

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****SCHOOLS FORUM****6<sup>th</sup> October 2015****Report of the Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults****Central Schools Block funding 2016-17****1 Purpose of the Report**

To seek School Forum approval to retain funding centrally within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block for 2016-17 and to support applications to the Secretary of State for Education where required.

**2. Information and Analysis**

Attached as Appendix 1 to this report is a list of the central budgets for which the Authority is seeking approval to retain centrally within the Schools Block for 2016-17.

There are four areas where approval to increase or provide new funding is sought, namely:

- Support for Rethinking Our Early Help Offer - an increase of £2m (from £3m to £5m), further details are provided in a separate report to this meeting.
- Offsite and out of classroom activities – a new request for £175k – see Appendix 2.
- Support for critical incidents – new (£50k) – see Appendix 3.
- Support for the Schools Forum – additional (£12k) – to remove the expected historic subsidy for the Forum.

As these proposed allocations exceed historic levels then the final decision on whether to approve their central retention rests with the Secretary of State. The deadline for such applications is 30<sup>th</sup> September and a provisional application has been made to cover all of the above, subject to the outcome of this meeting.

Offsetting the above increases in funding are reductions in central budgets in respect of KS1 class size costs, school performance support, equal pay claims and endowments for children in care. The net change in the support for centrally funded activities is £1.174m.

Schools Forum approval to the amounts in Appendix 1 is sought.

### **3. Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime & disorder, equality of opportunity, human resources, legal & human rights, environmental, financial, health, property and transport considerations.

### **4. Background Papers**

Papers held in CAYA Finance

### **5. Officer's Recommendations**

The Forum is asked to:

- (i) approve the Authority's application to retain funding centrally within the Schools Block for the functions set out in Appendix 1;
- (ii) support the Authority's application to the Secretary of State for the increases in respect of the Early Help Offer and Schools Forum; and
- (iii) support the Authority's application to the Secretary of State to create new central budgets in respect of critical incidents in schools and offsite and out of classroom activities.

**IAN JOHNSON**  
**Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults**

**Proposed retained Schools Block budgets****Appendix 1**

	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	
<b>Service</b>	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>	<b>Description of services</b>
Admissions	468	468	Provision of service to allocate places at schools and academies in accordance with national requirements
Schools Forum - <b>increase</b>	40	28	Support for the costs of the Schools Forum including direct costs and officer time
Contribution to Combined Budgets	2,721	2,721	This funds a variety of initiatives including support for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) raising standards in schools e.g. Journey to Excellence;</li> <li>(ii) vulnerable students;</li> <li>(iii) ad hoc initiatives e.g. reading recovery, elective home education;</li> <li>(iv) schools causing concern;</li> <li>(v) schools, families and children with behaviour, attendance and other needs.</li> </ul>
Contribution to Combined Budgets – REHO - <b>increase</b>	5,000	3,000	To offset impact of cuts in LA funding pending outcome of co-production/ co-design of new structures/services
Pupil Growth Fund - <b>reduction</b>	1,200	2,111	Additional support to infant and primary schools to assist them in meeting the Key Stage 1 class size requirements.
Licences	518	518	This funds licences in respect of the Copyright Licensing Agency, Music Publishers Association, Educational Recording Agency Christian Copyright Licencing International, Mechanical Copyright Protection Society, Performing Rights Society and Phonographic Performance Limited for all schools and academies as required by the DfE. Quantum subject to DfE confirmation, Forum approval <u>not</u> required.
SEN Transport	80	80	This is funding towards the costs of SEN placements which, although more cost effective overall, result in higher Council funded transport costs. The funding is effectively a contribution towards the extra costs incurred by the Council.
School Performance - <b>reduction</b>	0	1,500	Support schools and academies whose performances give cause for concern.

	2016-17	2015-16	
Service	£k	£k	Description of services
Children in care endowment - <b>reduction</b>	-	500	To support an endowment scheme for children in care to raise aspirations – agreed by Schools Forum on 4 <sup>th</sup> November 2014 to be funded from DSG cash balances
Equal Pay – <b>reduction</b>	-	500	To fund the costs of historic equal pay claims from school based employees
Offsite and out of classroom activities – <b>new</b>	175	-	To support the cost of a central support service to help schools and academies with managing off site educational visits
Support for Critical Incidents - <b>new</b>	50	-	To fund the support provided by the Authority for critical incidents in schools
<b>Total central allocations</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>11,426</b>	



## **2016-17 Proposal to fund centrally support for schools off-site educational visits**

### **Background**

Derbyshire County Council endorses and supports initiatives to enhance young people's educational and experiential learning, recognising that off-site educational visits are a valuable part of every learner's experience whilst at school. High quality off-site visits and activities form an essential part of young people's development, providing a foundation for lifelong learning and healthy lifestyles and are often the most memorable experiences of a child's time at school. They also contribute to raising attainment and achievement, an integral element of Derbyshire's 'Journey to Excellence' strategy. This is supported by Ofsted research into learning outside the classroom and its relationship to attainment which concluded that;

*"When planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards and improving pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Local authorities can build on their successful work in assuring appropriate health and safety practices by better supporting and encouraging schools in enhancing the quality of learning outside the classroom as a means of raising achievement". (Ofsted, via LOTC Conference 2006.)*

### **Visits Notification, Approval and Monitoring System**

The County Council (DCC) aims for all schools to have access to and use of a robust and safe system for the notification, approvals and monitoring of school procedures for all off-site educational visits. This includes any trip that requires leaving the school grounds, and where you would normally complete risk assessments beforehand, particularly higher risk 'Category C' visits. The system currently used is the *Evolve* system, which is web based and is supported by the Local Authority Outdoor Education Service and CAYA Health and Safety Staff who monitor the school's visit plans and approvals.

There are a wide range of benefits to schools, including administration and time savings from the current system and the support and re-assurance for head teachers and governing bodies from having a robust system in place, as well as access to expert advice and guidance that will be given to schools that subscribe. *Evolve* also provides access to details of a range of educational visits that have been carried out by other organisations, allowing the sharing of good practice.

Critical information about a visit is available through *Evolve* to enable head teachers, governors, the council and emergency services to provide an appropriate response in the event of an emergency. The proposed school visits monitoring system would be managed for DCC by a highly experienced staff team, who are linked with the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP), and who hold a wide range of national governing body qualifications. This provides head teachers and governors access to significant levels of experience and expertise in order to ensure robust procedures are in place, as well as an audit trail of strong governance, in the unfortunate event that any issue should occur. In addition, the proposed system creates access to an extensive database of providers of all educational visits. This would include, for example, activity providers and travel companies in the locality of any visit.

## **Central Funding for School Visits Management**

Under the principle of devolved school budgets, LA's are only permitted to keep a number of Dedicated School Grant (DSG) central budgets with Secretary of State and Schools Forum approval. The funding required covering the costs for HSE/Outdoor Education Service to operate an educational visits advisory and notification function has therefore been included in the formula budget from 2013 onwards. The Council, unlike many other authorities has not immediately introduced a charging system, though it is now necessary that we do so due to the current budget situation.

By offering schools a centrally managed system the costs of the provision can be maintained at a lower level than if the service were administered through Service Level Agreements. Due to savings on economies of scale the proposed central cost equates to:

Primary and Junior	£1.70 per pupil on roll
Secondary and Academies	£2.05 per pupil on roll

Research was undertaken to ensure that the cost of the service being offered is comparable to those offered to educational establishments by neighbouring shire and unitary authorities. A comparison of charges show the Derbyshire costs are significantly lower; for example £2.15 per pupil and £2.82 per pupil at Secondary level with higher charges than this for academies. The differentiation between the Primary and Secondary per-student costs reflects the number and volume of visits undertaken by Secondary schools. Which include a higher number of residential, overseas and adventurous trips taking place, which clearly hold an increase risk factor impacting upon the amount of work and monitoring time needed.

The charges for this service apply to all state funded educational establishments, which include schools, academies and free schools. Other service areas (these are mainly CAYA internal) who wish to use the system will be accommodated in a manner and cost similar to that which is currently in operation.

## **What would be included as part of a centrally provided County Notification, Approval and Monitoring System?**

1. Maintenance and provision of Evolve including licence fees.
2. Administration and staffing of the central system.
3. Expert advice and support through a dedicated support email and telephone number for all educational visits enquiries. . Access to a suite of guidance and generic risk assessments and support in completing these as necessary
4. Dedicated monitoring system that looks at visit quality and safety, and supports establishments to improve and recognise good practice and safe and efficient controls for all types of school visits, with access to reports for head teachers and governing bodies to create advice and guidance for all visits.
5. Access to EVC (Educational Visits Co-ordinator) Training and regular EVC updates, sharing of best practice and the most current national developments.
6. Subsidised training opportunities for teachers and staff leading visits, courses for NQT's, visits management and other relevant training and support courses.

## **A summary of benefits of the proposed central system**

The benefits of the proposed central system are:

1. A system that is robust and effective and which achieves economies of scale, ensuring schools have access to a system at a cost consistently below that of neighbouring counties and other national offers.
2. A system in-line with current government policy that seeks to reduce bureaucracy and streamline administration functions to improve efficiency and achieve savings for schools.
3. A system which is user friendly and enables production of statistical data for presentations, e.g. parent evenings or governing body meetings and evidence for school self-evaluation and Ofsted purposes
4. Time saving benefit of a paper free and easily accessible system
5. An audit trail which can demonstrate that the local authority, schools, head teachers and governors are fulfilling their statutory health and safety duty.
6. Commercial providers of similar types of service may be available but because this central option is offered through DCC it is strictly costed at a not for profit price. The charges to schools and academies cover the costs of providing this service to schools. The LA has a duty of care for all its employees and pupils and this arrangement ensures that the LA is able to enjoy the confidence that it is meeting its obligations through the offer of this service. The arrangements detailed will create a robust system of checks and real monitoring to ensure that the arrangements in place are being used correctly.

## **Alternative Service Level Agreement Options or Schools Opting Out**

The available alternative option to a centrally costed provision will be for the service to be provided under individual SLA agreements which would involve a higher per pupil charge, and a minimum charge level for small schools, to ensure that we meet costs incurred in management and administration.

In the event that a school or academy decides to 'opt-out' of DCC's System, and looks to obtain the advisory services from an independent provider, DCC would not be responsible for the advice or guidance given by that provider. In the event of an emergency, accountability for all educational visit planning decisions rests initially with the governing body.

In the case of a school or academy opting not to purchase this Service, DCC's duty of care is fulfilled through:

- Direct communication to all schools' leadership and governance teams of the details and availability of this Service.
- The monitoring of health and safety compliance, including educational visits with feedback to the head and the school's governing body, of all Derbyshire state funded schools and academies, regardless of whether the school had purchased the Service or decides to 'opt-out'
- Access to CAYA Health & Safety and the Emergency Planning Service's (core offer) to all state funded schools for support in the event of a critical or non-critical incident

**I T Price,**  
**J Sanderson,**

**Head of Sports and Outdoor education, CAYA**  
**Principal Health & Safety Officer, CAYA**

## **Support for Critical Incidents (£50k)**

## **Appendix 3**

In the 2014/15 academic year a significant amount of time was spent responding to “critical incidents” in schools. This support was led by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) but drew upon other local authority and community services too. As well as the time spent responding to these incidents, further resources were used on supervision and reflection after each event and maintaining an up-to-date research base to inform and improve our work going forward.

Incidents to which the Authority responded last year included several suicides of young people, sudden death of key staff in school, arrests of staff in school, violent deaths just outside of school premises and violent incidents from the neighbourhood spilling into school. The focus of the Authority’s role has been to support the school community in returning to normal and in managing the many and varied stresses which surround such incidents. Feedback from schools has always been very positive.

Sadly critical incident work has increased year by year and, given the constraints on Authority funding, the provision of this non-core EPS support is becoming increasingly unaffordable. One option would be to charge the individual schools affected by these incidents for the services provided. However, the Authority is conscious that levying a charge, at what is inevitably a sensitive time in the life of the school, is challenging and would instead prefer that the issue of funding was dealt with in another way.

The Authority is therefore asking approval to be allowed to retain £50k centrally so that this service can continue to be provided free at the point of delivery for those schools and academies which have need of it.