

## **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **SCHOOLS' FORUM**

## **TRADE UNION FACILITY TIME FUNDING**

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

- 1.1 To update the Forum on current trade union facility time funding and to consider the options with regard to challenges currently faced.

### **2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 There is currently a Trade Union Facility Time (TUFT) agreement in place which sets out:
- The guiding principles on how TUFT will be used to promote positive employee relations.
  - How TUFT funding will be allocated in schools and participating academies.
  - The time and facilities available to nominated trade union representatives who are not paid officials.
- 2.2 Funding for TUFT is pooled centrally for maintained schools and for academies which choose to participate in the agreement. Having a local/central fund in place means that all staff in schools have access to experienced trade union representatives. There is great benefit in having locally based representatives involved in a variety of procedures and situations. It ensures that an employers' many legal responsibilities are covered, that local caseworkers and representatives are available, and that staff have easy access to union representation – reducing any waiting times for key meetings and reducing the likelihood of employment matters escalating.
- 2.3 The de-delegation funds the on-going central approach to reimburse individual schools that employ teachers who need to be released to carry out such trade union duties. There are five trade unions who are

part of the TUFT agreement and could therefore draw on the pooled funding to release their local officers.

- 2.4 Currently this de-delegation is calculated using £2.79 per pupil per year at each maintained school and each academy that chooses to participate. This currently provides for circa. £40,000 per year to fund the release of local officers.
- 2.5 The per pupil figure has not been revisited in several years despite increases to pay and this now means that there is not sufficient pooled funding to cover the full cost current local officer provision.
- 2.6 The existing TUFT agreement provides for reimbursement on the basis of the actual hourly rate of the supply cover (either agency or in-house), up to a maximum of the hourly rate of the representative being released, and subject to an overall maximum of UPS3. This is not meeting the full cost of the current local officer provision.
- 2.7 The TUFT agreement will shortly be revisited with trade union colleagues to seek to address the reimbursement issue to ensure that full cost recovery is possible and that therefore no school is at detriment.

### 3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 **Option 1** – To retain the current per pupil rate to continue to only partially fund the release of local officers for TUFT.
- 3.2 **Option 2** – To increase the current per pupil rate by 28.3% to £3.58. This will ensure that there is sufficient pooled funding to cover the current full cost of local officer provision.

### 4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 **Option One** would mean that there continues to be insufficient funding available to cover the full cost release of a local officer for the NEU. Currently only one trade union draw on this, but were others to do so, the financial situation would be even more challenging.
- 4.2 **Option Two** would support sufficient funding ensure that there is sufficient pooled funding to cover the current full cost local officer provision. If this option is agreed, the current TUFT agreement would be revised in respect of reimbursement to ensure it was clear that this would be on a full cost basis.

## 5. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Costs would depend on the chosen option and its individual impact on maintained schools and academies that choose to participate in the agreement.

## 6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None.

## 7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

7.1 Initial discussions have taken place at a local level with the one trade union currently directly affected.

## 8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 It is suggested that Schools Forum consider the issues and implications of each option to determine the best route, however Option Two would ensure that there is sufficient pooled funding to cover the current full cost local officer provision and the TUFT agreement would be revisited on this basis.

Director Outcomes  
North Lincolnshire Council  
Church Square House  
30-40 High Street  
Scunthorpe  
North Lincolnshire  
DN15 6NL  
Author: Rebecca Stanford  
Date: 31 October 2023

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

Trade Union Facility Time Agreement April 2022