**School Forum Decisions – 27th September 2023**

**Agenda Item 2 – High Needs Funding**

**Recommendations:**

2.1 Schools Forum agreed the revisions to the funding decisions taken in July to **£4.8m** for 2023/24 detailed at 5.5 and **£4m** for 2024/25 detailed at 5.6 as recommended by the High Needs Review Group. Schools Forum approved an amendment to the recommendations for allocating an increase to top-up funding. Funding will not automatically pass to schools within Trusts that pool funding until the Authority has conducted a review.

5.5 The changes to the July agreement for 2023/24 are shown in the second and fourth bullet points.

* Continue to increase place funding for schools in 2023/24 as agreed in July **(£735,000**).
* To apply the same methodology (shown in points 1 to 4 below) to allocate place funding to the allocation of top-up funding for 2023/24 (**£1.2 million)**

1. Schools with less than 210 pupil whose balance is 8% or lower or up to £60,000, whichever is the greater, receive a 5% increase to top-up funding.
2. Schools with more than 210 pupils who have a balance of 8% or lower (5% or lower for secondary schools) receive a 5% increase to top-up funding.
3. Schools with balances above 8% (5% secondary) but below 20% receive a 2.5% increase to top-up funding.
4. Schools with balances above 20% receive no increase to top-up funding.

* Invest in early intervention starting with an additional **£1 million** for Outreach in 2023/24.
* To re-allocate the funding from the original top-up funding proposal to early intervention (**£1.9 million**). Proposals to be determined.

5.6 For 2024/25 the Authority needs to operate within the funding available. It is therefore proposed to invest only in early intervention in 2024/25 to help make the high needs block sustainable in future years. All expenditure will be evaluated for effectiveness and if it is not having the desired impact, it will be ceased.

* Outreach **£2 million**
* Inclusion Fund **£1 million**
* Training **£500,000**
* Education Access Turnaround **£500,000**

2.2 Schools Forum endorsed the recommendation of the Authority for the creation of an Independent Schools working group.

**Agenda Item 3 – School Funding 2024/25**

**Recommendations**

2.1 Schools Forum noted the provisional funding settlement for 2024/25.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | £m |
| Schools Block 2023/24 | 1,090.6 |
| Mainstream Schools Additional Grant 2023/24 | 37.1 |
| 2023/24 Baseline | 1,127.7 |
| Provisional Schools Block 2024/25 | **1,159.4[[1]](#footnote-1)** |
| Provisional Increase | 31.7 |
| % Increase | 2.83% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | £m |
| High Needs Block 2023/24 | 226.7 |
| Provisional High Needs Block 2024/25 | **238.5** |
| Provisional Increase | 11.8 |
| % Increase | 5.2% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | £m |
| Central School Services Block 2023/24 | 11.4 |
| Provisional Central School Services Block 2024/25 | **11.5[[2]](#footnote-2)** |
| Provisional Increase | 0.1 |
| % Increase | 1.1% |

2.2 Schools Forum approved the recommended changes to the Essex Formula for Funding Schools for 2024/25 (at 7.1 and 7.2), as recommended by the Finance Review Group

7.1 To fund schools using the Essex non-fringe area cost adjustment uplift for 2024/25 to ensure all schools receive funding based on the geographic cost pressures.

7.2 To increase the London Fringe allowance from 1.0156 to 1.0251 which is halfway between 1.0156 and 1.0345.

2.3 Schools Forum approved the school funding consultation document (at Annex B), as recommended by the Finance Review Group.

**Agenda Item 4 – De-Delegation and Education Functions 2024/25**

**Recommendations**

2.1 Primary maintained members approved the proposal for de-delegation for public duties at £1 per pupil for 2024/25.;

2.2 The secondary maintained member agreed the proposal for de-delegation for public duties at £1 per pupil for 2024/25;

2.3 School members agreed to top-slice **£1.3m** for premature retirement costs at 4.7;

2.4 All members agreed the proposals for education functions funded by the ongoing responsibilities element of the Central School Services Block at 5.3; and

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Central Services for all schools | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|  | **£’000** | **£’000** |
| Statutory & Regulatory services: |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Education Welfare | 1,170 | 1,566 |
| - School attendance |  |  |
| - Employment of children |  |  |
| - Children missing education and elective home education |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Statutory Regulatory Duties - | 1,577 | 1,155 |
| - Director Education |  |  |
| - Senior Education Management Team |  |  |
| - Planning for education service as a whole |  |  |
| - Revenue budget preparation / external audit |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Asset Management | 333 | 359 |
| - Management of the LA's capital programme |  |  |
| - Preparation and review of the asset management plan |  |  |
| - Negotiation and management of private finance transactions |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Total | **3,080** | **3,080** |

2.5 All maintained members agreed the proposals for education functions to be funded by maintained schools at 5.4.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Central Services for maintained schools | 2023/24 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2024/25 |
|  | **Cost of service** | **Per Pupil** | **Cost of service** | **Per Pupil** |
| Asset Management | 268 | 4.48 | 268 | 4.53 |
| - General landlord duties including: |  |  |  |  |
| i) appropriate facilities for pupils / staff |  |  |  |  |
| ii) ability to sustain appropriate loads |  |  |  |  |
| iii) reasonable weather resistance |  |  |  |  |
| iv) safe escape routes |  |  |  |  |
| vi) adequate water supplies and drainage |  |  |  |  |
| vii) playing fields of appropriate standards |  |  |  |  |
| - General health and safety |  |  |  |  |
| - Management of the risk of asbestos in community schools |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Statutory & regulatory Duties | 2,168 | 36.28 | 2,168 | 36.65 |
| - maintaining computer systems |  |  |  |  |
| - data storage |  |  |  |  |
| - Budgeting and accounting functions |  |  |  |  |
| - planning sufficient school places |  |  |  |  |
| - compliance with Health & Safety regs |  |  |  |  |
| - pupil access to education |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| School Improvement |  |  |  |  |
| - core school improvement function | 438 | 7.34 | 438 | 7.41 |
| Total Education Functions | **2,874** | **48.10** | **2,874** | **48.59** |

1. Assumes the same growth fund allocation as 2023/24 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Assumes historic commitments will be protected at £3.8 million. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)