

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM

FUNDING OF LA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICES 2025/26

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To provide details of the current LA structure and approach to support and intervention for schools relating to school improvement services.
- 1.2 To provide School Forum members with an update in relation to the funding of local authority school improvement services for the financial year 2025/26
- 1.3 To seek School Forum views on the funding, as well as levels and breadth of services to be provided via the local authority School Improvement service.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In 2017, the Government introduced a school improvement grant for local authorities to enable them to fulfil their core school improvement functions. The DfE decided to abolish the grant from 2023/24 onwards and reduce it by 50% in 2022/23 as a transitional measure. The DfE's intention is that local authorities should fund their core school improvement functions by de-delegation from the schools' budget.
- 2.2 For the 2024/25 financial year, School Forum members agreed to de-delegate DSG reserve funding of £200k to support this function. This reserve funding was combined with LA core funding and some SLA funding to allow the service to continue with its existing offer (see financial implications section below).
- 2.3 For the 2025/26 financial year, without this reserve funding there is a shortfall in funding to maintain the same level of service for schools via the School Improvement Service.

2.4 There are options for School Forum members to consider in relation to both the levels of service to be provided and the ways in which these services can be funded, and these will be consulted on in the coming months.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Details of the current budget for school improvement functions are set out under the financial and resource allocations section below. For 2025/26 the local authority wishes to consult with schools on future partnership arrangements. This will include

- What level of service should be provided to schools and how this should be funded
- Joint responsibilities and accountability for impact and outcomes
- Bringing all elements of services that support schools together

3.2 When considering the proposed offer of school improvement and intervention services, it is suggested that school forum members reflect on the levels of service to be provided. For example, the number of visits per term/year that a school should receive and whether this level of support should be based on an agreed RAG rating, e.g. Red schools receiving more visits than Green rated, or a standard offer for all schools regardless of RAG rating.

3.3 Details of the structure and approach to supporting and intervening in schools are provided in the Appendices below. School Forum members may wish to see an increase in the levels of service available, for example to provide more support for 'Green' rated schools or additional support and intervention for those schools of greatest concern.

4. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The funding in North Lincolnshire in relation to this work is currently made up of a mix of core funding and DSG reserve funding. However, this is for the 2024/25 financial year only. The current budget is made up as follows:

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Current Gross Budget (excludes Phonic Grant £10k) | £640,000 |
| <u>Funded by (budget)</u> | |
| Income from academies | £10,000 |
| Income from maintained schools | £60,000 |
| Other income | £10,000 |
| Contribution from De-delegation reserve (1 year only) | £200,000 |
| Core Funding | £360,000 |
| Total Funding | £640,000* |

* From April 2025, the Council will need to find the shortfall (currently covered by DSG reserves) in order to maintain the existing offer, unless other funding sources are agreed. Options include de-delegation of funding by all or LA maintained schools only.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 School forum members are asked to consider the current levels of service provided by the LA School Improvement team as well as value, impact and future funding options. Members are also asked to support discussions in relation to future partnership arrangements between schools and the local authority.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR EDUCATION

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Appendix One

North Lincolnshire Education Standards – Principles for undertaking school reviews

Six key principles

Our approach in North Lincolnshire is based on six shared principles which were co-produced to base the model for further improving education outcomes in North Lincolnshire:

- A **collective endeavour** - regardless of designation of school* – to improve outcomes for **all our children** and young people, **especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged**
- Being **child-focused** at all times, i.e. focused on achieving great outcomes for pupils across North Lincolnshire (and not merely good Ofsted outcomes for individual schools)
- Working **cross-phase** wherever possible, to ensure a **consistent approach** for pupils on their **educational journey from age 2 to age 16 and beyond**
- Enabling a culture of **courageous conversations** between school leaders* that are **solutions-focused**
- Having **professional generosity** towards others and an **openness** to receiving both support and challenge (including **stepping outside current partnerships and alliances** within and **beyond North Lincolnshire**)
- Ensuring **investment in** the continuing professional development of **our school leaders** – to take the lead in sector-led improvement

The role of the local authority in a school-led system

The role of the local authority will be to:

- **Facilitate** a system of school-led improvement
- **Enable** school leaders to take the lead in a school-led system (e.g. by ensuring high quality continuing professional development for system leaders)
- **Administer** decisions made collegiately with school leaders
- **Quality assure** the rigour and effectiveness of peer leader and other school-to-school work – all documentation will be checked against our standards before it is finalised and distributed for example
- Provide the **framework for area-wide accountability** for standards, quality and performance
- **Celebrate** the **success** of and **disseminate good practice** generated by the school-led system

Appendix Two - Education Standards Board

Purpose

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a statutory duty on all local authorities to intervene with schools causing concern. The enactment of the Education and Adoption Act 2016 confers additional duties and powers of intervention to Regional Schools Commissioners. The details of these duties along with the wider legislative underpinning are set out in the DFE [Schools Causing Concern](#) Statutory Guidance. The guidance sets out Local Authorities' duties under the Act for monitoring, supporting, challenging and intervening with schools causing concern, and defines the criteria for intervention in schools causing concern

- the standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so
- there has been a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, such standards of performance
- the safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise)
- the governing body have failed to comply with a provision of an order under section 122 of the Education Act 2002 (teachers' pay and conditions) that applies to a teacher at the school; or have failed to secure that the head teacher of the school complies with such a provision

Our partnership approach to meeting those duties in North Lincolnshire is built on our values of equality of opportunity, excellence, integrity and self-responsibility. The Education Standards Board enables education leaders and partners to work together to raise standards, challenge underperformance and champion inclusion. The Board monitors and maintains oversight of performance and standards, and outcomes in their broadest sense, at school level and at system level including Ofsted outcomes, children's achievement, FAIP and exclusions, outcomes for groups of children including SEND and ethnic minority achievement, children in care; measuring the impact of plans to improve outcomes, including the SEND and Inclusion Plan, Best Start Early Years Plan.

APPENDIX THREE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

