

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL****SCHOOLS FORUM****UPDATE ON THE USE OF DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT****1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To update the Forum on further reductions to the Historic Commitments element of the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2023/24 and to consider the options with regard to the implications for its current use in supporting schools

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The DSG Central Services Historic Commitments element currently funds three main strands of work:
- Peer Leader Programme/external SIPs
  - Learning networks: largely delegated to the Primary Consortium and Secondary Heads and Principals,
  - Schools' contribution to the Children's MARS board
- 2.2 The DSG for historic commitments 2023/24 is a total of **£149,504**.

Last financial year the funding was £186,880 so a reduction of £37,376. In 2022/3 the funding was used as follows:

Peer Leader Programme/external SIPs	140,000
Learning Networks	72,000
Schools Contribution to MARS	<u>20,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>232,000</b>

Last financial year, Learning Networks funding was used to fund the Primary Consortium to develop the role and reach of Primary Curriculum Pioneers at a cost of £40,000, and to fund Secondary Heads and Principals to work together to improve outcomes for secondary aged children at £25,000. The remainder of the funding was used to fund central education opportunities such as primary engineering, green education projects.

Following consultation with those participating in the Peer Leadership Programme, the headteachers agreed unanimously continue to provide support to another school without the release fee of £1,200 per year per school. This was agreed with the commitment from the Local Authority to fund release time for headteachers in particularly small schools where prohibitive costs would prevent them participating without funding to support their release time from a teaching commitment. During the consultation, it was suggested that some moneys would instead be put into central training and development for school leaders to further strengthen the programme.

Further analysis of the SIPs/Peer Leader funding element revealed that up to £80,000 had been used to pay for externally sourced School Improvement Officers (SIPs or SIOs) in previous years, a role now undertaken by recently retired peer leader headteacher. This work provides flexible capacity when needed.

## 2. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 **Option 1** – continue to fund Primary Consortium at £40,000, and Secondary Heads and Principals at £25,000 reduce CMARS Board contribution to £10,000 and utilise the remaining £74,500 for SIP/SIO support and central training and development of the Peer Leader Programme
- 2.2 **Option 2** - increase funding to the Primary Consortium to £60,000, continue funding Secondary Heads and Principals at £25,000 and the CMARS Board at £10,000 and utilise the remaining £54,000 for SIP/SIOs and for the central training and development of the Peer Leader Programme
- 2.3 **Option 3** – in recognition of the impact of Curriculum Pioneers, increase funding to Primary Consortium to the original rate of £80,000, retain Secondary Heads and Principals at £25,000, reduce the CMARS funding to £10,000 and hold £34,000 for central training and additional capacity through external SIOs

## 3. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 3.1 **Option One** would enable Secondary Heads and Principals to continue and the Primary Consortium to receive Learning Network allocations, and allow central training, CMARS and retain additional capacity through external SIOs.
- 3.2 **Option Two** recognises the success of Primary Curriculum Pioneer programme, provides continuity of support for all four areas and

may support the smooth transition of workstreams across all three activity areas

- 3.3 **Option Three** would support the Learning Network workstreams managed by the Primary Consortium and Secondary Heads and Principals, continue some funding to CMARS, and reduce central training and development, and flexible school improvement capacity through external SIOs.

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

- 4.1.1 Last financial year the Central Services element was £186,880 with a contribution from central DSG agreed by Schools Forum to bring the funding up to £232,000, however this year most of this is allocated. Due to pay awards and other increased costs to schools. The Central Services Historic Commitments for 2023/24 is £149,504, so an effective reduction of funded work across the related budget areas of £82,496 as per the proposals.

A further reduction or final removal of this element is anticipated in the government's funding arrangements for 2024/25

#### 5. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Ensuring that all children are able to access high quality education through excellent schools is pivotal to their future education and career pathways. It is essential that the use of DSG Historic Commitments funding has a positive impact on children's lives through ensuring positive educational experiences, opportunities and outcomes. Due to the reducing nature of this funding element, it is important to ensure the remaining funding has most impact strengthening the system for children.

#### 6. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Continued discussions have taken place with the Primary Consortium Steering Group, the Secondary Heads and Principals, and a full consultation was undertaken with all participating Peer Leaders.

#### 7. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 It is suggested that Schools Forum consider the issues and implications of each option to determine the best route.

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**