

Report to:	SCHOOLS FORUM
Date:	19 January 2023
Reporting Officer:	Tim Bowman, Director of Education (Tameside and Stockport)
Subject:	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT DE-DELEGATION
Report Summary:	This report aims to seek de-delegation from maintained schools to fund the school improvement function previously funded by the School Improvement and Brokerage grant.
Recommendations:	We ask that Forum: Agrees to de-delegation for the maintained sector at a cost per pupil of £12.78
Corporate Plan:	Education finances significantly support the Starting Well agenda to provide the very best start in life where children are ready to learn and encouraged to thrive and develop, and supports Aspiration and Hope through learning and moving with confidence from childhood to adulthood.
Policy Implications:	In line with financial and policy framework.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	The Dedicated Schools Grant is a ring fenced grant solely for the purposes of schools and pupil related expenditure from which de-delegation decisions are funded. This de-delegation is vital to ensure support can continue to be provided. Any cost pressure created as a result of schools deciding not to de-delegate funding would have to be managed by a reduction in service or the council may apply to the Secretary of State via a disapplication of regulations to secure funding.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	As set out in the main body of the report this change in delegation of the funding is required following the decision by the Department for Education in relation to how the funded it provided. The use of the funding will still be subject to the same level of scrutiny and oversight.
Risk Management:	There is a funding and function risk to schools and the LA if the funds are not secured.
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 Information: The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Jane Sowerby

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following the decision by the DfE in 2022-23 to remove the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant, Local Authorities (LAs) were required to seek de-delegation of schools block funding from maintained schools to support any on ongoing LA School Improvement activity costs. As noted last year the transitional grant was available in 2022-23 only so School Improvement will need to be de-delegated in full in 2023-24.
- 1.2 The purpose of the grant was to provide support to local authorities in England for expenditure lawfully incurred relating to local authorities' statutory school improvement functions. This relates to maintained schools in Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the school improvement expectations relating to maintained schools set out on page 36 of the Schools Causing Concern Guidance. In summary, these functions require local authorities to monitor the performance of schools, broker or provide school improvement provision, and intervene as appropriate.
- 1.3 Since 2017, this Grant has been provided to support councils to fulfil their core improvement activities, with the amount received by each council proportionate to the number of maintained schools in their area.
- 1.4 The Department for Education updated the Schools Causing Concern Guidance October 2022 to make it clear that core school improvement activity goes beyond solely exercising formal intervention powers.
- 1.4 In line with the direction of travel of the Schools White Paper 2022, the Government has now fully removed the Grant. This report seeks a decision on de-delegation for School Improvement for 2023/24
- 1.5 In January 2022, Schools Forum agreed to de-delegate 50% of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant. This was in line with the removal of the Grant and the transitional funding arrangement. Schools Forum also supported the request for academies to buy into the offer under an SLA arrangement. Tameside has strong relationships with the whole schools sector. The relationships between maintained schools, academies and the LA are an important part of the success of the schools system in Tameside. All stakeholders are keen to maintain, support and further develop these relationships.

2. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- 2.1 The School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant in the financial year 2021-22 was worth £213k in total. Maintained schools agreed to de-delegate £106k from the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2022-23 and a transitional grant of £97k was received directly from the DfE. The FY 2022-23 per pupil cost was set at £6.12.
- 2.2 Due to the transitional arrangement ending, in 2023-24 the de-delegated cost per pupil will increase to £12.78 per pupil

3. WHY THE DE-DELEGATION IS IMPORTANT

- 3.1 Since 2018, the model of School Improvement activity in Tameside has not been limited to maintained schools, with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and support being available to any school that may need it. The Council will also invite academies to buy into the School Improvement Service which will ensure that we retain the ability to support the whole sector and retain equity, which has proved so successful in Tameside over the last four to five years.

- 3.2 All schools need to be part of the big picture. Tameside's school improvement model is built on partnerships and relationships. It is collaborative and seeks to engage all schools in a variety of consultative and task and finish groups. Strategy and priority setting is based on full engagement with the Tameside Primary Consortium, Tameside Association of Secondary Headteachers and Special Schools Sector Partnership. It has never been more important that this continues and grows, in the next phase of Government schools policy.
- 3.3 The grant/de-delegation currently funds the work of the Head of Education Improvement and Partnerships, including commissioning and brokering budgets for school improvement.
- 3.4 Education Improvement and Partnerships ensures cohesion across the school system; facilitating working together responsibly between schools and with the local authority. The service provides an infrastructure for the school system, attracting partners and funding to the area, enabling opportunities to develop at a systemic level such as The Ogden Trust and University of Manchester Science partnership, the Education Endowment Foundation and Research School partnership, English and Maths Hubs, Mental Health Support Teams, BeeWell, transitions including Six into Seven, and Priority Area planning.
- 3.5 The grant/de-delegation supports the LA to meet needs before schools reach a critical point of failure. Monies are used to help support schools and prevent Tameside children from being at risk of attending a school that is less than good, long before being eligible for intervention. This may include commissioned improvement support from an academy trust or funded evidence-based approaches which address priorities agreed with the LA.
- 3.6 In addition to supporting strategic and operational cohesion in the schools system the grant/de-delegation is also intended to support the LA with its school improvement statutory duties and powers of intervention which include:
- Ofsted engagement and liaison
 - Annual categorisation process of primary schools and development of the Primary Standards and Performance Protocol
 - Implementing Schools Causing Concern guidance
 - Brokering and monitoring school-led improvement partnerships e.g. schools at risk of becoming inadequate or double RI
 - Commissioning and facilitating support for RI, Inadequate and category 3 schools
 - Data collection, management, and support outside of the data SLA
 - Statutory moderation for primary schools.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The LA requests maintained schools support the full delegation in 2023-24.
- 4.2 Education Improvement and Partnerships ensures cohesion across the school system; facilitating working together responsibly between schools and with the local authority.
- 4.3 Since 2018, the model of School Improvement activity in Tameside has not been limited to maintained schools, with CPD and support being available to any school that may need it. By offering a School Improvement Service that academies can buy into, we will ensure that we retain the ability to support the whole sector and retain equity, which has proved so successful in Tameside over the last four to five years.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 As set out at the front of the report.