

**Schools Forum  
5 March 2024**

**Approval of Central Expenditure Budgets for 2024/25**

**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 For Schools Forum to approve the proposed Central Expenditure for 2024/25 as determined by the ESFA and set out in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Schools Forum approve tables 1 and 2 as set out to form the basis for central expenditure for the 2024/25 financial year.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations state that “A local authority must not deduct the expenditure referred to in Part 1 (Central Services), Part 2 (Central Schools Expenditure), Part 3 (Central Early Years Expenditure) or Part 5 (Items that May Be Removed From Maintained Schools Budget Shares) of Schedule 2 without authorisation from their Schools Forum under regulation 12 (1), or from the Secretary of State under regulation 12 (3).
- 3.2 This report therefore sets out the amounts that Walsall Council proposes to utilise from the Central School Services Block of DSG and the central budgets to be retained from the Early Years Block of DSG.

**4. Items Under Part 1 (Central Services)**

- 4.1 **Table 1** below highlights the proposed Central Services that would be funded from the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) of DSG. The total value proposed is in line with the illustrative allocation for CSSB provided by the ESFA.

<b>Table 1 – Central Services</b>		
<b>Area</b>	<b>Value for 2024/25 (£m)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Schools Admissions	0.392	This is based on the 2023/24 value funded within the Schools Central Services Block of DSG, increased using revised pupil count.
Music Service	0.038	Agreed by Schools Forum at their meeting on 25 September 2023, and is the value that has been funded within the Schools Central Services Block of DSG.

Area	Value for 2024/25 (£m)	Comments
Servicing Schools Forum	0.005	This is the same value as that requested for 2023/24 and is the value that has been funded within the Schools Central Services Block of DSG
Licenses (coded under other items)	0.289	This is based on the 2023/24 value as there is a delay in providing the revised figure for 2024/25. This is funded by the Schools Central Services Block of DSG and is in relation to a national agreement for copyright licences.
Teachers' Pension for centrally employed teachers	0.054	Additional pension funding for centrally employed teachers was rolled into CSSB funding from 2021/22 and is included in the baseline per pupil funding for ongoing responsibilities.
ESG Retained Duties - Responsibilities that Local Authorities hold for all schools	1.113	This represents funding that was previously paid to the authority as part of the Education Services Grant (ESG), which has now been transferred to the Central Schools Services Block of DSG and is to be utilised to contribute toward the responsibilities that the authority holds for all schools (a full list of these services is provided at Appendix 1).
ESG General Duties - Responsibilities that Local Authorities hold for maintained schools	0	In line with the feedback from School Forum in previous years, as the funding that the authority previously received as part of the Education Services Grant (ESG) for responsibilities that it holds for maintained schools was not transferred DSG, the authority is not requesting any funding from schools to support these services (as it would represent a cut to school budgets).
<b>Total allocation</b>	<b>1.891</b>	

## 5. Part 2 (Central Early Years Expenditure)

5.1 Table 2 highlights the proposed Central Early Years Expenditure to be funded from the Early Years Block of DSG.

Table 2 – Central Early Years Expenditure		
Area	Value for 2024/25 (£m)	Comments
Early Years Contingency	0.500	This is estimated based on actual costs required to be paid out to providers from the central early years contingency for 2024/25 and is used to fund termly changes in pupil numbers for 3 and 4 year olds.

Expenditure on Children under 5	0.778	Under the updated Early Years finance regulations the local authority is allowed to retain up to 5% of early years funding centrally to fund central early years services, however the £0.778m requested here is below this level (circa 2.3% of overall Early Years DSG block funding for 2024/25). To note, as this is based on a percentage of the Early Years funding, this number could vary depending on final funding allocations based on actual pupil take up. This funding will be used support internal Early Years and Early Help services.
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**6. Financial implications / Value for Money**

- 6.1 All values set out are either at or below those agreed for 2023/24, or in line with forecast costs expected for 2024/25, and can be contained within the overall Schools Central Services Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, and the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding received by Walsall.

**7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations state that “A local authority must not deduct the expenditure referred to in Part 1 (Central Services), Part 2 (Central Schools Expenditure), Part 3 (Central Early Years Expenditure) or Part 5 (Items that May Be Removed From Maintained Schools Budget Shares) of Schedule 2 without authorisation from their Schools Forum under regulation 12 (1), or from the Secretary of State under regulation 12 (3).

**8. School Improvement**

- 8.1 No issues directly arising from this report.

**9. Members eligible to vote**

- 9.1 All elected members with voting rights are eligible to vote on this matter.

<b>Appendix 1 - Responsibilities that Local Authorities hold for all schools</b>
<b>Reference 'The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022 Schedule 2 – Part 3</b>
<b>Statutory and Regulatory duties:</b>
Director of children's services and personal staff for director
Planning for the education service as a whole
Revenue budget preparation, preparation of information on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education
Administration of grants
Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares
Formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula
Internal audit and other tasks related to the authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under Section 151 of LGA 1972 except duties specifically related to maintained schools
Consultation costs relating to non-staffing issues
Plans involving collaboration with other LA services or public/voluntary bodies
Standing Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs)
Provision of information to or at the request of the Crown other than relating specifically to maintained schools
<b>Education Welfare:</b>
Functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision of education to excluded pupils
School attendance
Responsibilities regarding the employment of children
<b>Asset management:</b>
Management of the LA's capital programme including preparation and review of an asset management plan, and negotiation and management of private finance transactions
General landlord duties for all buildings owned by the local authority, including those leased to academies
<b>Central support services:</b>
No functions
<b>Premature retirement and redundancy:</b>
No functions
<b>Monitoring national curriculum assessment:</b>
No functions
<b>Therapies:</b>
No functions
<b>Additional note:</b>
Services set out in the table above will also include overheads relating to these services for:
· Ensuring payments are made in respect of taxation, national insurance and superannuation contributions
· Recruitment, training, continuing professional development, performance management and personnel management of staff

## Agenda Item 7

· Investigations of employees or potential employees, with or without remuneration
· Investigation and resolution of complaints
· Legal services related to education functions