

## 9d De-delegation of additional school improvement services

### 1. Proposal

- 1.1 The council proposes to ask the maintained schools' representatives on the Schools Forum to agree to increase the amount of de-delegated funding for 'additional school improvement services' from £101,000 to £310,000.
- 1.2 It is proposed to consult maintained primary and secondary schools on this proposal before the Schools Forum is asked to make its decision at a special meeting in late November. It should be noted that the council will also be conducting a public consultation on this proposal as part of its consultation on its proposed Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 Until 2016-17 local authorities received an Education Services Grant to fund services such as school improvement, education welfare services, asset management and strategic planning. The ESG was an un-ringfenced revenue funding stream, allocated on a simple flat rate per pupil. It offered local authorities flexibilities and freedoms to offer education support services based on local need.
- 2.2 The ESG allocation in relation to services to maintained schools only (community and voluntary-aided schools, not Academies or Free Schools) was withdrawn entirely in 2018-19, a loss of £2.8m a year for Barnet.
- 2.3 From 2017-18 the government allocated a separate 'school improvement' grant to local authorities to cover the cost of statutory intervention functions and monitoring and commissioning of school improvement support.
- 2.4 The 'Schools revenue funding 2019 to 2020; Operational guide' published by the DfE in July 2018 explains the arrangements for local authorities to retain funding from the budget shares of maintained primary and secondary schools for a number of functions that were previously funded through the ESG. It explains that those arrangements do not extend to school improvement functions. In relation to school improvement, the guidance indicates that local authorities receive a separate school improvement grant covering their statutory intervention functions and monitoring and commissioning of school improvement support and that, if local authorities choose to provide school improvement services beyond what is funded through the grant, then they may ask the Schools Forum to agree to a contribution through de-delegation from maintained primary and secondary school budgets.
- 2.5 This grant is up to £50 million per full year nationally, allocated to local authorities based on the number of maintained schools, an area cost adjustment and top-up to ensure each local authority receives a minimum allocation of £50,000. The allocation for the London Borough of Barnet for the last academic year was £339,130.

**Final Allocation  
October 2017 (£s  
rounded)**

£198,716

**Final Allocation  
April 2018 (£s  
rounded)**

£140,414

**Total Allocation for  
Academic Year  
2017 to 2018**

£339,130

- 2.6 The DfE has indicated that school improvement grant will be allocated again for the school year 2018/19, but has not indicated the amount yet. It has given no indication about whether the grant will be available after the current school year.
- 2.7 Last year the council asked the Schools Forum to agree to de-delegation of £101,000 for 'additional school improvement services' in the financial year 2018-19 and this was agreed by the maintained school representatives on the Schools Forum. Schools Forums can agree to de-delegate further funding for additional school improvement provision in 2019 to 2020. As for 2018-19, separate decisions will be required for the primary and secondary phases, with just the maintained school representatives for the relevant phase being able to vote in each case.
- 2.8 The contributions from the DfE school improvement grant do not align to financial years, but the table above indicates the grant funding for the school year 2018/19.

### 3. Proposal to increase de-delegation

- 3.1 As reported to the Schools Forum in December 2017, Council funding for school improvement services was estimated to be around £450,000 a year (before any de-delegation or school improvement grant). This pays for most of the costs of the Learning Network Inspector service and towards the cost of the data team's work on school performance data.
- 3.2 If the level of school improvement grant funding is at the same level for the 2018/19 school year as in the 2017/18 school year, the difference between the grant and the budgeted expenditure for the 2018/19 financial year will be about £110,000 and that is mostly made up by the de-delegation of £101,000 agreed by the Schools Forum.
- 3.3 The DfE has only indicated that the grant will be available for the 2018/19 school year, meaning about £140,000 available for the 2019-20 financial year for the period April to August 2019. In the absence of any confirmation that the grant will be available beyond that, this will leave a shortfall of about £310,000. It is therefore proposed to increase the de-delegation from maintained primary and secondary schools from £101,000 to £310,000.
- 3.4 If the proposal is not agreed, it will be necessary to reduce the budget of the school improvement service and reduce the Learning Network Inspector team to a single post, tasked with carrying out the core statutory functions envisaged by the DfE, with significant reliance on the use of data, as the resource is unlikely to be sufficient to allow for regular visits to schools. The DfE has indicated that the core functions are:
- Monitoring maintained schools to identify those that may require intervention
  - Intervening in underperforming maintained schools
  - Commissioning of support for schools subject to intervention
- Schools will recognise that the current role of LNIs is much wider than this as it includes challenge and support to all maintained schools, organisation of network meetings, brokering school to school support and so on.
- 3.5 The proposal, if approved, would mean a deduction from the budgets of maintained primary and secondary schools of **£11.28 per Primary pupil, £5.83 per Secondary pupil**. This would equate to a similar average contribution per phase (primary and secondary), as school improvement support does not tend to vary with the size of school.

Appendix C illustrates the impact of all de-delegation proposals presented above on individual maintained school budgets.

The Schools Forum is asked to note, and comment on, this report.