

## **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **SCHOOLS FORUM**

## **DE-DELEGATION OF BUDGETS 2024/25**

### **1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 As part of the Department for Education's School Funding Reforms introduced from April 2013, Local Authorities were directed to delegate specific budgets to schools and academies.
- 1.2 Since The regulations allow for the de-delegation of budgets for specific services for maintained primary and maintained secondary schools only.
- 1.3 This paper sets out the details, costs and charges of the services on which maintained school representatives are required to vote annually.

### **2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Funding for de-delegated services must be allocated through the formula but can be passed back, or de-delegated, for maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools with Schools Forum approval.
- 2.2 De-delegation does not apply to special schools, or pupil referral units (PRUs). However, those schools and academies will have the option to buyback these services at a cost based on the same amount per pupil as for maintained primary and secondary schools.
- 2.3 In the case of special schools and PRUs, the funding to buy such services will be included in any top-up payments. Any decisions made to de-delegate in 2023 to 2024 related to that year only, new decisions will be required for any service to be de-delegated in 2024 to 2025.
- 2.4 Schools Forum members for primary maintained schools and secondary maintained schools must decide separately for each phase whether each

service should be provided centrally; the decision will apply to all maintained mainstream schools in that phase.

- 2.5 They must decide on fixed contributions for these services so that funding can then be removed through the formula before school budgets are issued.
- 2.6 There may be different decisions for each phase.
- 2.7 Since 2022 to 2023, schools forums have been able to agree to de-delegate funding for local authorities' core school improvement activities in relation to maintained schools. From 2023 to 2024, the school improvement monitoring and brokering grant is no longer being paid to local authorities.
- 2.8 The following table provides details of services that can be de-delegated and those which are currently de-delegated in North Lincolnshire Council

<b>Services which may be de-delegated</b>	<b>De-delegated in North Lincolnshire</b>	<b>2023/24 Primary &amp; Secondary (Per pupil)</b>	<b>Proposed 2024/25 Primary and Secondary (Per pupil)</b>
additional school improvement services			
Contingencies (including schools in financial difficulties and deficits of closing schools)	No		
Behaviour Support Services	Yes	£15.26	£16.02
Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners	Yes	£10.33	10.85
Free School Meals eligibility (per FSM6 pupil)	Yes	£4.02	£4.22
Insurance	No		
RPA	No		
Museum and library services	No		
Staff costs supply cover (trade union and public duties)	Yes	£2.79	£3.58
Licences and subscriptions; except for those which are paid for by the DFE	No		

- 2.9 The de-delegation of resources provides an opportunity to further strengthen the relationship between the maintained schools sector and the local authority. Building on our shared objectives for safeguarding the positive mental health and well-being and education outcomes of all children and young people within our area. De-delegation provides a mechanism for strengthening mutual accountability for outcomes, reaffirming standards of quality and continuing the discussion on the design and delivery of services.

### 3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Decisions made to de-delegate in 2023/24 related to that year only; new decisions are required for any service to be de-delegated in 2024/25.
- 3.2 Maintained school members are asked to consider the de-delegation of the following service budgets.
- Behaviour Support (Social Emotional Mental Health SEMH)
  - Support to Ethnic Minorities and bilingual pupils
  - Free school meals eligibility
  - Staff Costs

### 4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 **Behaviour Support (SEMH)** – Under the SEND Code of Practice 2014, there is statutory need to provide a professional service to support schools to meet their requirements under this code. Provision of de-delegation funding enables the continuation of this professional service. The Behaviour Support Service supports schools to develop safe and effective approaches to meeting the individual needs of children with SEMH; they provide advice, training and support in partnership with Education Psychology colleagues to identify children's needs, train and develop staff across the education sector; provide preventative and de-escalation approaches and bespoke advice and support for individual children; whole school approaches to improving children's learning experiences, wellbeing and development, supporting inclusive learning environments in order to achieve better outcomes for children and young people including those who may have social, emotional and mental health issues.
- 4.2 **Support to Ethnic Minorities, those with English as an additional language and Gypsy/Roma and Traveller children** – this support is provided by the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) specifically in the context EAL (English as an additional language) and underachieving Black and Minority Ethnic groups including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) children. Support and training is provided to maintained schools and through a traded service with academies. Both EAL and BAME populations have seen a significant increase in North Lincolnshire with approximately 86 different languages being spoken by our bilingual children, and with the recent increases in new communities including from Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan and Romania the EMTAS team are working with more schools than ever.
- 4.3 At any given time of year, EMTAS will work with a significant number of primary and secondary schools across North Lincolnshire in a range of different ways dependent on need. The service continues to provide an

immediate response to provision of support for highly mobile new arrivals who may also be new to English. And a key area of focus is on raising the achievement of BME groups and supporting schools to demonstrate how they meet the needs of their pupils to OFSTED when required. This is particularly important as the number of BME pupils has continued to rise. Many schools rely upon the support and advice given by EMTAS, and in recognition of the need to build capacity, EMTAS also delivers a wide range of CPD courses to schools, either centrally, bespoke and more recently via on-line learning platforms to schools and services.

- 4.4 **Free School Meals Eligibility** – de-delegation funds the administration process of Free School Meals on behalf of schools. The council has access to online DfE Eligibility Checking System, which is populated with Benefits Agency and Tax Credit Agency claim data and can access eligibility information quickly, accurately and efficiently. The system is also used to review claims in large batches instead of manually checking each individual claim. This database is not available to individual schools. Schools would have to set up time consuming manual systems should the Admissions team not undertake this function.
- 4.5 The service continues to work with schools to promote the importance of families continuing to register for free school meals in light of the universal free school meals funding for KS1 children.
- 4.6 **Staff Costs** – this covers the cost of staff nominated as Local Officers undertaking approved teacher union duties. Please see separate report for further information.

## 5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The overall underspend on de-delegated budgets in 2022/23 was £20k.
- 5.2 The appendix shows the amount per pupil which is being requested for de-delegation in 2024/25.
- 5.3 If school forum members decide not to de-delegate then funding for these services would remain within school budgets and schools would need to pay for such services direct from their own resources.
- 5.4 It should be noted that final data from the ESFA on which our final formula funding for 2024/25 will be based will not be available until December, and as such the sums proposed below are approximations based on the October 2022 census data and assumes that the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, EAL funding etc is the same as 2023/24.
- 5.5 Any unspent de-delegated funding remaining at the year-end will be reported to School Forum. Funding may be carried forward to the

following funding period and can be used specifically for de-delegated services. The total de-delegation carry forward as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 was £470k.

## 6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The services that are funded centrally provide support for vulnerable pupils and therefore ensure that there will be the same level of service available for all children and young people across North Lincolnshire.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Schools Forum members for primary maintained schools decide for the maintained primary phase the de-delegation of budgets as detailed in appendix 1.
- 7.2 Schools Forum members for secondary maintained school decide for the maintained secondary phase the de-delegation of budgets as detailed in appendix 1.

### STRATEGIC LEAD (FINANCE)

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### **Background Papers used in the preparation of this report –**

Schools Revenue Funding 2024 to 2025 Operational Guide