

**27 JUNE 2018**

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND BROKERAGE GRANT**

*Report of the Director of Children's Services*

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To update the Forum on the recently-received School Improvement and Brokerage Grant

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 The Council has now received a grant in relation to the above activities for maintained schools; we wish to consider how best to use this in consultation with Schools Forum.

**3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 Forum is asked to note the options set out in this report, and that we will return to Forum in September to seek a final view.

**4. Background**

- 4.1 The DfE has for some while been indicating that it would make some grant funding available to local authorities to cover the costs of core required school improvement activity for maintained schools, together with the costs of brokering/transferring schools to Academy status, when subject to directive academy orders. The Council is required to take all reasonable steps to facilitate conversion/sponsorship in such circumstances, and the grant provides funding to allow this to be done.
- 4.2 A grant allocation has now been received, well after the start of this financial year, and after all our financial planning for the year has been completed. The value of the grant is £597k, it relates only to maintained schools, but is not "ring-fenced" and thus the Council could spend it on any purpose. There remains no certainty that the grant will recur in future years.

- 4.3 For 2018/19, the Council expects to incur about £300,000 of costs in relation to directed academisation of mainstream schools. (This does not include lagged funding for growth in pupil numbers covered through the disapplication request. Nor does it cover direct costs such as legal and property related fees). The costs are largely payments to sponsors and similar. These costs are therefore the first element of spending to be set against the grant, and would amount to half of this year's figure.
- 4.4 It would be reasonable therefor to see the balance of 50%/£300,000 as relating to the Council's core school improvement activities, sitting alongside and complementing the work undertaken and paid for via the funding de-delegated by Primary Schools for School Improvement. The de-delegation of funding is intended by DfE to be additional to the "core" requirement for school improvement which the grant is supposed to fund.
- 4.5 There are a number of ways in which we could use this funding to support schools. These are:
- (i) To carry it forward to next year and use it to offset some of the de-delegation that would otherwise be requested. This has two disadvantages; firstly we would not be able to show how the grant had been used on core school improvement this year; and secondly there would be a delay in its application. However, if we wish to pass the funding on to schools in one way or another, this is a reasonable way to do this.
  - (ii) To supplement or replace activity that maintained schools would otherwise be required to fund themselves, in particular a part of the HIP programme which is a key element of activity that HCC needs to see being undertaken if it is to be able effectively to maintain its schools. However, we would need to undertake further work on how this would operate.
  - (iii) To use it on new, additional school improvement activity with maintained schools, perhaps commissioned from HfL.
- 4.6 Separately, there is likely also to be a small underspend on funding de-delegated for the education leadership role for 2018/19. When it is clear what scale this will be, we will also be able to take account of it in future budget setting/support for schools.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 Frum is asked to note and comment on the report; and note that we will return to Forum in September to seek a final view.