools	Local Authority	School Adjudicator	Local Authority
Foundation Schools	Governing Body	School Adjudicator	Governing body
Voluntary aided schools	Governing Body	School Adjudicator	Governing body
Voluntary controlled schools	Local Authority	School Adjudicator	Local Authority

Benchmarking data for admissions funding in 2022 illustrates that Birmingham is funded at a lower rate per pupil (£8 per head) compared to the England average (£9 per head).

Education Safeguarding & Early Help

Introduction:

In January 2019 Schools Forum agreed the continuation of £262,000 funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant to support the Children's Advice & Support Service (CASS) Education Team and Birmingham Children's Trust Early Help Support Team.

This offer ensures that Schools are supported to fulfil the requirements of Right Help, Right time and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2019.

This is a request for the funding arrangements to continue for 2023/2024.

Local Authority CASS Education Team

Continued DSG funding requested

£192,661 to continue to be allocated as follows:

- 1.00 fte Deputy Head/ DSL
- 1.00 fte School Support Officer
- 1.00 fte Additional CASS Deputy Head DSLs. (arranged through an SLA with schools)

Core Offer

The CASS Education team has developed in the past 4 years to support this wider delivery of Early Help within Education, this is in addition to the services provided to schools through annual subscription. Delivery includes;

- Strategic Education representation for partnership initiatives e.g. families in temporary accommodation
- Development of Education specific guidance on emerging issues within CASS e.g. sexting / harmful sexual behaviours
- Advice, guidance and quality assurance of requests for support submitted to CASS
- Detailed feedback to support delivery of Early Help following CASS outcomes
- Support to schools contributing to strategy discussions and delivering support to children within a social care plan
- Intensive support to schools where a "critical near miss" has been identified
- Notification to Head teachers attending ICPCs during school holidays
- Advice, guidance and support to schools where difficulties have arisen within social work allocated cases
- Bespoke support to schools identifying school based Early Help and possible "PBR" submissions
- Early Help support within learning reviews for school settings

Following city wide briefings last October, schools identified ongoing development needs to both the strategic and operational interface with the Children's Trust. Most notably, safeguarding children with SEND. The CASS Education team will take this forward as part of an improved offer to schools.

The Children`s Trust Early Help Support Team

Continued DSG funding requested

£69,339 of the DSG allocation will continue to contribute towards the Early Help Support Team staff

- 3 fte grade 3 Admin Staff
- 3.77 fte Early Help Support Workers

Core Offer

- Duty Support line to all agencies that provides advice and guidance to all agencies. This includes pathways, support and advice when to make referrals into CASS & signposting.
- Follow up support for agencies requiring support for initiating Early Help Assessments.
- Advice and guidance to partners sitting within the CASS around thresholds and the early help offer
- Registration of all Early Help Assessments and our Family Plans to one central point for data analysis and reporting. Feedback on quality assurance & next steps. Co delivery of training to partners regarding Early Help and Early Help Assessments.
- Case auditing and quality assurance of assessments and plans to support the improvement in practice and support to families
- Supporting the allocation of cases utilising Right Help Right Time to ensure families receive the appropriate support, including Family Support, Think Family Intensive Provision and Early Help.
- CASS development regarding process, improving practice, developing partnership working. Workshops/ meetings with CASS partners

Continued DSG funding will enable development of the CASS MASH partnership and continuation direct support to schools engaging with partnership working.