AGENDA ITEM 5

**Title of report: Review of the De-Delegation Budget**

**Date Prepared: 18 September 2025**

**Date to present the paper to Schools Forum: 8 October 2025**

**Author of the paper: Leslie Oosthuizen**

**Officer to present the paper to Schools Forum: Leslie Oosthuizen**

**Details on who has been consulted with on this paper to date: Finance**

**Executive Summary:**

This report sets out how the de-delegated services for the financial year 2025-2026 is managed and a range of options to consider in advance of a decision for the 2026-27 funding year.

**Details of recommendations and timescales for decisions:**

Schools Forum are asked to:

1. Note the contents of this report
2. **Background**
   1. At budget setting time each year, Schools Forum will be asked to approve the de-delegation of funding for centrally provided support in the following areas:

* School Specific Contingency
* Free School Meal Eligibility Assessment
* Trade Union Facilities Agreement (TUFA) Time
* Behaviour Support and Anti-bullying
* Additional School Improvement
  1. De-delegation is agreed by Schools Forum as a contribution from maintained schools to fund the aforementioned centrally supported activities based on a per pupil formula, which is considered by the DfE to be a fair way of accounting for the size of the school and its budget.

1. **Forecast of De-Delegated Budgets 2025-26**
   1. **Schools Block Contingency (not growth fund)**

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| **Item** | **Amount** |
| **Per Pupil Rate**  **Total Amount De-delegated: (Primary £70,216 + Secondary £34,083 + Special £4,137)**  **Projected Expenditure Includes:**  i. Exceptional unforeseen costs which it would be unreasonable to expect governing bodies to meet  ii. Schools in financial difficulty  iii. Additional costs relating to reorganised or closing schools  iv. Funding for schools’ combined subscriptions and policies  **Projected Overspend / (Underspend)**  The contingency fund provides for unforeseen expenses in schools during the year. Without a central fund, individual schools facing an unforeseen significant cost may find themselves unable to operate within their delegated budgets. Individual schools may not by themselves be able to build up sufficient contingency to cover this. | £4.20  £108,436  £108,436  £nil Breakeven |

* 1. **Free School Meal (FSM) Eligibility Assessment**

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| **Item** | **Amount** |
| **Per Pupil Rate**  **Total Amount De-delegated**  **Projected Expenditure**  **Projected Expenditure Includes:**  SLA with the Council’s Housing Benefit Service  **Projected Overspend / (Underspend)**  The service assesses pupils’ eligibility for free school meals and notifies individual schools on a regular basis of their pupils’ eligibility.  Providing this service centrally means that efficiencies can be gained. Administration at individual school level would be burdensome as entitlement checking would have to be done manually. The service also conducts campaigns on behalf of schools, resulting in increased take up. | £4.27  £34,651  £34,651  £nil Breakeven |

* 1. **Trade Union Facilities Agreement (TUFA)**

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| **Item** | **Amount** |
| **Per Pupil Rate – Maintained and Academies**  **Per Pupil Rate – Special schools (as agreed in January 2025)**  **Total Amount de-delegated: (Maintained mainstream schools £135,340 + Academies £65,035 + Special Schools £13,194**  **Projected Expenditure:**  Backfill cover for TUFA  **Projected Overspend / (Underspend)**  The TU Facilities Agreement ensures that representatives are available to enable Schools to participate in collective bargaining and consultation processes. By accompanying staff to formal meetings enables Schools to progress formal actions under HR Procedures.  Holding the budget centrally enables schools to share the costs of supply cover to support the TU facilities time agreement and ensures that individual schools who employ TU reps are not disadvantaged. | £5.45  £16.35  £213,569  £213,569  £nil Breakeven |

* 1. **Behaviour Support Services**

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| **Item** | **Amount** |
| **Per Pupil Rate – Primary Schools**  **Per Pupil Rate – Secondary Schools**  **Total Amount De-delegated**  **Projected Expenditure**  **Projected Expenditure Includes:**  SLA to Behaviour & Attendance Support Service (BASS)  **Projected Overspend / (Underspend)**  The service offers a wide range of advice, assessment, guidance and training which is designed to support schools to develop and deliver their statutory responsibilities for promoting positive behaviour and reducing risk of suspension for vulnerable groups.  Providing this service centrally means that efficiencies can be gained. | £5.43  £9.35  £166,654  £166,654  £nil |

* 1. **Additional School Improvement**

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| **Item** | **Amount** |
| **Per Pupil Rate**  **Total Amount De-delegated**  **Projected Expenditure:**  SLA with Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP)  **Projected Overspend / (Underspend)**  The additional de-delegation of the School Improvement Service followed the phasing out of the Schools Moderation and Brokering grant. The grant was previously allocated to local authorities to allow them to monitor and support performance of maintained schools, broker school improvement provision and provide intervention to raise standards. | £6.34  £157,441  £157,441  £nil Breakeven |

**3. Consultation and Next Steps**

* 1. At the Schools Forum meeting held in January 2025, it was agreed that the charge for special schools would use the mainstream rate multiplied by the number of places (weighted x 3) rather than pupil numbers for Trade Union Facilities Time and Contingency Fund and the number of places for Free School Meals (FSM) Eligibility Assessment. The weighting is less than the overall funding differential between mainstream & special phases and more in the region of DfE grant funding differential.
  2. For 2025-2026 the following multipliers per pupil have been used for Special Schools with Behaviour Support Service charges being excluded:
* FSM Eligibility (x1)
* Additional School Improvement Services (x1)
* Contingency Fund (x1)
* Trade Union Facilities Time (x3)
  1. The Consultative Group agreed to all rates except:
* Phoenix School should not be based on 3 x places because the numbers are like a small secondary mainstream school
* FSM Eligibility should not be based on 3 x places for all special school and alternative provision settings

3.5 A consultation email will be sent to schools in October with the de-delegation options which will include proposals for de-delegation for 2026-2027.