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|  | Coventry Schools Forum 20 January 2022Agenda Item 7 |
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| Education and Skills  |

**Title: Coventry Education Improvement Strategy Commissioning Fund**

**Recommendations**

**This item is for the School Forum to note**

* **The Schools Forum should agree that all schools will be asked to return their share of the £450K funding that is delegated through budget shares to fund the commissioning fund as set out in this report**

Voting: Although this item is to note we ask that that the Schools Forum takes a vote from all school representatives to agree to the principle that all types of school will return the funding they receive from the DSG reserve.

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## Background

### For the past several years the Local Authority has annually distributed £450k of one-off DSG reserves into school budget shares. This funding was then passed back to the LA by all schools to fund the operation of the Coventry Education Improvement Strategy Commissioning fund (CEISCF).

1.2 The CEISCF funds the network and collaborative model that is in place in Coventry. A small amount of the resource supports the school infrastructure, and the remainder is distributed amongst the networks and collaboratives to be used to fund the Coventry Education Partnership’s city wide school improvement priorities. The use of this funding is monitored and evaluated by Coventry Monitoring Officers, and network and collaborative leads report to the Director of Education through the city wide school improvement boards.

### The funding mechanism in place was to distribute the additional funding to schools at a set value per pupil, with all schools returning this same amount of funding to the LA through de-delegation (maintained schools) or through an invoice (as academies can not de-delegate). This meant that the distribution and return of the £450k reserve funding had no net impact on schools’ funding allocations.

### In 2021/22 financial year the National Funding Formula position has changed how best to manage the process around this School Improvement Funding. The double protection mechanism (the Minimum Funding Level and the Minimum Funding Guarantee) means it is no longer possible to give one off funding equally to all schools. Therefore if the usual mechanism was used, funding would end up being de-delegated/contributed by schools who had never received the funding.

### To resolve this issue and ensure the continued operation of this fund is possible, in 21/22 the £450k was included within schools’ budget shares, and all schools were asked to return the amount of money received through an invoice process. This was to ensure that the distribution and return of the £450k reserve funding continues to have no net impact on any school’s funding allocations, and that the full £450k remains in place to support this fund.

## Approach for 2022/23

### In order to allocate the £450K of one-off resource through the formula the LA needs to apply to the DfE for a minimum funding guarantee disapplication. This is to ensure that one-off funding is not locked into school’s baselines. The report to enable this to happen was approved at the November 2021 Schools Forum. The DfE have approved the disapplication for the 2022/23 financial year but have indicated they are unlikely to approve further requests.

### The Local Authority proposes to continue with the same approach in 2022/23, and all schools will be asked to return the funding via an invoice process. Following the Schools Forum we will write to all schools notifying them of the approach, and the support and approval of the Schools Forum.

### We will need to undertake a review of how the CEISCF will be funded and operate after 2022/23.

## Further Information

### Through discussions on the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering grant consultation schools have highlighted their continued support for Coventry’s approach, and have welcomed the use of DSG reserve to support partnership and school improvement in the city.

3.2 This approach only works if all schools in the city agree to return the funding in their budget shares. This agreement of all schools has been a stipulation of the Schools Forum in the use of the reserve for the CEISCF.

## Who does the report affect?

### The decision affects all schools as they will be asked to return the funding allocated to them from the £450K reserve.

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| **Contributor/approver name** | **Title** | **Division or organisation** | **Date doc sent out** | **Date response received or approved** |
| Kirston Nelson | Director of Education & Skills | Education and Skills | 13/01/2022 |  |
| Chris Whiteley | Finance Manager | Financial Management | 13/01/2022 | 14/01/2022 |

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