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| **AGENDA ITEM 3.2** |

**Title of report: Central School Services Block**

**Author of the paper: Kay Goodacre**

**Officer to present the paper to Schools Forum: Kay Goodacre**

**Details on who has been consulted on this paper to date:** Previous Forum meeting

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| **Executive Summary.**  The report:   1. Sets out the background to the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) and the allocation for 2021-22. 2. Informs members of the real terms cut of £0.505m in the CSSB for 2021-22. 3. Sets out the budgets that the local authority wishes to continue through the central school service block and the proposed budgetary reductions to accommodate the cut in funding. |

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| **Details of recommendations and timescales for decisions:**  **Schools Forum is asked to:**  **Agree the continuation of the use of Central school Services budget to the budget lines listed.** |

1. **Central School Services Block (CSSB).**
   1. The Central Schools Services Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was created in 2018-19. It brought together centrally retained budgets transferred from the Schools Block and funding for duties retained for both maintained schools and academies. The latter was previously funded through the Education Services Grant (ESG).
   2. The aim of the CSSB is to improve transparency and recognise the continued need to use the DSG to fund centrally managed commitments which support front line and support service functions.
   3. The funding the Authority receives is made up of two elements:
      1. Funding through a national formula for ongoing responsibilities, such as admissions, and former ESG services. For 2021-22 the allocation is £2.107m compared to £1.974m for 2020-21, this represents a decrease in real terms of £59k as an allocation of £192k is included which was previously paid separately as pay and pensions grant.
      2. A lump sum element for historical commitments. For 2021-22 this will be £1.780m compared to £2.226m for 2020-21, a reduction of £0.446m. This is a significant reduction in funding and although a reduction in this element was expected, as the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) assumes a downward trend in historical commitments it represents a significant reduction in LA resources.
   4. The overall CSSB for 2021-22 is therefore £3.887m, compared with a 2017-18 baseline of £4.920m, a reduction exceeding £1m and 20% over 4 years.
   5. The services retained under this block in 2020-21 and the proposed allocations for 2021-22 are set out in Table 1.

**Table 1: CSSB Budget Allocations.**

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| **Service.** | **2021-22**  **£000** | **2020-21**  **(updated for final allocation)**  **£000** |
| School admissions | 730  99 | 699 |
| Servicing of Schools forums | 35 | 30 |
| Fees to Independent schools without SEN | 225 | 358 |
| Copyright licenses | 280 | 257 |
| Former ESG Duties \* | 645 | 630 |
| Central Teachers pay and pensions | 192 |  |
| **Ongoing Duties** | **2,107** | **1,974** |
| **Historical Commitments** | **1,780** | **2,226** |
| **Total CSSB** | **3,887** | **4,200** |

Former ESG duties are those statutory duties that the Council holds for all Maintained Schools and Academies, these will include Statutory reporting and officer duties, Education Welfare and Asset management (Annex 1) The allocation represents the amount that was baselined to the Central school services block in 2018-19, increased by inflation for 2021 to 2022

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1.7 **Recommended Distribution of Historic Commitments**

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| **Item** | **2021-22**  **£00’s** | **2020-21**  **£00’s** |
| Education Psychology |  | 188 |
| Children in Public Care including Virtual School | 370 | 370 |
| Enrichment |  | 52 |
| Clothing Grant | 201 | 201 |
| Weekend GCSE Classes |  | 21 |
| In-Reach/Out-Reach Work | 738 | 738 |
| Historic Redundancy Cost | 471 \* | 656 \* |
| **Total** | **1,780** | **2,226** |

**\*** balancing figure from historic duties

1.8 The expectation from the ESFA is that the value of Historic commitments will continue to decrease with this funding further reducing in future years. Allocations will therefore need to reviewed regularly and further details will be bought to the Autumn term forum.

## Contact Details

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact:

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**Appendix 1:** **Ongoing Duties**.

1. **Pupil Services and School Sufficiency (Admissions).**

Pupil Services and School Sufficiency discharges the local authority’s statutory duties in respect of school place planning, school admissions, pupil exclusion and children missing education; adhering to legislation and statutory guidance laid by central government.  The Service works to ensure that every child in the borough has access to a school place. Statutory duties include:

1. To be responsible for ensuring that sufficient education is available to meet the needs of the population in the area.
2. To be responsible for the planning and provision of arrangements to manage the supply of primary and secondary school places in the local authority area, including arrangements for the establishment of new schools and the discontinuance of existing schools.
3. To comply with the legislative Code in exercising and discharging the local authority functions in relation to school admissions under the School Standards and Framework Act (SSFA) 1998. The SSFA and relevant regulations confers a number of duties which require the LA to carry out different functions at different times of the admissions cycle.
4. For each school year, the local authority must publicly consult on, determine and publish the prescribed information about the admission arrangements for each of the maintained schools in its area, and if regulations so provide, such maintained schools outside its area.
5. To provide advice and assistance to parents when deciding on a school place and allow parents to express a preference.
6. To co-ordinate the arrangements for admission to maintained schools in the area at the statutory points of entry and exit, and the management of in-year admissions.
7. To monitor children missing from education, including the management of pupil exclusions under the LA’s Fair Access arrangements.
8. To manage the Local Authority’s arrangements for enabling parents of a children to appeal against admissions decisions to maintained schools in its area.
9. Reports by Local Authority to the adjudicator and returns to the DfE about matters relevant to Schools admissions as may be required by the School Admissions and School Appeals Codes.

1. **Servicing of Schools Forums.**

A local authority is required to establish a Schools forum in its area and is allowed to retain costs relating to the establishment and maintenance of the forum as well as costs of consultations. The retained budget covers the cost of arranging and clerking meetings and officer support to the Forum.

1. **Fees to Independent Schools for Pupils without SEN.**

Fees or expenses payable in respect of pupils without SEN at a specialist and non-maintained institution. This relates to pupils on remand and other social care.

1. **Licence Fees.**

These are licence fees negotiated nationally by the Secretary of State for Education. This is a consultation item as the charge is automatically deducted from the DSG and Forum’s permission to retain this item is not required.