

ITEM NO: 4

Report To:	SCHOOLS FORUM
Date:	2 March 2016
Reporting Officer:	Bob Berry – Assistant Executive Director - Learning.
Subject:	SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN FUNDING UPDATE
Report Summary:	A report to update members on the use of the Schools Causing Concern funding in financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16 and proposals concerning its future use.
Recommendations:	Members of the Schools Forum are requested to note the contents of the report and to consider the proposals for future use of this funding.
Links to Community Strategy:	Effectively calculated and targeted resources will improve access to a high quality education experience for all our children.
Policy Implications:	In line with current policy
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the section 151 officer)	The report provides a summary of the contributions made by Schools over the last two years and how that funding has been used to date. Members of the Schools Forum are asked to consider the proposals for future use of this funding.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	There is a statutory duty to use resources efficiently and effectively against priorities.
Risk Management:	The correct accounting treatment of the Dedicated Schools Grant is a condition of the grant and procedures exist in budget monitoring and the closure of accounts to ensure that this is achieved. These will be subject to regular review.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

NON-CONFIDENTIAL

This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the Press or members of the public.

Background Papers

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Stephen Wilde – Head of Resource Management, Directorate of Finance by:



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1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Tameside Schools Causing Concern Budget has provided important financial support to Primary schools for a number of years. Schools have paid into the fund on a per pupil basis Primary Schools choose to pay into this fund each year. The proportion of schools choosing to contribute to the fund is falling. In financial year 2015/2016 around 60% of primary schools contributed to the fund. Head teachers have rightly questioned the transparency of this funding in terms of allocation and accountability. This funding is used to support schools that are currently categorized as Requiring Improvement or are categorized at 3B or below against the descriptors found in Tameside's Schools Causing Concern Policy which was last updated in September 2015. Currently there are 21 schools categorized as 3B schools.
- 1.2 The budget supports the commissioning work of the SPSO officer and Schools are supported financially in a variety of ways:
- Deployment of Associate Head Teacher.
 - Deployment of SLE through Teaching School Alliance.
 - Deployment of consultant to work with Head Teacher / Governing Body.
 - Deployment of consultant to work directly with Teaching Staff (Teaching and Learning Coach / Subject Specialist / Moderator)
 - Support a school based improvement project with external support.

2. FUNDING

- 2.1 During 2015/16 46 out of 74 schools contributed to the Schools Causing Concern Budget. Schools paid £9.46 per pupil in 2014/2015 and £9.79 per pupil in 2015/16. **Appendix A** shows a list of the Schools who made contributions towards this budget in both financial years. The total contributed by Schools in 2015/16 was £114,736 which has been combined with the £89,372 carried forward from 2014/15 to give a total budget available in 2015/16 of £203,972

3. SCHOOLS SUPPORTED FROM THE BUDGET

- 3.1 The following schools have either accessed support from the budget already or funding has been committed to support further work in 2016.
- Hurst Knoll CE Primary School
 - Canon Johnson CE Primary School
 - St Paul's RC Primary School, Hyde
 - The Heys Primary School
 - Audenshaw Primary School
 - St Stephens CE Primary School
 - Greenfield Primary School
 - Gee Cross Holy Trinity CE Primary
 - Waterloo Primary School
 - Corrie Primary School
 - St Anne's RC Primary School
 - St Paul's CE Primary School
 - St Stephen's RC Primary School
 - Broadoak Primary School
 - Dowson Primary School
 - Leigh Primary School
 - Poplar Street Primary School
 - Yew Tree Primary School

In addition to this 14 primary schools currently in the OFSTED window had a thorough and independent review of their website funded from this budget. **Appendix B** contains a summary of the support provided to Schools and the associated costs covering the period from the beginning of the Spring Term 2015 through to Spring Term 2016.

4. PROPOSED FUTURE USE OF THE BUDGET

4.1 The biggest threat to schools accessing the financial support for school improvement activity is the growing number of schools choosing not to contribute to the budget or/and the growing number of Primary Academies who may choose not to contribute to this LA fund.. An ever-decreasing budget would limit the scope and scale of any school improvement activity that could be centrally funded from this budget. There are of course many reasons why a school may choose not to contribute to a pot of money, which is centrally held by the Local Authority. The lack of transparency in recent years of how the budget is managed and spent has significantly contributed to this. This paper together with the opportunity to brief both Heads and Chairs of Governors in the Spring term of 2016 will hopefully allow Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors to understand how the budget is being spent to support schools causing concern.

4.2 There are some issues to consider.

- How can we safeguard the future of the Schools Causing Concern Budget?
- How will the budget be managed in the future?
- Who makes decisions around which schools can access the budget and what will be the process of doing this?
- Should schools only be able to access financial support if they choose to pay into it?
- What accountability is there in terms of schools accessing and using the budget?
- Do we need to widen the number of schools able to access the financial support?
- Do we need to call the SCC budget something else?

4.3 The options listed in sections 4.4 to 4.7 below will be put before Tameside Head Teachers at a briefing on February 25th 2016. It may be that further proposals emerge from that discussion.

4.4 Proposal 1 - Funded support is open only to those schools that choose to contribute to the budget.

4.5 Proposal 2 - The fund is renamed as The School Improvement Fund and is made accessible to a wider range of schools. This would enable a preventative, as well as a reactive approach to supporting school improvement in identified schools. This should be linked to the annual evaluation of schools.

4.6 Proposal 3 – Tameside Primary Consortium (TPC) should put forward cluster improvement projects requiring full or partial funding. These projects would require an external evaluation of impact.

4.7 Proposal 4 - How the fund is spent and its impact is reported termly to TPC and annually to all Head Teachers.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Members of the Schools Forum are requested to note the contents of the report and to consider the proposals for future use of this funding.