

## **Slough Schools Forum**

14 June 2016

### **Proposals for the use of centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant in 2016-2017.**

#### **1. Purpose of the report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the rationale for a set of proposals on how and why the centrally retained element of the Dedicated Schools Grant should be spent in 2016- 2017.

#### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 The recommendation in this report is to seek the views of members of the Schools Forum on the options outlined in 3.8 and 3.10 of this paper and endorse the revision of the proposals for the use of the underspend or any monies that are not required for the Cambridge Education contract going forward.

#### **3. Reasons for the recommendations**

3.1 In January 2016 a consultant was engaged by the Director of Children's Services and the Schools Forum to undertake a review of the statutory elements of school improvement following the Second Direction which was issued by the Department for Education in September 2015.

3.2 The Second Direction stated that the contract with Cambridge Education to deliver services on behalf of the Council should not be extended beyond 31 September 2016.

3.3 This provided a timely opportunity to review the delivery of statutory school improvement. The outcomes of this consultation, in which all schools were invited to take part, were a number of learning points for the Council and the development of eight options for the delivery of statutory school improvement going forward.

3.4 Following further discussions it was agreed that option 6 would be the preferred model going forward. Option 6 is set out below;

To develop a joint approach to school improvement with Cambridge Education and the Slough Teaching Schools Alliance (STSA).

This option would be to develop a more holistic and coherent approach to school improvement between the two organisations. Cambridge Education would undertake the role as described in option five but working in parallel would be a reformed STSA of three or more schools who would be responsible for developing teachers, training teachers, developing teachers into leaders and promoting and developing networks. The STSA would be a conduit for bringing

money and opportunities into Slough. The STSA would run the appropriate body service for NQTs. This option simplifies the current approach to school improvement within Slough. Schools have asked for this to happen, but it would see the end of the Slough Learning Partnership. There is a risk attached to this option which is the long term future of Teaching Schools is not known, however what is known is that the school-led system is here to stay and there are models in other areas of this type of collaborative approach working. This can be viewed as a medium term option that would need to evolve over time.

3.5 Work is currently underway to develop option 6 with Cambridge Education, the Slough Schools Teaching Alliance, the chairs of the two headteacher groups and the council. This also provides a timely opportunity to look at how things are funded and an opportunity to fund from the centrally retained DSG other initiatives which schools have said they would want and would value.

3.6 During the interviews carried out by the consultant relating to school improvement a number of other concerns and comments were raised. Many of these concerns and comments are in the process of being addressed and did not require any money to address them.

3.7 However, three concerns which did require some money to be spent on them were;

- a) Poor communication between the local authority and schools
- b) There is no welcome or induction for new headteacher or headteachers new to Slough
- c) The recruitment of teachers is a major problem for Slough schools

3.7.1 The issue of poor communication is in the process of being addressed and 3.8 below sets out one of the ways in which it is proposed to address this concern.

3.7.2 A welcome pack for head teachers has been commissioned by Cambridge Education and Slough Learning Partnership is in the process of producing it. Further, a welcome meeting for new headteachers and headteachers new to Slough is being proposed by the Council for September 2016.

3.7.3 The Schools Forum has given a sum of money to pay for a consultant to help address this issue and this is in the process of taking place.

3.8 However, one of the learning points for the council that came out of the consultant's report was the lack of a contact directory and information repository for the schools with the council. It is therefore proposed to address this issue using some of the centrally retained DSG to purchase a Schools' Portal which would sit on the external Council's website but only schools would have access to this site. A link to an example of what a school's portal might look like is proved here; <https://www.enfield.gov.uk/schoolsportal/site/index.php>. A

demonstration of this site will be given to the Schools Forum at the meeting. Precise costs for the purchase of a schools' portal are still to be determined. However, it is believed that for a modest investment in a piece of technology it would provide schools with a tool that would have maximum benefits for them and the Council.

3.9 As part of the consultation exercise on the review of statutory school improvement provision neighboring local authorities were contacted to ask if they would be interested in working together to explore routes for delivering statutory school improvement. Embryonic discussions with two local authorities, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham, have led to a possibility of providing some joint training for headteachers to become peer challenge leaders. Peer challenge leaders are a critical part of the self improving school ethos. The self improving school is a major strand in the government's white paper Educational Excellence Everywhere. In recognition of this the local authority is recommending that some centrally retained DSG money is used to fund peer challenge leader training for headteachers who may wish to take part in this training.

3.10 Some thought might also be given to providing some funding to the STSA to enable posts to be back filled when teaching staff with expertise in specific areas of the curriculum are providing support to other schools. A paper from the STSA will set out this and other requests separately.

3.11 There are now fewer maintained schools within Slough than there were at the start of the contract with Cambridge Education in October 2013. This continues to decrease as more schools become academies. Consequently less resource is needed to meet the statutory element of school improvement than previously agreed at the December 2015 meeting of the Schools Forum.

#### **4. Alternative options**

4.1. Within the consultant's report; Future options for statutory provision for school improvement in Slough, which was sent to all schools and key partners, seven alternative options were explored, risk assessed and rejected.

4.2 In December 2015 a paper was brought to the Schools Forum which set out how the centrally retained element of DSG was proposed to be spent for 2016-2017. However, since that time there has been the consultant's report on the future delivery of statutory school improvement, the consultation documents on the fair funding proposals and the white paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere. The consultation documents on fair funding and the white paper set out the future remit for local authorities which does not include a school improvement element from September 2017. It is therefore felt that the proposals set out in section 5 of this report are a better reflection for what is needed going forward than those previously recommended in the December 2015 paper to the Schools Forum.

## 5. Supporting information

5.1 The centrally retained element of the DSG is currently used to fund the statutory elements of school improvement which are undertaken by Cambridge Education on behalf of Slough Borough Council.

5.2 The current distribution of the centrally retained DSG monies for 2016-17 is set out below;

Area	Budget
<b>School Admissions</b>	178,180
<b>School Improvement Support</b> (improvement and standards: early support, monitoring, challenge and intervention)	629,725
<b>Education, School Improvement and Raising Standards</b> leadership, management, business and administrative support with on costs	95,000
<b>Local Authority Safeguarding Children Board:</b> Schools' contribution to the Board	30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>932,905</b>

The School Improvement Support element referred to above can be considered under the following broad headings:

Function	Budget £
<p><b>Early support, monitoring, challenge and intervention:</b> Use of School Improvement specialists.</p> <p>This is to cover:</p> <p>1. <b>Autumn Term Visits (ATVs):</b> compulsory for all maintained schools (23; 46% of all Slough schools), and optional visits for academies on request (16 – 60% of academies - out of 27 academies proposed for this Autumn Term 2015)</p> <p>2. <b>Support, monitoring, challenge and intervention for maintained schools in difficulty</b> during the year as a result of Ofsted inspection or issues arising from the Autumn Term Visit</p> <p>3. <b>Targeted support</b> on areas of agreed curriculum focus and vulnerable pupil groups where emphasis is on closing the gap: which is encompassed in the Children and Young People's Plan</p>	300,000
<b>Budget to support schools in intervention:</b> to facilitate school to school support and achieve rapid and sustainable progress.	130,000

<p>This allocation of funding to schools is primarily related to addressing challenges around leadership and management, teaching and learning and curriculum development.</p>	
<p><b>System leaders:</b> Development of support networks available to schools facing significant and unexpected leadership and management issues, where in some instances rapid responses are required. Areas being developed are associated with securing the rapid availability of head teachers, members of senior leadership teams, bursars/business managers and governors.</p>	48,000
<p><b>School to school support: Commissioned to be provided by Slough Learning Partnership</b></p> <p>1. <b>Primary subject/strand</b> development networks: £33,150</p> <p>2. <b>Secondary subject/strand</b> development networks: £18,575</p>	51,725
<p><b>Head teacher development. Commissioned to be provided by Slough Learning Partnership</b></p>	15,000
<p><b>School Governance: Commissioned to be provided by Slough Learning Partnership: aspects of this work: recruitment, induction, toolkit and conference programme)</b></p> <p>Needing to cover: Governance requirements specified as statutory requirements by national government and contractual requirements between the Local Authority and Cambridge Education. This addresses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment to committees</li> <li>• Setting out requirements for governing bodies: ensuring instruments of governance are in place for all maintained schools</li> <li>• Appointment of LA governors</li> <li>• Advice and support for governors</li> <li>• Information, including newsletter, signposting and training</li> <li>• Producing statements of action for schools in difficulty</li> <li>• Assessing governance through the Autumn Term Visits and Strategy Action Groups (SAGs)</li> <li>• Carrying out external reviews of governance as required by Ofsted or associated with local assessment indicating the need for review</li> <li>• Appointing additional governors where required</li> <li>• Issuing Warning Notices to governors where required</li> <li>• Disbanding governing bodies where necessary and pursuing Interim Executive Boards (IEBs) and the costs</li> </ul>	60,000

associated with their delivery	
<b>Supporting head teacher meetings</b> and consultation groups	10,000
<b>Fischer Family Trust subscription</b> for access by the Local Authority and access for all Slough schools and academies	12,000
<b>CLEAPSS:</b> is an advisory service providing support in science and technology for a consortium of local authorities and their schools including establishments for pupils with special needs	3,000
Total	629,725

5.3 The elements for school improvement support and Education, school improvement and raising standards are in essence funding Lot 1 of the Cambridge Education contract with Slough Borough Council.

5.4 In March 2016 the government published a consultation paper entitled “Schools national funding formula 7 March 2016”. The proposals within this consultation paper clearly set out the role for local authorities in the future. These are set out in Chapter 4: Funding that will remain with the local authorities, it states in 4.1 “The role of the local authorities in supporting the provision of excellent education for all children of compulsory school age is to ensure that every child has a school place and ensuring that fair access through admissions and transport arrangements; ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils are met; to act as a champion for all parents and families. On top of these responsibilities, local authorities have a key role in shaping school provision in their area, and to encourage an increasing number of academies. In 4.3 it goes on to state; “The funding for these functions is not within the scope of this consultation” which means that schools will not be consulted about the amount of money that will be put into the proposed central block for funding local authorities to carry out their retained functions .

5.5 The white paper Educational Excellence Everywhere was also published in March 2016. It states that all schools are to become academies by 2022 and to have plans in place to become academies by 2020. In chapter 4 of the white paper entitled; A school-led system with every school an academy, empowered pupils, parents and communities and a clearly defined role for local government 4.24 states ‘regional School Commissioners (RSGs) will intervene promptly where academies or MATs are underperforming”. 4.71 states; ‘Beyond the removal of their duties to run schools....responsibility for school improvement is moving away from local authorities to the school- led system and local authorities’ role in allocating local funding will be overtaken by the National Funding Formula.’ 4.72

continues; “ We therefore intend to legislate to change local authorities’ powers and duties instead of running schools or school improvement, local authorities will focus on delivering their core functions working as partners with the school system of the future and champions for parents and the local community.” The white paper proposes that this will be the case from September 2017.

5.6 In response to concern expressed by a number of groups about all schools having to become academies the government announced on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016 that good or outstanding maintained schools would not be required to become academies. However, where local authorities were too small to support any remaining maintained schools the Regional Schools Commissioner would require those schools to become academies.

5.7 Given the timescales set out in the consultation paper the Council proposes to fund statutory school improvement service for another two years, but with a break clause at the end of the first year if the government’s proposal to end the role of local authorities having a role in statutory school improvement be implemented in September 2017.

5.8 Two years are the maximum length of time a contract can be extended for without it having to be fully commissioned again. It is also the proposed length of time for the soft fair funding arrangements to be in place and where the Schools Forum will still be able to influence where and how the centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant can be spent

5.9 The funding for the statutory school improvement service is proposed to come from the centrally retained block of the DSG but at a reduced rate given the reduction of the number of maintained schools and the number of maintained schools in a failing category since the beginning of the contract period with Cambridge Education in October 2013.

5.10 The costs for the statutory school improvement element of the revised contract with Cambridge Education are still being negotiated but a paper will be brought to Schools Forum once they have been finalised.

5.11 However, whilst the costs are anticipated to be lower, the elements set out in 5.2 above will still be covered but on a reduced budget as there are now fewer maintained schools and fewer schools in a category than at the start of the contract with Cambridge Education in October 2013.

## **6 Advice received from statutory and other officers**

Borough Solicitor

Section 151 officer – Strategic Director of resources

## **7. Consultation**

Principal groups consulted

All headteachers were invited to take part in the consultation exercise on the review of the provision of statutory school improvement services and again when the draft report was circulated.

The Schools Forum took part in the discussion relating to the review of the provision of statutory school improvement services

The Slough Schools Education forum were also consulted on the proposed option

Method of consultation

Consultation took the form of a written invitation to participate to all schools

22 interviews were carried out by the consultant with headteachers

Discussion took place at the Slough Schools Education Forum

Representations received

A collective response was received on behalf of all the secondary headteachers in support of option 6

Two responses were received supporting working with other local authorities

Two responses were received in support of the Slough Learning Partnership running the statutory school improvement service.