

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM

CHANGES TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To update Schools Forum of the Council response to changes to school improvement funding through the ESFA Local Authority Monitoring and Brokering Grant

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 All local authorities have a statutory duty to maintain standards in schools under the 1996 Education Act. In North Lincolnshire strong and effective partnerships have driven a robust approach to school improvement and mutual accountability.
- 2.2 The Council works with all schools, regardless of designation as a maintained school, a free school or an academy. This core school improvement offer has been funded through a combination of DSG Historic Commitments, the ESFA Local Authority Monitoring and Brokering (LAMB) Grant and core council budget.
- 2.3 In January 2022 the DFE announced that ESFA school improvement funding would be reduced by 50% for the financial year 2022/3 and removed in 2023/4. The government contribution to EFSA School Improvement funding in North Lincolnshire is approximately £200,000, the remainder of the costs of this team is met by North Lincolnshire Council Core Funding (approximately £210,000). The government response to the consultation suggests that LAs should seek to de-delegate funding from schools through Schools Forum for core school improvement activity.
- 2.4 At the 20 January 2022 meeting, Schools Forum agreed de-delegation from maintained schools to ensure continuity of support into the new financial year (from April 2022).
- 2.5 Subsequently elected leaders agreed additional funding for school improvement, prioritising education standards as a key area of investment in North Lincolnshire for all children. As a result of that Council investment, bespoke challenge and support will continue to be available for all schools regardless of designation. Because the de-delegation had

already been agreed by Schools Forum the new financial year (2022/23) the de-delegation will show on maintained school budgets, however an in-year adjustment will be made so that costs to maintained schools are reimbursed.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 To recognise the strength of political commitment to the importance of maintaining a strong school improvement strategy which ensures high standards in schools and impacts on inclusion and children's outcomes.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

The elected and appointed leadership of North Lincolnshire Council have demonstrated their ongoing commitment to place leadership in education through investing core council funding to ensure the continued improvements in schools. This represents a strong local approach and ensures that school improvement support will continue to be available without cost to all state funded schools regardless of designation.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The council will contribute an additional £100,000 to mitigate the impact of national changes to funding through the ESFA. Maintained schools will have a de-delegation however there will be an in-year adjustment to their budgets.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Ensuring that all children are able to access high quality education through excellent schools is pivotal to their future education and career pathways, local funding will now enable all schools to access bespoke challenge and support.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Discussions about the consultation to remove the LAMB Grant have taken place with the Education Chairs Group, the Education Standards Board and the Executive Headteachers Group.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that Schools Forum note the political decision to invest in support for schools and thank the Cabinet Member for Children for her leadership in this decision.

HEAD OF STANDARDS AND EFFECTIVENESS

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