

**Paper 5b - for information and decision**

## **School Improvement Grant Consultation (Maintained Schools Only)**

### **Key Messages**

Forum members are asked to:

- Note the reduction in the School Improvement Grant by 50% in 2022/23 and 100% in 2023/24.
- Note the options for de-delegation and the outcome of the consultation (to be updated on 21 February 2022)
- Vote on the preferred option – applies to maintained school representatives only.

### **1. Introduction/background**

In November 2021, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) launched a consultation on the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant and the outcome of that consultation was only recently published in January 2022:

- The ESFA will proceed with reducing the local authority School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant by 50% for financial year 2022 to 2023, prior to full removal in financial year 2023 to 2024.
- Provision will be included in the School and Early Years Finance Regulations 2022 (England) to instead allow local authorities to deduct funding for local authorities' core school improvement activities from maintained school budgets.

Sheffield received a £268k grant in 2021/22 to deliver core school improvement activities for maintained schools. The grant in its entirety - supplemented by an additional Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation - was transferred to Learn Sheffield who we (Sheffield City Council) commission to discharge school improvement responsibility<sup>1</sup>.

### **2. Options for de-delegation**

This change will mean a reduction of £134k in the School Improvement Grant received from the Department for Education (DfE) in 2022/23 and a further reduction of the remaining £134k in 2023/24. Given the lateness of this decision by ESFA, and to mitigate this reduction and continue delivery of services via Learn Sheffield, we

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<sup>1</sup> A summary of school improvement activities can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this document

propose the following options for 2022/23 and 2023/24 in line with the national policy directive.

That we request the Schools Forum considers the following three approaches to de-delegation:

1. Option 1: Full de-delegation (to March 2024)

Schools Forum initiates “de-delegation” funding arrangements for £134k in 2022/23 (and then £268k in 2023/24). This would mean requesting that maintained schools agree and contribute a per pupil amount of funding from their budgets to support school improvement activity to make up the funding shortfall. This contribution would equate to £5.92 per pupil across all sectors for 2022/23 and £11.84 per pupil for 2023/24

2. Option 2: Restructure the commission and de-delegate (to March 2024)

Schools Forum agrees to cease to fund the amount of £67.5k from the current commission that goes directly from Learn Sheffield to local partnerships (pro-rata from September 2022 – March 2023), for School Improvement Activities, meaning that only the balance of £94,625 would be required to be de-delegated in 2022/23 - £4.18 per pupil (and £8.86 per pupil for 2023/2024).

3. Option 3: Restructure the commission and de-delegate to August 2023 followed by a traded model

Schools Forum agrees to cease to fund the amount of £67.5k from the current commission that goes directly from Learn Sheffield to local partnerships (pro-rata from September 2022 – March 2023), for School Improvement Activities (as in option 2) but the de-delegation ceases in August 2023. This reduces the de-delegation to £3.69 per pupil in 2023/24. From September 2023, the traded model will be further developed by Learn Sheffield to manage the reduction in funding.

Table summary of options:

| Options  | Cost per pupil<br>2022/23 | Cost per pupil<br>2023/24 |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Option 1: Full de-delegation (to March 2024)   | £5.92                     | £11.84                    |
| Option 2: Restructure the commission and de-delegate (to March 2024)                           | £4.18                     | £8.86                     |
| Option 3: Restructure the commission and de-delegate to August 2023 followed by a traded model | £4.18                     | £3.69                     |

*These options should be considered in the context that Sheffield schools are set to receive a Supplementary Fund from the DfE of £12m introduced for 2022-23 to support the Health & Social Care Levy, plus other cost pressures that schools face.*

We have consulted with maintained schools as to their preferred option and will verbally update the Forum at the February meeting on the outcome of this consultation.

### 3. Recommendations

Forum members are asked to:

- **Note** the reduction in the School Improvement Grant by 50% in 2022/23 and 100% in 2023/24.
- **Note** the options for de-delegation and the outcome of the consultation (to be updated on 21 February 2022).
- **Vote** on the preferred option – applies to maintained school representatives only (not included the PRU). The following Forum members are therefore eligible to vote:
  - Nigel Brooke-Smith
  - Laura Gillespie
  - Linda Gooden
  - Cathy Rowland
  - Sacha Schofield
  - Paul Stockley
  - Alison Warner

## **Appendix 1**

### **School Improvement Activities**

Learn Sheffield supports school improvement in the following ways:

- Provides a point of need support via telephone, text or email which gives advice and information that will support school improvement and offers relevant expert advice required to meet their statutory duty.
- System leadership – facilitation of the various partnership arrangements and provides an improvement partner who supports the nine locality or sector-based partnerships to impact upon locally agreed priorities.
- Maintains a categorisation process which enables schools to use their self-evaluation to identify key areas for improvement and develop the leadership and expertise of the school.
- Leadership briefings and communication – provides regular briefings including information relating to local and national guidance, curriculum updates, advice and information relating to school improvement.
- Governance briefings and communication – termly briefings for school governors, termly governors' newsletters providing information on national and local information and updates.
- Access to training packages:
  - Access to priority training identified and based on local need which includes online safety training.
  - Governance training programme and conference.
  - Leadership training programme.
  - Research-led Sheffield programme.
  - Research training courses and Learn Sheffield Improvement Programme training courses/ sessions.
  - Subject specific CPD programme.
  - Leadership (face-to-face) conference.
  - September (online) festival.
- Partnership data package – provision of a data package outlining key data relating to the school locality.
- Crisis communications – schools can contact Learn Sheffield in the first instance who then work in partnership with the Sheffield City Council communications team.
- Create Sheffield membership – membership to Create Sheffield, a charitable organisation set up to take the young people of Sheffield on a journey into the arts, culture and heritage sectors.