

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR IMPROVING SCHOOLS 2014/15

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the requirement on local authorities to make arrangements to improve education outcomes within their area.
- 1.2 The report informs Cabinet of the priority areas for investing in school improvement in 2014/15 following the Council's approval of the budget.
- 1.3 It is recommended that Cabinet endorses the outline plan for additional investment in school improvement for 2014/15.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Local authorities retain a legal responsibility for educational performance in the area as a whole under the 1996 Education Act. In addition, the Secretary of State has made clear the expectation for local authorities to act as strategic commissioners for all schools – regardless of the designation of the school as maintained, convertor academy, sponsored academy or free school.
- 2.2 Ofsted reintroduced inspections of local authority functions in relation to supporting educational improvement in England under section 135 and section 136(1)(b) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 from May 2013. Ofsted will report on four areas: corporate leadership and strategic planning; monitoring, challenge, intervention and support; support and challenge for leadership and management (including governance); use of resources. The Council recognises that while this inspection framework has a particular focus on the role of the local authority's education improvement functions, what matters is the entirety of the Council's ambition to drive up the quality of education provision and thereby improve outcomes for children and young people.
- 2.3 The Council's ambition for further improving school age education is set out in the North Lincolnshire Education Strategy for Schools entitled 'All our children'. This document builds on the vision of the Council and People Directorate, setting out three aims for the education sector of:
 - Raising Achievement
 - Championing Inclusion
 - Supporting Regeneration

The realisation of these aims is in the context of the drive towards a self-improving schools system. North Lincolnshire Council has confidently taken its place in providing leadership, resources and expertise for increasing the pace of improvement in outcomes for school age children and young people.

- 2.4 In the February 2014 budget setting process, the Council allocated an additional £150,000 a year investment in schools to promote improvement during 2014/15 and 2015/16. In keeping with the ethos of 'all our children', this new resource will be targeted at all schools with specific areas for improvement and regardless of designation.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 To maximise the impact of the new funding for improving schools, it is proposed to target the following aspects in 2014/15 based on the area wide priorities:

3.1.1 Strengthening School Governance

Strong governance is essential to ensuring schools improve further. North Lincolnshire will develop a targeted offer to governing bodies of schools that are not yet good, or which indicate that they are facing challenges in leadership or governance. The offer will include a formal review of governance carried out by a National Leader of Governance; targeted training and development for governing bodies; peer-to-peer support for Chairs of Governing Bodies where this can be arranged. The Council expects strong governance of schools to be a significant factor in ensuring more pupils experience good and outstanding provision, in improving outcomes for children and young people, and in shaping the strategic direction of schools.

3.1.2 Developing Peer Challenge between School Leaders

Schools have embraced the need to have robust quality assurance systems for ensuring that pupils experience stimulating lessons in which they make good progress in their learning. There is a growing demand from Headteachers for external validation of the quality of learning and for cross-schools working. In 2014/15, the local authority will further develop the capacity for schools to provide mutual challenge for assessing the quality of learning provision and assessing the effectiveness of leadership of learning.

3.1.3 Pilot for improving outcomes for primary age children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

The local authority will sponsor a group of primary schools to trial a nationally accredited whole-school approach to improving rates of progress for pupils with SEN and disabled pupils (SEND) in English and mathematics.

3.1.4 Embedding targeted interventions for literacy and numeracy

An extended offer will be made to targeted schools where children make slower progress in reading, writing or mathematics. This will involve

opportunities for professional development of teachers, action research and networking.

3.1.5 Excellence in the Early Years – school project

A group of schools will be invited to participate in a project to improve the quality of provision in the early years; drawing on nationally recognised practice and improving readiness for primary school.

3.1.6 Outstanding Schools Project

Proportionally, fewer pupils attend schools that have been judged to be outstanding in the local area than is the case nationally. Schools that have a recognised potential to achieve outstanding by the end of the academic year 2014/15 will be supported to work together on gaining this recognition. The project will draw on the expertise of Her Majesty's Inspectors and outstanding schools outside of North Lincolnshire.

3.1.7 The activity outlined above is additional to school improvement activity already planned for within the Education Strategy for Schools.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 The options outlined above recognise the immediate priorities for the schools sector in North Lincolnshire. The additional funding for 2014/15 provides the opportunity to commission additional capacity to work alongside local authority officers and teams: with the overarching aim of building capacity within our schools. Resources can be deployed without delay, reflecting the urgency for further improvement locally. The options are aligned to the North Lincolnshire Education Strategy for Schools.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 Financial

The options proposed will be funded by the £150K investment schools for 2014/15, supported by pre-existing revenue funding.

5.2 Staffing

Coordination and leadership will be met from the staffing establishment of the People Directorate.

5.3 There are no resource implications for property or IT.

6. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACTASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

6.1 An integrated impact assessment has not been carried out.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

- 7.1 The recommendations were based on extensive consultation.
- 7.2 North Lincolnshire Education Strategy for Schools: 'All our children' was arrived at after extensive consultation with Headteachers, the executive of the North Lincolnshire Association of Governing Bodies, governors, members of the public and the Youth Council. The proposals for investing in school improvement are in keeping with the strategy.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet endorses the outline plan for additional investment for schools during the financial year 2014/15.

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

Civic Centre
Ashby Road
SCUNTHORPE
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB
Author: Pete Thorpe
Date: 17 March 2014

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report.

- North Lincolnshire Education Strategy for Schools: 'All our children'