

Title of meeting: Schools Forum

Date of meeting: 7 December 2022

Subject: Removal of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant

Report by: Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director, Education

Wards affected: All

Key decision: Yes/No

Full Council decision: Yes/No

1 Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Inform Schools Forum about the government's removal of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering grant which is currently allocated to local authorities to support school improvement activities;
- Inform Schools Forum about the consultation which was undertaken to seek the views of LA maintained schools about the proposal to de-delegate funding from schools' budget shares to cover the removal of the Grant; and
- Seek Schools Forum approval for de-delegation for both Maintained Primary and Secondary Phases.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that maintained school members of Schools Forum approve the de-delegation of funding from schools' budget shares to continue to provide school improvement services to maintained schools from 1 April 2023. The value of de-delegation per pupil per phase to be brought to the January 2023 Schools Forum for approval.

3 Background

3.1 Since 2017, the Local Authority School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering grant has been allocated to local authorities to support them in fulfilling their statutory school improvement functions under Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and their additional school improvement expectations as set out in the Schools Causing Concern Guidance (collectively referred to as core school improvement services). In summary these activities require councils



to monitor the performance of maintained schools, broker school improvement provision and intervene as appropriate.

- 3.2 In Portsmouth the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering grant in 2020/21 was £80,000. This helped to cover some of the costs relating to the School Improvement Team which consists of two posts: the Head of School Improvement & Early Years; and the School Improvement Adviser. It also supported the costs associated with the monitoring, moderation and assessment for primary schools (Key Stage 1 and 2 including Year 1 phonics screening) for which there is currently no charge. A traded service exists for academies.
- 3.3 In October 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) launched a consultation seeking views on the government's intention to remove the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant, currently allocated to local authorities to support school improvement activities and make provisions within the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022 to allow local authorities to fund all of their school improvement activity via de-delegation from Maintained school's budget shares
- 3.4 The national consultation took place from 29 October 2021 to 26 November 2021. The Government's response to the consultation was published on 18 January 2022. It confirmed that the Government will:
- Reduce the grant by 50% for the FY 2022-23 and bring it to an end in FY 2023-24; and
 - Include provision in Part 7 of Schedule 2 of the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022 which would allow councils to de-delegate for all improvement expenditure, including all core improvement activities.
- 3.5 Locally, the council consulted with all 18 LA maintained schools in Portsmouth about the proposal to de-delegate funding from schools' budget shares in order to cover the removal of the Local Authority School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant as from April 2023. A consultation document was issued on 31 October 2022 (Appendix 1) with a deadline for responses by 24 November 2022. The council also discussed the proposals with Headteachers of LA maintained schools at the regular LA briefing on 23 November 2022.
- 3.6 No responses were received to the consultation but at the LA briefing for Headteachers of LA maintained schools on 23 November there was a general consensus of support and that the school improvement support received from the LA was highly valued.

4 Reason for recommendations

- 4.1 The reason for the recommendation is in response to the government's decision to remove the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant yet still



requiring local authorities to fulfil their statutory school improvement functions under Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and their additional school improvement expectations as set out in the Schools Causing Concern guidance (collectively referred to as core school improvement services).

- 4.2 De- delegation will allow the school improvement services that support maintained schools to continue at the existing levels, whilst being in line with the government's guidance to achieve parity of funding with academy schools. In addition to ongoing and bespoke school improvement activities such as providing regular updates, attending meetings with school leaders, writing model policies, delivering training and advising governors, proportional support and challenge is specifically delivered to LA Maintained schools through a range of quality assurance activities (as outlined in Appendix 1).

5 Integrated impact assessment

- 5.1 An integrated impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a positive or negative impact on communities and safety, regeneration and culture, environment and public space or equality and diversity.

6 Legal implications

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report. The recommendations in this report are intended to ensure that the LA can continue to fulfil its statutory school improvement functions under Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the requirements set out in the Schools Causing Concern guidance (October 2022).

7 Director of Finance's comments

- 7.1 The Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022 and the Schools Forum regulations and good practice guide set out the both the local authority and Schools Forum responsibilities with regard to de-delegation of funding from maintained schools budgets.
- 7.2 The decision to de-delegate rests with the maintained school members of Schools Forum, with each sector being required to vote separately on the amount per pupil to be deducted.
- 7.3 Estimates based on the October 2021 census, suggest that the amount deducted per pupil will be approximately £10.50 for both primary and secondary pupils. On receipt of the October 2022 census data in mid-December the per pupil value will be re-calculated and brought to the January 2023 Schools Forum for approval by Maintained schools, for implementation from April 2023.

Signed by:

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: