

**Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee**  
**Monday 12 December 2022**  
**1.00 pm Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton**



**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA**

To: The Members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

We are now able to enclose the following presentation given at the meeting held on 12 December 2022 in respect of **agenda item 7 - LA Maintained Schools - Core Offer - Business Case** (Pages 3 – 30).

Published on 13 December 2022

Democratic Service Team, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY

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A photograph of two hands, one from the left and one from the right, reaching towards each other. The hands are dark-skinned and are positioned as if about to shake or hold each other. The background is a plain, light color.

# **LA Maintained Schools Core Offer Children and Families Scrutiny**

**12 December 2022**

# Three inter-connected strands

Education  
Redesign

Core Offer

Education  
Strategy



# Progress update

- **Redesign** in implementation
- First cohort of roles now in post, recruiting internally and externally
- **Core Offer** for decision on Wednesday by Executive
- **Strategy** narrative and process in discussion with SLT, Executive, Department for Education
- Will engage with Scrutiny as part of any consultation





# Core Offer



# What is the Core Offer?

- We are proposing the change the traded offer that is available to LA Maintained schools to buy
- Not everything that is available to buy would be affected
- Services offered to academies and trusts are not affected



# Is this a major change?

- **Yes and No**
- **Yes:**
  - It is designed to significantly impact the way that services respond to need in the system, as well as how supported schools feel
  - It will be considerably more expensive in the first year of operation
- **No:**
  - It has been designed to match as closely as possible what schools are currently buying
  - Removal of government grant would have meant sharp increases in costs under any model



# What kind of services are delivered?



Page 9

Briefings and updates

Governor services

Statutory performance intervention

Library delivery service

Insurance

Financial monitoring and reporting

Crisis communications support

Access to training, development and networks

Property compliance facilitation

Health and Safety

Legal Advice

Headteacher counselling and coaching

Talent management

Refuse and Recycling

HR Administration and Payroll

HR Advice



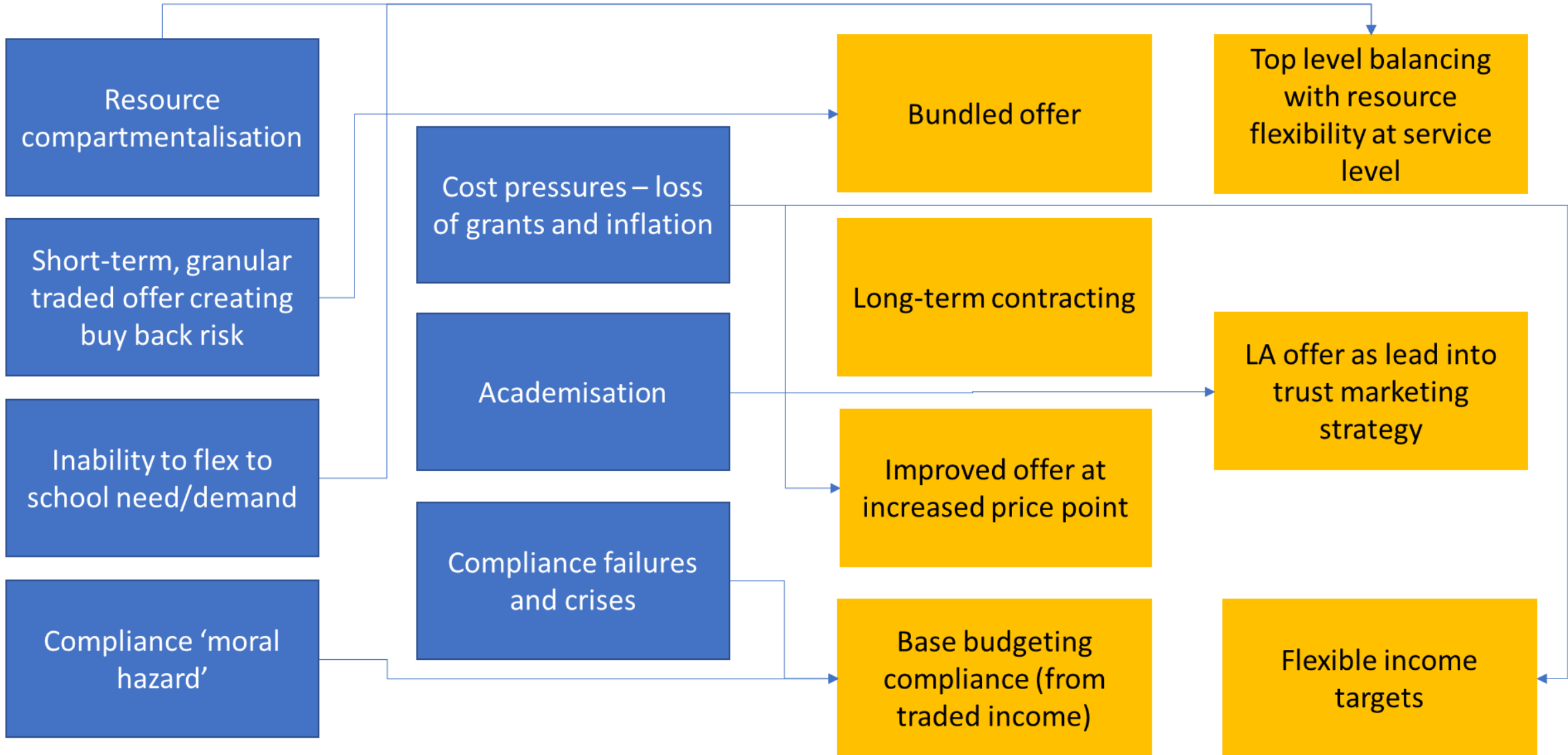
# Why change the approach?

- Advantage of simplicity: every service must 'wash its face'
- Disadvantages:
  - Too difficult to evolve services in response to need, opportunity or changing environment
  - Needs going unmet because 'school hasn't bought in', including where this involves safety concerns or non-compliance
  - Disproportionate focus at service level on finance as opposed to children and schools
  - Not well designed to incentivise ambition and efficiency
  - Encourages silo thinking

# Risk

# Issue

# Strategic mitigation

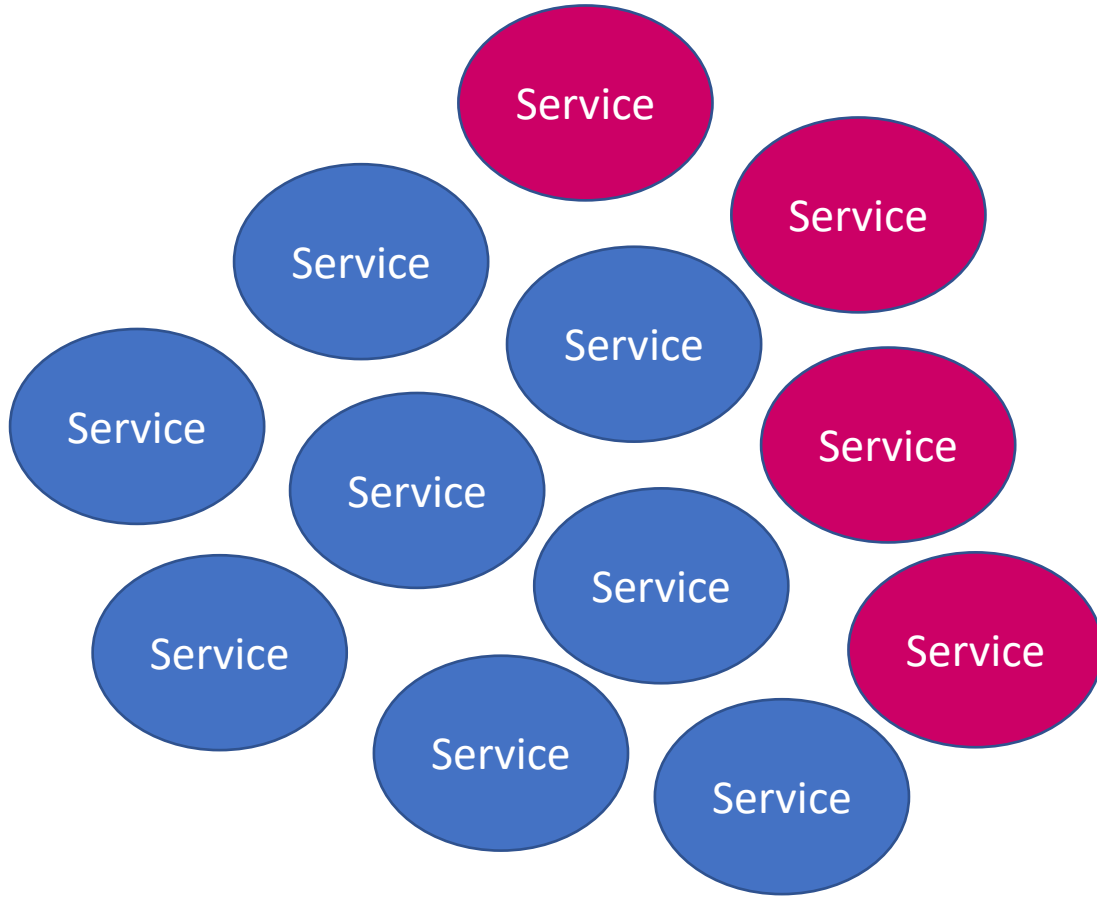




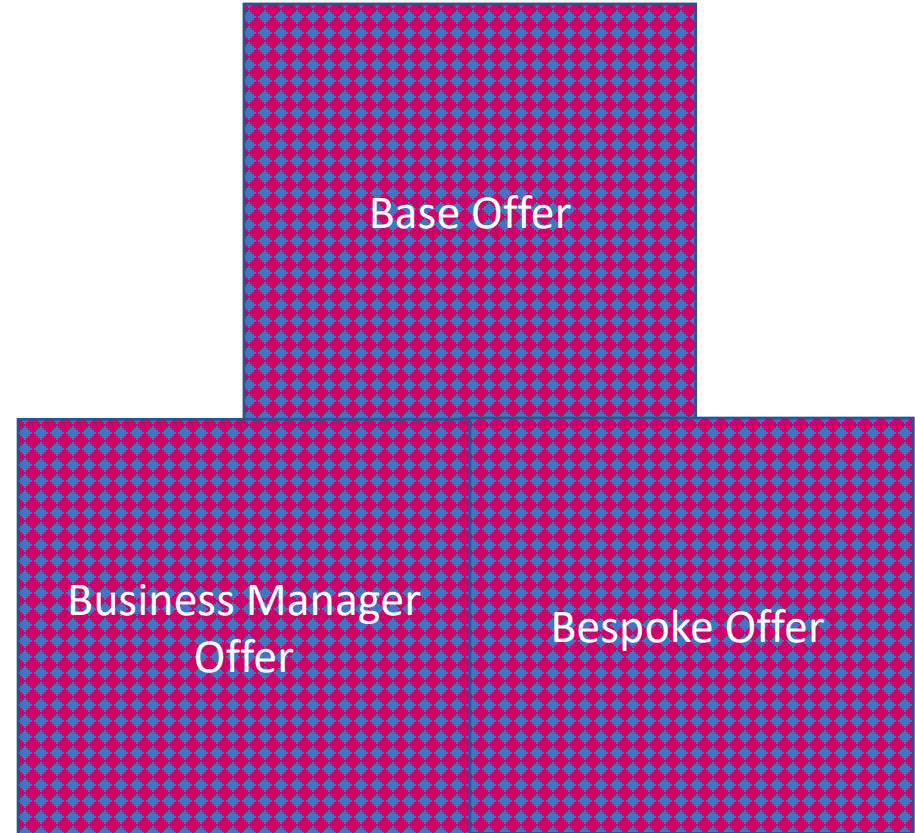
# What is different?

- Services bundled together with single charge rather than offered separately
- Financial balancing at AD level, not service manager
- Clearer definition of what we will deliver as a totality to avoid 'gaps and traps'
- New Head of Service with overall accountability for trading offer as a whole
- Focus on quality and total customer experience for any interaction with the LA
- New investment in relationship management, curriculum coordination and talent management

### From staff-focused silos



### To customer-focused value





# Process to date

# Background

- During the autumn term 2021 we briefed schools about a project we were starting to look at the relationship between the LA and LA maintained schools in the county
- In spring 2022 we commissioned research from external partners TPXImpact
- Research was conducted in April and May with briefings on progress for interested schools
- The DfE published the White Paper
- We received the final report from TPXImpact in June with their recommendations for us as a council
- Using the research we came up with a draft core offer
- Early in September we launched a survey which gave schools the chance to comment on the draft deliverables in the core offer and the possible impact they would have on staff or contracts at each school



# Themes from research

Interviews surfaced five main themes about what support for schools' non-teaching responsibilities should focus on

Page 16

**Quality assurance and school improvement**

The activity schools undertake to ensure they are meeting expected standards

**Maintenance and compliance**

The activity schools undertake to ensure they are providing a safe learning environment

**Recruitment and talent management**

The activity schools undertake to ensure they are attracting, developing and supporting staff with the right skills and expertise

**Back-office functions (HR, Legal and Finance)**

The activity schools undertake to ensure they are financially viable and compliant

**Partnership landscape**

The current and future role of local/national school networks and MATs





# How did we respond?

- Staffing reorganisation is creating capacity and focus in some areas which were previously under-served (recruitment, academisation and leadership development)
- Compliance, safety and minimum standards will be delivered in a much more flexible and need focused manner through the core offer
- More focus on financial standards and compliance will be included in the core offer, as well as a more flexible offer to access business management capacity

# LA Maintained Schools – Core Offer Base Offer

Services with very high levels of buy back or risk-mitigating

Page 18



Service delivery from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023

- School reviews and crisis management
- Relationship management
- Headteacher support
- Exchequer full service + procurement cards
- HR Admin and Payroll
- Legal
- Data Protection
- HR Advisory
- Finance basics
- Governance premium
- Training basic access
- MIS Support
- School library service Silver 2
- Health and safety basics
- Property condition assurance
- All current functions provided currently through de-delegation

# LA Maintained Schools – Core Offer Business Manager Package

Variable levels of buy back, due to schools employing a mix of staff and contractors with varying competencies

Page 19



- ❖ ICT
- ❖ Property
- ❖ Finance

Service delivery from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023

# LA Maintained Schools Bespoke Offer

Some services would continue to be offered outside the set packages

Page 20

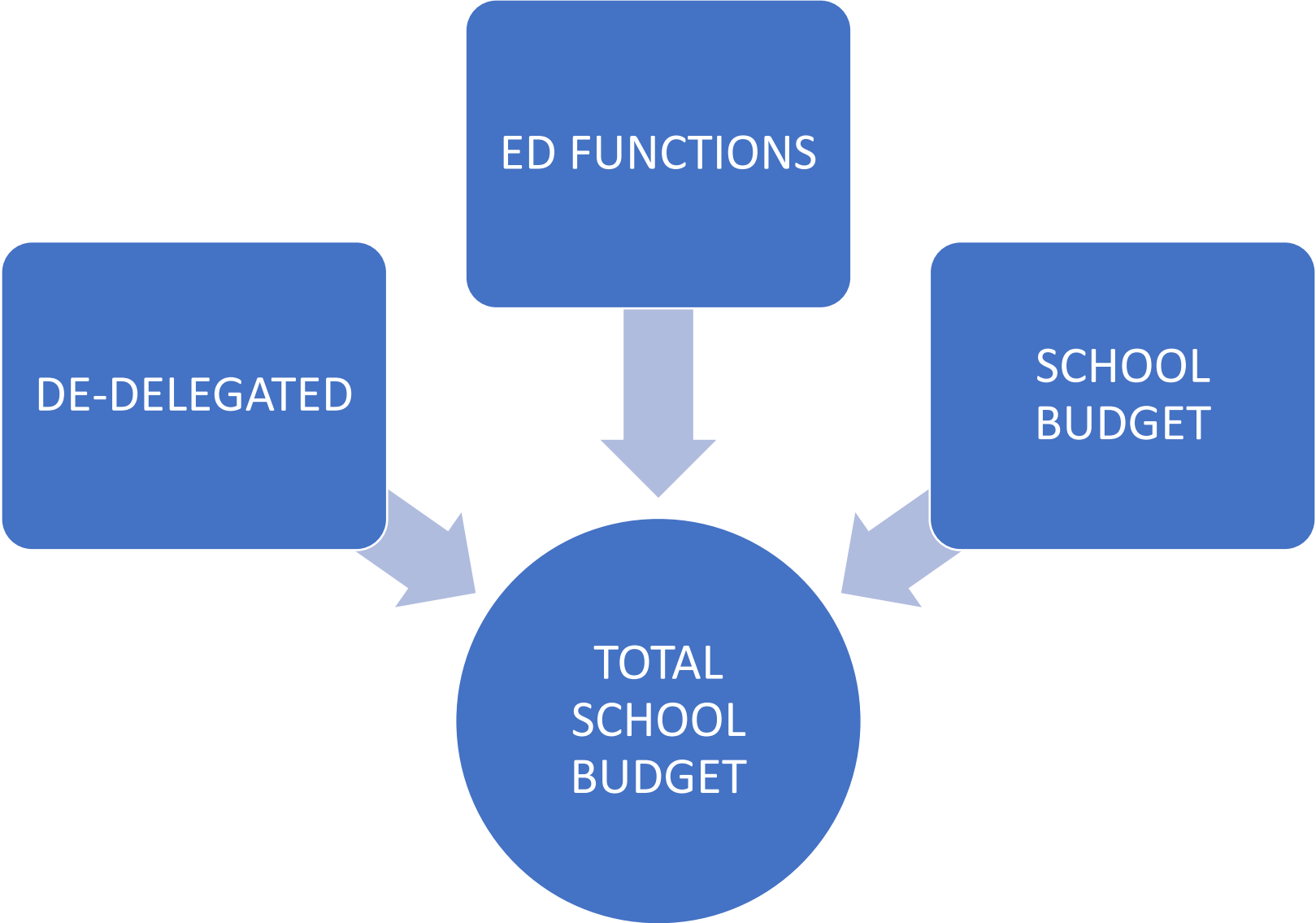


- School Library Service – Top up to Gold package
- South West Mutual
- Outdoors Centres
- Music
- Ed Psych Service
- Headteacher Service (SAPH)
- Individual 'nice to have' services available as currently

**Service delivery from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023**

*Except any top ups*

# Core Offer - Finance Model



*Excluding any additional grants, e.g.,  
Supplementary, Pupil Premium etc*

## Base Offer

- Primary, Special and PRU – **5%** of individual school budget (total school budget excluding any additional grants, e.g., Supplementary, Pupil Premium etc)
- Secondary – **3%** of individual school budget (total school budget excluding any additional grants, e.g., Supplementary, Pupil Premium etc)
- Protection – Increases to any school will be capped at 60% in the first year (2023/24), based on level of buy back of services included in the Base offer.

## Business Manager Package

Days can be accessed from any of ICT, Finance or Property Services. Support utilised will be rounded to the nearest hour. Support cannot be carried over from one financial year to another, except by prior arrangement.

- Level 1 - **£4,200** for 60 hours support
- Level 2 - **£10,500** for 155 hours support
- Level 3 - **£17,000** for 250 hours support

**Bespoke Offer** - Services remain unchanged and will be offered in a manner similar to previous years.

# What if I end up paying for things I don't use?

“Based on clinical need, not ability to pay”



The base offer is about helping schools when they need the most help, not about doing particular tasks.

A different approach is about taking down barriers so that our focus is relentlessly on raising standards and meeting need.





# How will this be made affordable?

There are four potential mitigations:

- Supplementary grant – the government has announced an additional £2.3 billion for schools
- Capping increases – a 60% cap on the increase for any schools is part of the financial modelling
- Interest – with interest rates increasing, there is a probability of a school return on surpluses which could mitigate increases
- Inflationary fund – discussion with Schools Forum about a central fund for schools facing inflationary pressures, criteria to be considered





# Is this a reasonable level of charge?

We have benchmarked nationally:

- In 2016, local authority service charges nationally were most commonly between 8 and 12%
- Latest research suggests that majority of trust top-slice charges are between 4 and 6%



# Do schools have to pay?

No, this is a traded offer, not a top-slice.

However, the proposal is that base offer services will not be made available except through the core offer, they will not be available to buy individually.

The services in the base offer have been carefully selected to represent what the vast majority of schools already pay for.



# Timeline

- Democratic decision making (Scrutiny and Executive)- [December 22](#)
- Schools will be able to purchase **Core Offer** Services (Services will be in SSE shopping basket) - [early/mid January 23](#)
- Deadline for Schools to purchase **Core Offer** services by [10/02/23](#) – [Before February Half Term](#) (Flexible if schools have questions)
- **Bespoke** Services outside Core Offer available for purchasing – [W/C 20/02/23](#)
- Delivery of **Core Offer** services from [01/04/23](#)
- Delivery of **Bespoke** Services from [01/09/23](#)



# Implementation planning



- New webpage for all information on Core Offer
- Rapid fire work to finalise Individual Schools Budgets
- Core Offer costs for each school to be provided including full list of deliverables and 'read across' from last year's packages to new offer
- New Relationship Managers to be introduced, who will be able to help schools through the process and answer any questions

# Questions and Answers



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