AGENDA ITEM 8

REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM

10th NOVEMBER 2025

DELEGATION – DEDELEGATION 2026/27

SUMMARY

1. Funding for de-delegated services must be allocated through the formula but can be passed back, or de-delegated for maintained primary and secondary schools with school forum approval.

2. The authority is proposing the option of de-delegation (i.e. central management) for all of the areas covered in this report for 2026/27.

3. An equivalent paper was presented and discussed at the last Forum on 6th October, so members were aware of voting at today's meeting. Also, in the event of any of the proposals being rejected this would allow time to plan for the transfer of budgets and responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION

4. That the eligible **Schools Forum members representing maintained schools** vote separately according to their sector on the proposals to de-delegate services set out in the report.

DETAIL

5. Under the government's funding reforms there is an assumption of delegation for a number of budget areas which are currently held centrally for maintained schools and are delegated for academies. **Maintained schools' primary and secondary representatives on the Schools Forum can vote, by sector**, to de-delegate these areas where it is proposed by the local authority. The outcome of the vote is binding for all maintained schools in that sector.

6. If the Schools Forum voted against the proposals for de-delegation then a range of costs and associated responsibilities currently met centrally by the local authority will transfer to maintained schools for them to manage themselves. The budget for these costs would also transfer to schools on a formula basis which was previously consulted on and agreed.

7. Academies are not part of these arrangements since these responsibilities and the funding for them are automatically delegated to academies through the DfE using the local funding formula.

8. Responsibility for a number of services and associated funding that falls within the regulations has been delegated for several years and it is proposed that this continues for those areas namely, insurances, museum and library services and staff supply costs (other than trade union duties).

9. The Schools Forum agreed to de-delegation last year for services in the section below for all primary and secondary maintained schools (i.e. excluding academies).

BUDGETS PROPOSED FOR CONTINUED DE-DELEGATION

10. A summary table of the services, their related estimated funding and the basis the funding which would be removed from the formula is shown in the table below.

Service	Primary £	Primary Basis	Secondary £	Secondary Basis	Total £
Contingencies	£7,682	£2.16 per child (NoR)	£3,535	£2.28 per child (NoR)	£11,217
Support to Schools Partnership Fund	£17,726	£4.99 per child (NoR)	£8,537	£5.50 per child (NoR)	£26,263
Staff costs supply cover – Union facilities time	£10,653	£3.00 per child (NoR)	£4,656	£3.00 per child (NoR)	£15,309
Behaviour and Support Services	£33,388	Low Att Total Primary Units	£25,446	Low Att Total Secondary Units	£58,834
Free school meals eligibility	£0	No longer de-delegated	£3,985	£2.57 per child (NoR)	£3,985
School Improvement Functions	£13,655	£3.85 per child (NoR)	£5,968	£3.85 per child (NoR)	£19,623
TOTAL	**£83,104**		**£52,127**		**£135,231 ***

* above takes account of schools known to be converting to academy status before 4th January 2025.

The number of maintained schools on which the above estimates are based is:-

Primary Schools - 12
Secondary Schools - 1

11. **Contingencies Formula Errors**: This budget relates to a contingency for correction of errors in the funding formula. If this budget wasn't in place then the schools budget would have to be asked to absorb these costs or corrections made in future years.

12. **Partnership Fund:** Relates to support to the Schools Partnership Fund. In line with the Stockton Borough Council School Improvement Framework, a fund is in place to support maintained schools experiencing challenging circumstances. Schools may be those in Ofsted categories or vulnerable to weak outcomes.

13. **Staff costs supply cover (not sickness)**: This budget relates to trade union facility time. Under the Employment Acts Trade Union representatives have a statutory right to reasonable paid time off from employment to carry out trade union duties and training. The following considerations should be taken into account:-

    a. **Maintained Schools:**
        i. In the past facility time for senior teacher trade union representatives based in schools has always been funded by centrally retained DSG funding. This report recommends this continues by approving de-delegation for maintained schools.

ii. If this is not supported the budget will be delegated and schools will have to make their own arrangements for negotiating and consulting with the trade unions on changes to HR policies which will lead to duplication of effort and inconsistencies across schools.
iii. Trade union representatives have a legal right to time off to participate in the collective bargaining arrangements of their employer and to represent their members. If the de-delegation were not agreed individual schools would have to bear the cost of the time off for the senior TU reps nominated by their union to participate in these discussions.
iv. Due to increased time spent by unions on representing members, the per pupil rate, which has not been uplifted for a number of years, has been increased to £3 per pupil from £1.68 (secondary) and £1.51 (primary).

b. **Academies (receive funding for TU facilitation in their budget) - options**:-
i. They contribute in the same way as maintained schools do;
ii. They are invoiced for TU time spent in their establishment by the trade union representatives, which has been paid for by the LA, and then reimburse the LA accordingly. They invoice the authority for time spent by TU reps, employed by the academy, spent in maintained schools; or
iii. They make their own arrangements with the trade unions for representatives from the trade unions amongst their own workforce.

14. **Letters from the various trade unions and NASUWT** supporting de-delegation are attached to this paper. If de-delegation is agreed for trade union facilitation arrangements, then the LA would be willing to manage the pooled arrangements and contact academies to make them the offer to buy into the arrangements in support of good industrial relations across the borough. Resources are limited to contributions only and payments to unions will only be made up to the value of the contributions received.

15. **Behaviour and Support Services**: This budget relates to provision of advice, support and training to schools, on behaviour, social and emotional aspects of learning in order to avoid exclusions and incidences of disruptive behaviour. The SEMH service is made up of highly skilled teachers and case workers whose role is to support schools and staff in Stockton to further improve their understanding of the needs of their pupils. Academies and independent schools and colleges can continue to purchase support through the SEMH offer. The offer includes strategic support, offers of Continuous Professional Development sessions and individual pupil and staff support.

16. **Free school meals eligibility**: This budget relates to the administration of the free school meal eligibility scheme currently undertaken by Customer Services.

17. **School Improvement Fund**: The Government proceeded with reducing the local authority school improvement monitoring and brokering grant by 50% for financial year 2022 to 2023, with full removal in financial year 2023 to 2024. Provision has been included in the School and Early Years Finance Regulations 2022 (England) to allow local authorities to deduct funding for local authorities' core school improvement activities from maintained school budgets via the de-delegation process. For financial year 2026/27, the LA proposes to maintain the rate per child on roll at the 2025/26 level (£3.85). This will result in de-delegation of c£19,623, which reflects further academisation (2025/26 £21,750).

18. **National Copyright Licenses**: The Secretary of State will continue to negotiate a number of licences on behalf of Local Authorities and "top-slice" LA DSG budgets to cover the cost. The 2026/27 figure will be provided by DFE as part of the DSG budget in December 2025 (2025/26 £208k). The licences covered under this arrangement in 2026/27 will be:-

i. Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA)
ii. School Printed Music License (SPML)
iii. Newspaper Licensing Agency (NLA)
iv. Education Recording Agency (ERA)
v. Public Video Screening Licence (PVSL), managed by Filmbank
vi. Motion Picture Licensing Company (MPLC)
vii. Performing Rights Society License (PRSL)
viii. Phonographic Performance License (PPL)
ix. Christian Copyright Licensing International License (CCLI)

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