



County Offices
Newland
Lincoln
LN1 1YL

28 September 2022

Lincolnshire Schools' Forum

A meeting of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum will be held on **Thursday, 6 October 2022 at 1.00 pm via Virtual - Online Meeting via Microsoft Teams** for the transaction of the business set out on the attached Agenda.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Debbie Barnes'.

Debbie Barnes OBE
Chief Executive

Membership of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum

SCHOOLS' MEMBERS

Nursery (1)

Amy Stancer (Head Teacher, St Giles Nursery School, Lincoln)

Special (1)

Kyna Adkins (Head Teacher, St Christopher's School)

Primary Maintained (6)

Primary Maintained Head Teachers (3)

Callum Clay, (Head Teacher, Sleaford Church Lane Primary School)

Catherine Stratton (Head Teacher, Saxilby C E Primary School)

1 vacancy

Primary Maintained Governors (3)

Alan Howe, (Governor, Sutton on Sea County Primary School)

Tony Stevens, (Governor, The Holt Primary School, Skellingthorpe)

1 vacancy

Secondary Maintained Head Teacher (1)

Michele Anderson (Head Teacher, Spalding High School)

Secondary Academies (7)

Secondary Academies Head Teachers (4)

Steven Baragwanath (Head Teacher, University Academy, Holbeach)

Frances Green (Head Teacher, Somercotes Academy)

Simon Pickett (Head Master, The King's School, Grantham)

1 vacancy

Secondary Academies Governors (3)

Rachel Barrett FCCA (Governor, North Kesteven Academy, North Hykeham)

Professor Ken Durrands CBE, (Governor, The King's School, Grantham)

Jo Slesser (Governor, Carres Grammar School, Sleaford)

Primary Academies (5)

Primary Academies Head Teachers (3)

Gavin Booth (Head Teacher, Boston St Thomas' C E Primary School) **CHAIRMAN**

Katie Grivil (Head Teacher, Kirkby la Thorpe C E Primary Academy)

Simon Morley (Head Teacher, Boston West Academy)

Primary Academies Governors (2)

2 vacancies

Special Academies (2)

Special Academies Head Teacher (1)

Leandra Mason (Executive Head Teacher, Lincolnshire Wolds Federation)

Special Academies Governor (1)

Dr Stephen Hopkins (Trust Chair of Communities Inclusive Trust)

Alternative Provision Academy (1)

Josh Greaves (Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Wellspring Academy Trust) **VICE-CHAIRMAN**

NON-SCHOOLS' MEMBERS

Faith Groups (1)

Peter Tomlinson (Diocese of Lincoln)

Providers of 16 to 19 Education (1)

Heather Marks (Vice-Principal, Boston College)

Staff Trade Unions (1)

Andrew Watts (NEU)

Early Years Providers (1)

Julia Merivale (Trinity Day Nursery, Gainsborough)

LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM AGENDA
THURSDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2022

Item	Title	Pages
1	Apologies for Absence/Replacement Members	
2	Declarations of Members' Interest	
3	Minutes of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum meeting held on 30 June 2022	5 - 12
4	Chairman's Announcements	
5	National Funding Formula for Schools - Update 2023/24 <i>(To receive a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team, which provides the Forum with an update on the mainstream school funding)</i>	13 - 24
6	De-delegation of Maintained Primary Schools Budgets (2023/24) <i>(To receive a report from Mark Popplewell, Head of Finance - Children's Services, which seeks approval from the maintained primary school representatives of the Schools' Forum to the Local Authority's (LA) proposals for the de-delegation of certain budgets)</i>	25 - 38
7	Revised Schools Budgets 2022/23 <i>(To receive a report from Mark Popplewell, Head of Finance - Children's Services, which enables the Forum to consider the revised Schools Budget for 2022/23)</i>	39 - 56
8	Children with Disabilities Early Support Learning Provision <i>(To receive a report from Rosemary Akrill, Senior Commissioning Officer, which seeks support from the Forum for the Dedicated Schools Grant to continue funding Early Support Learning Provision)</i>	57 - 60
9	Alternative Provision Arrangements <i>(To receive a report from Kate Capel, Head of Service for Inclusion, which provides the Forum with an update on how alternative provision arrangements are working)</i>	61 - 70
10	Academies and Trust Update <i>(To receive a report from John O'Connor, Children's Service Manager, Education and Support, which provides the Schools' Forum with an update on the latest number of academies and pupils in academies, and academy trusts)</i>	71 - 76

11 Lincolnshire Schools' Forum - Work Programme

77 - 80

(This item provides the Schools' Forum with an opportunity to discuss potential items for future meetings, which will be subsequently included in the Work Programme)

12 Future Meeting Dates

For the Schools' Forum to agree the following meeting dates and times:

Thursday 19 January 2023, 1pm

Thursday 20 April 2023, 1pm

Thursday 29 June 2023, 1pm

Thursday 5 October 2023, 1pm

Democratic Services Officer Contact Details

Name: **Tom Crofts**
Direct Dial **07769 368547**
E Mail Address thomas.crofts@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Please note: for more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for servicing this meeting

- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details set out above.

Please note: This meeting will be audio broadcast live on the internet and can be sought by accessing [Agenda for Lincolnshire Schools' Forum on Thursday, 6th October, 2022, 1.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

All papers for council meetings are available on:
<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/council-business/search-committee-records>



**LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
30 JUNE 2022**

PRESENT: GAVIN BOOTH (CHAIRMAN)

Amy Stancer (Headteacher, St Giles Nursery School, Lincoln), Kyna Adkins (Head Teacher, St Christopher's Special School), Alan Howe (Governor, Sutton on Sea County Primary School), Anthony Stevens (Governor, The Holt Primary School, Skellingthorpe), Callum Clay (Head Teacher, Church Lane Primary School, Sleaford), Catherine Stratton (Head Teacher, Saxilby Church of England Primary School), Michele Anderson (Head Teacher, Spalding High School), Rachel Barrett FCCA (Governor, North Kesteven Academy), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, The King's School, Grantham), Jo Slesser (Governor, Carres Grammar School, Sleaford), Steve Baragwanath (Executive Principal, University Academy Holbeach), Frances Green MA (Oxon) (Head Teacher, Somercotes Secondary Academy), Simon Pickett (Head Master, The King's School, Grantham), Katie Grivil (Head Teacher, Kirkby la Thorpe Church of England Primary Academy), Simon Morley (Head Teacher, Boston West Academy), Josh Greaves (Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Wellspring Academy Trust) (Vice-Chairman), Peter Tomlinson (Diocesan Business and Operations Manager, Diocese of Lincoln), Heather Marks (Vice-Principal, Boston College) and Julia Merivale (Manager, Trinity Day Nursery),

Also in attendance:

Jordan Ingram (Education and Skills Funding Agency) attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:- Elizabeth Bowes (Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team), Martin Smith (Assistant Director – Children's Education), Tony Warnock (Head of Financial Services), Geraldine O'Neill (Sustainability and Development Manager), Ady Clarke (Education Reorganisation Officer), Angela Lawton (Strategic Finance Manager – Children's Services), Kate Capel (Head of Service for Inclusion) and Thomas Crofts (Democratic Services Officer)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Gavin Booth be elected as Chairman of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum for 2022/23.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Josh Greaves be elected Vice-Chairman of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum for 2022/23.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence was received from Amy Stancer, Daniel Callaghan, Callum Clay, Frances Green, Dr Stephen Hopkins, Jo Slessor, Simon Morley, Tony Stevens, Mark Popplewell and Sheriden Dodsworth.

4 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

There were no declarations of members' interest made at this stage of the proceedings.

5 MINUTES OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2022

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum meeting held on 21 April 2022 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- The Budget Allocation for Early Support Learning provision beyond September 2023 item was deferred to October 2022 so as to accommodate the Council's decision-making timetable concerning their Children with Disabilities service review.
- The Alternative Provision Arrangements item has been deferred so that the whole academic year for 2021/22 could be reflected in the report.

7 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM - CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team, on updates to the constitution of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum. The following was reported:

- The terms of reference remained unchanged since the last update in June 2021.
- The terms of reference were reviewed and updated (where applicable) on an annual basis ready for the new academic year.
- The school membership composition had been reviewed to reflect the June 2022 maintained and academy schools' position, and the composition remained unchanged for 2022/23.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- The Memberships reflected a good representation of Lincolnshire schools, but vacancies needed to be filled.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Forum endorse the updated Constitution and Membership document.
2. That the report and comments be noted.

8 SCHOOLS FORUM SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

Consideration was given to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team, on responses to the Government's Schools forum self-assessment toolkit, which was reviewed on an annual basis. The following was highlighted:

- Officers had reviewed the current training programme available to new Members, which was to be offered in the autumn term following elections.
- Virtual meetings had been adopted for the convenience of Members across a large rural county. This was to be periodically reviewed.
- Elections were to be conducted at the beginning of the Autumn term.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- Existing Members were encouraged to do a refresher course following the election of new Members in the Autumn.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

9 SECTION 251 BUDGETS STATEMENT 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team, on the Section 251 budget statement for the 2022/23 financial year. The following was reported:

- The information detailed in the report was required to be submitted by all Local Authorities to the DfE for checks by 30 April 2022, and should any amendments be required, it will be updated at a later stage.
- For 2022/23, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) continued to consist of four blocks – Schools Block, Central Schools Services Block (CSSB), High Needs Block and Early Years Block, each of determined by a separate national funding formula.
- The Schools Block was ring-fenced and the Council was only able to transfer 0.5% of the Schools Block funding to an alternative block with the agreement of the Schools Forum, following consultation with all schools and academies.
- The only block transfer made for 2022/23 related to a £0.260m movement from available monies in the CSSB to the Schools Block to replicate the Government's schools' national funding formula factors and monetary values, as supported by the Forum on 20 January 2022. The transfer was required to meet the additional cost from an increase in Free School Meal eligibility due to the pandemic.

- The High Needs block continued to see growth in the demand for more specialist support for young people.
- The Government's SEND Green Paper acknowledged the unsustainable SEND system. Consultation was to close on the 22 July 2022 and the sector were encouraged to respond.
- Key areas of the return detailed on pages 43 and 44 were discussed including the following:
 - 99.81% of the Schools Block was devolved to schools.
 - 96.08% of the Early Years Block was to be allocated to the sector by the end of the financial year.
 - Within the High Needs Block, 75.46% was earmarked to be devolved to Lincolnshire maintained settings.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- More detailed reasoning regarding risks and impacts in the report was welcomed.
- Regarding the Free School Meal affordability issue in future years, options included consideration of block transfer into Schools Block, review of Growth funding, modelling the impact of the Minimum Funding Guarantee or reduction in AWPU values. It was highlighted in previous consultations on the formula that there had been no clear steer from schools and academies regarding their preferred option. Reassurance was provided that officers would ensure the most favourable option was delivered by managing the financial impact upon schools.
- The current cost of ensuring SEND placements outside of the county was £11.6m – placements were made on a case-by-case basis.
- Confirmation was provided that the percentages delegated out had slightly increased in comparison to last year.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

10 ANNUAL REPORT ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Consideration was given to a report from Martin Smith, Assistant Director – Children's (Education), on SEND activity both nationally and within the county. The following was highlighted:

- Lincolnshire's High Needs transformation programme work was aimed at ensuring that children and young people were supported as early as possible to avoid their needs escalating. Focus was given to the following areas:
 - Valuing SEND, the Inclusion Toolkit and Local Offer.
 - Workforce development

- Transitions protocol – which provided targeted intervention to support children and young people to step-down from specialist provision to mainstream.
- Ask SALL – Lincolnshire’s SEND advice line for SENCo, which launched in September 2020.
- A multi-disciplinary assessment panel was formed in November 2020 to consider requests for EHC Needs Assessments and ensured that practice standards were evidenced.
- Lincolnshire’s high needs transformational programme and improved High Needs block financial settlements had supported Lincolnshire’s budget position in 2021/22 (£1.964m underspend).
- Whilst Lincolnshire remained above the national average in terms of the numbers of children identified with SEND, there were positive signs of changes in practice that move away from reliance on statutory plans and build on the inclusive practice of many Lincolnshire schools.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- Costs had risen regarding independent placements as Lincolnshire special schools lacked capacity. In response, the special school capital programme was increased over capacity by 512 places; however, places were soon anticipated to be oversubscribed.
- Expansions were anticipated to assist issues regarding capacity, but it was recognised more need to be done. Research was currently underway to inform how many more places would be needed for future cohorts.
- Upskilling staff in mainstream settings to be able to accommodate more SEND placements eased some capacity pressures.
- Children were being identified as SEND at progressively younger ages and it was important to recognise that Education, Health and Care plans were not always the first port of call for these children.
- More children had remained in education following the pandemic public health measures.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

11 ANNUAL EARLY YEARS & CHILDCARE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from Geraldine O'Neill, Sustainability and Development Manager, on the delivery of services to support early years and childcare provision across Lincolnshire. The following was reported:

- The Service’s six key areas were outlined to Members, as follows:
 1. Funding and delivery of the Early Years Entitlements for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds.

2. Provision of sufficient and sustainable early years and childcare provision for children aged 0-14 years (18 years for those with SEND).
 3. Delivery of quality provision and educational outcomes for children (within the EYFS framework).
 4. Professional development and workforce training in the early years and childcare sector.
 5. Inclusion funding and SEN advice and support.
 6. Partnership working in relation to school readiness including health and the quality and delivery of Children's Centres.
- With direct reference to the report, the priorities for Early Years and Childcare Support Service during 2021-22 and their outcomes were explained to Members.
 - With direct reference to the report, the priorities for Early Years and Childcare during 2022-23 were outlined to Members.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- The recruitment and retention of staff was a significant issue facing Early Years due to low pay in the sector.
- Schools expressed an appetite for collaboration with the Early Years sector.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Forum agree the priorities for 2022-23.
2. That the report and comments be noted.

12 ACADEMIES AND TRUST UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team, on updates regarding Academies and Trusts. The following was highlighted since the last report:

- No further schools had become academies.
- There were two primary schools seeking to become academies.
- Grantham Harrowby Church of England Infant School and Grantham The National Church of England Junior School joined Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust. Formerly they were in the Harrowby/National Academies Trust. This promoted Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust to the largest trust operating in Lincolnshire with 15 schools.
- There were thirty-four active multi-academy trusts operating within Lincolnshire and a total of 147 Lincolnshire academies that were members of multi-academy trusts.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- The report author was to clarify if standalone Academies that became Trusts were represented in the data.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

13 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM - WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the work programme presented be received.

The meeting closed at 2.31 pm

This page is intentionally left blank



Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director - Children's Services

Report to:	Lincolnshire Schools' Forum
Date:	06 October 2022
Subject:	National Funding Formula for Schools - Update for 2023/24

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the updates from the Department for Education (DfE) relating to the national funding formula for schools, central schools services, high needs and early years for 2023/24.

Recommendation(s):

Schools' Forum is asked to note the content of the report, and to comment on the steps to ensure the national funding formula is affordable.

Background

The government first introduced the national funding formula (NFF) in 2018/19 for mainstream schools, its purpose was to create consistency in funding across all schools nationally ensuring a fairer settlement for each school. Since its introduction, Local Authorities (LAs) have continued to be responsible for agreeing and calculating schools funding allocations however, LAs were strongly encouraged to move to the NFF arrangements so that schools' allocations were on a sensible trajectory towards the 'hard' formula, subject to floors and ceilings due to a re-distribution of funding nationally.

In 2020/21, the Government made available sufficient funding to LAs to replicate the NFF so that all schools would attract at least their full allocations under the formula. Only 78 out of 150 LAs have mirrored the NFF in 2022/23. Lincolnshire is one of those LAs. Since the introduction of the NFF in 2018/19, Lincolnshire has replicated the Government's NFF due to the increased per pupil funding levels that have been received. It currently remains the LA decision on setting its schools funding formula within the DfE's funding framework.

In 2022/23, Lincolnshire continued to replicate the monetary values of the NFF factors, however due to the significant increase in Free School Meals (FSMs) recorded on the October 2021 census resulting from the pandemic, as LAs are expected to finance this increase through their Schools block allocation, the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

had to be applied at +0.5% (within the MFG range) to support the formula being affordable.

As part of the spending review the government announced in 2021, the total core schools budget will increase to £56.8 billion by 2024/25. A £4bn funding increase in the current year (including the supplementary grant) compared to 2021/22 levels. The further two years up to 2024/25 will see an increase of £3bn overall. Funding through the schools NFF is increasing by 1.9% overall in 2023/24, and 1.9% per pupil compared to 2022/23¹.

The government's initial consultation outcomes on how further reforms to the NFF can be implemented for mainstream schools with the intention of moving to a 'hard' formula were published this year, and a report to the Schools' Forum was provided in the April 2022 meeting. The Council responded to this consultation concluding the importance of retaining local flexibility and decision-making powers for all aspects of schools funding. LAs in working with the sector are best placed to respond to local needs and demands on a timely basis within reasonable DfE parameters rather than through a centralised system. The focus of the consultation was on progressively tightening the rules governing LAs' flexibilities over school funding, so that school allocations move closer to the NFF which is being implemented in 2023/24, with particular focus on premise factors and schools growth funding.

On 7 June 2022 the DfE launched a second consultation which considered the next steps in completing the NFF reforms to move all schools onto the 'hard' NFF. The consultation was more future focused rather than for 2023/24. The department has listened to the concerns of LAs within the consultation responses and will ensure local flexibilities operates within an over-arching framework for growth funding. Other key headlines that were consulted upon:

- 'Notional SEN' budgets are proposed to be set nationally. The concept of 'Notional SEN' was introduced by the government and has been a mandatory addition to local formulas since. A nationally set indicative SEND budget would improve consistency of funding and practice across the country, and the NFF should underpin those assumptions. It is important that any nationally set level of 'Notional SEN' provides fair funding and not a disincentive, for schools to be inclusive, including clearly setting out the responsibilities that should be expected of mainstream schools but also afforded within the indicative SEND allocation.
- Government's intentions to determine split-site funding centrally. The LA contested this position, emphasising that each split-site arrangement is unique therefore localism is imperative to ensure these schools receive fair funding levels that reflect the costs in running their school. The government proposals would see a reduction in funding for three secondary split-site schools.
- Popular growth applications propose to be available to all schools, whether that be maintained or academies.
- Increasing the threshold above 2.5% from 1% of the total of schools budget for costs relating to exceptional circumstances funding, such as rents. The LA does not support such a proposal as it will not deliver fair funding leaving a number of

¹ Year on year funding comparisons include the funding from the School Supplementary Grant for 2022/23.

Lincolnshire primary schools losing out financially compared to similar size schools.

- A review of the Minimum Funding Guarantee’s application. The LA explained that measures must be in place to protect school-led factor policy changes.

The LA will report back to the Schools’ Forum on the DfE’s consultation outcomes in due course. The LA did use the consultation to re-iterate the message that the department should focus its attentions on ensuring the NFF (pupil-led factors and funding levels) are developed further to ensure it is underpinned by key assumptions and principles using ‘modelled’ school settings and the costs built up using key cost drivers through a zero-based review, rather than a re-distribution of funding using LA averages, and then subsequent increases in funding. This suggested approach would ensure fair funding is achieved and would also be responsive to cost changes taking place from year to year, which is particularly important at this moment in time. Unfortunately, the department do not consider a zero-based approach to be sensible on the basis there is “one size fits all” approach to running a school.

School funding announcements

On 20 July 2022, the government announced its funding intentions for 2023/24 including publication of the Schools Revenue Funding 2023/24 Operational Guidance and the provisional Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations for 2023/24.

For 2023/24, the DSG will continue to comprise of four blocks – Schools block, Central School Services block, High Needs block, and Early Years block.

Provisional allocations for 2023/24 are detailed in the table below:

Block	Lincolnshire (£m)
Schools block	542.167 ²
Central School Services block	4.751
High Needs block	121.466
Total	668.384
Early Years block	TBC

Schools block

Schools block allocations are calculated by aggregating schools' notional allocations under the NFF. Schools block allocations are expressed as a separate per pupil primary and secondary rate for each LA. The primary ranked positions for Lincolnshire have improved from a national context (out of 150 LAs) for 2023/24, the secondary ranked position remains the same for Lincolnshire when comparing to the national context. Although the rates have increased, they are however still below the England national average, as a result of the indices being used:

² Excludes Schools Growth funding.

2022/23	Lincolnshire's Unit of Funding	England National Average	Difference	Rank
Primary	£4,735	£4,786	-£51	96
Secondary	£5,899	£6,213	-£314	54
2023/24				
Primary	£4,933	£5,014	-£81	103
Secondary	£6,216	£6,542	-£326	54
Difference				
Primary	£198	£228	-£30	7
Secondary	£317	£329	-£12	0

The Schools Revenue Funding 2023/24 Operational Guide is available on the below link:

[Pre-16 schools funding: local authority guidance for 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/pre-16-schools-funding-local-authority-guidance-for-2023-to-2024)

Information within the guidance in relation to the Schools block confirms:

- LAs will continue to set the local schools funding formula for 2023/24.
- Following consultations on completing the reforms to the NFF, for 2023/24 all LAs must use all the NFF factors and for those LA not mirroring the NFF they must move their local formula factors at least 10% closer to the NFF. This will not impact Lincolnshire as the LA are already replicating the NFF.
- Additional support is being directed towards disadvantaged pupils by increasing the Free School Meals Ever 6 (FSM6) and IDACI factors by 4.3%
- All other formula factors in the NFF will increase by 2.4%.
- The minimum per pupil funding levels will be set at £4,405 for primary (currently £4,265) and £5,715 for secondary schools (currently £5,525)³.
- Every school will be allocated at least 0.5% more pupil-led funding per pupil compared to their 2022/23 NFF baseline, i.e. the Minimum Funding Floor. This means that every school will attract an increase in their pupil-led funding of at least 0.5% per pupil, if the NFF is replicated. The application of this will be subject to affordability.
- LAs will continue to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) between +0.0% and +0.5%.
- Schools Supplementary Grant funding that schools received as a separate grant in 2022/23 has been rolled into the NFF for 2023/24. This will be achieved by adding an amount representing the amount schools received through their grant into their baseline and adding values of the lump sum, basic per pupil rates and FSM6 parts of the grant onto the respective factors in the NFF.
- There will be no gains ceiling cap. All schools will attract at least their full allocations under the formula. LAs will still be able to use a cap in their local formula for affordability purposes.
- The ESFA proposed changes to the methodology of paying rates bills in 2022/23. Under the new methodology the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) would pay

³ The minimum per pupil values have been uplifted by the supplementary grant's basic per-pupil values, and an additional amount which represents the average amount of funding schools received from the FSM6 and Lump Sum parts of the grants

rates bills directly to the billing authority on behalf of all maintained schools and academies. In order for the new methodology to be adopted all billing authorities in the LA would need to agree to the new payment method. The billing authorities in Lincolnshire opted not to adopt this change in 2022/23. However, the ESFA are strongly encouraging all billing authorities to adopt the new payment method in 2023/24. Officers are awaiting further information as to whether the billing authorities in Lincolnshire will adopt the new payment method for 2023/24.

- Following the cancellation of progress assessments in the summer of 2020 and the summer of 2021 due to the pandemic, LAs will be required to use 2019 assessment data as a proxy in the low prior attainment factor within their local funding formulas' for the reception to year 6 cohort.
- Premise funding will continue to be allocated to LAs on the basis of prior year actual spend in the 2022/23 APT. The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) factor will increase in line with the RPIX measure of inflation (11.2%) to reflect PFI contracts.
- Growth funding will continue to be allocated to LAs based on the formulaic approach introduced in 2020/21 based on the growth in pupil numbers between October 2021 and October 2022 census. The government's growth funding applies a lagged approach rather than forecasting future growth expected.
- The Schools block continues to be ring-fenced, LAs can transfer up to 0.5% of their Schools block funding into another block, following consultation with all schools and academies and the approval of Schools' Forum.

Appendix A provides a funding comparison of the NFF factors from 2022/23 to 2023/24.

The sector and Schools' Forum have supported the decision for Lincolnshire to replicate the NFF due to the increased per pupil funding levels being seen in all mainstream schools. The LA still does however consider local flexibility and decision-making powers important to best respond to local needs and demands on a timely basis within reasonable DfE parameters.

The fundamentals principles of the NFF are not changing for 2023/24. In accordance with the 20 January 2021 Executive Councillor decision and sector support through the consultation exercise, the LA plans to continue replicating the NFF in 2023/24, which will include the modest changes identified above. This will of course be subject to affordability of the Schools block due to the government's application of lagged funding arrangement for LA Schools block funding. The latest October schools census information for determining schools budgets is typically shared with LA Finance departments in mid-December, and at that point the LA completes the Authority Proforma Tool (APT) to determine schools budgets and the assessment of affordability, before being submitted to the ESFA for compliance towards mid to late January. This therefore leaves limited time for engagement with the sector on the impact of specific measures to address affordability, if necessary. Schools responses have previously been mixed on affordability matters, however MFG and the ceilings cap have been the preferred solutions, in that order. In 2022/23, the LA decision was to alter the MFG (to the lower range of +0.5%) along with considering the use of other DSG funding streams. This was required due to the rise in FSMs eligibility. The reason for the preference to alter the MFG is firstly it is a positive MFG (i.e. all schools receive a per pupil increase) and those schools are being funded above the NFF due to historic funding levels. Another option available is to apply a

percentage gains ceiling cap to schools per pupil gains, which was a mechanism the DfE used to incrementally introduce the NFF due to affordability purposes. The LA would favour adopting the same approach and principles, if affordability issues arose for 2023/24. The affordability position will be shared with the Forum in the January meeting including the mitigating measures to address this and the school impact.

In light of the LA plans to replicate the NFF in 2024/24; the support received from the sector for this decision from previous consultations (since 2018/19); the minor DfE refinements to the NFF for next year through the mainstreaming of the school supplementary grant funding and formula factor monetary value increases by defined percentages, and the time practicalities on consulting with schools on the impact of affordability changes and prior feedback from schools on solutions, the LA concludes at this point in time that a schools consultation will not be required for mainstream schools funding in 2023/24.

Central Schools Services block

The published information outlines that within the Central School Services block, funding will continue to be provided to LAs to carry out central functions on behalf of maintained schools and academies, comprising two distinct elements:

- Ongoing responsibilities
- Historic commitments

The ongoing rate per pupil for 2023/24 is £37.17 (compared to 2022/23 rate of £36.29), a 2.4%⁴ increase. The final allocation will be subject to the October 2022 schools census, but the provisional allocation is £3.612m (2022/23: £3.500m). This will be considered when the detailed budget setting exercise is fulfilled.

The government will continue to reduce historic commitments monetary values by 20% in 2023/24. This will be a challenge for LAs to ensure a sustainable outcome is achieved for the remaining long term contract in place, namely PFI school buildings. It is forecast that the 2023/24 funding levels will be sufficient to meet next year's historic commitments.

High Needs block

The published information outlines that within the High Needs (HN) block the provisional allocation for 2023/24 has increased by £6.124m to £121.466m⁵.

Within the HN block the funding floor has been set at 5% so that each LA will see an increase of at least 5% per head of their 2 to 18 population in 2023/24. Lincolnshire has received a funding uplift within its funding allocation of £8.692m or £59.50 per pupil to ensure it receives this 5% minimum uplift, and is therefore in receipt of protection funding above the HN NFF. The protection funding in 2022/23 was £8.607m. Hospital funding has increased by 2%.

⁴ CSSB ongoing responsibilities 90% distributed through basic per pupil factor, 10% through FSM Ever 6

⁵ Historic Funding £31,461,638, Proxy Funding £68,909,602, 5% growth funding £8,692,091, Hospital School funding £2,817,481, Basic Entitlement funding £10,755,280, Imports & Exports -£1,170,000.

The increased funding in the HN block is welcomed, however detailed budget planning and trajectory work, and sector engagement will take place in the autumn to substantiate the requirements of HN spending. Information will be shared in the January Forum meeting. The SEND Green paper acknowledges the unsustainable SEND system and considers ways to address this. The outcomes of the consultation will likely have an impact on high needs funding allocated to LAs and schools.

There continues to be a growing trend nationally, and this growth is being experienced in Lincolnshire with more young people requiring specialist support which is having a material financial impact on the HN block. This remains a financial challenge. In Lincolnshire, transformational work is considered fundamental to securing further improved outcomes for young people with SEND through a truly integrated approach, whilst also securing an offer for Lincolnshire that is financially sustainable within the central Government allocation. The SEND Transformation Board is governing the transformational process and its key work streams, including of monitoring of progress against our ambitions.

Early Years block

The DfE launched a consultation of reforms to the Early Years Funding formula on 4 July 2022. The reforms propose:

- Updating the funding formulae for the early education entitlements for children aged 2,3 and 4. These formulae are no longer using the most recent data available.
- Creating a fairer distribution of maintained nursery school supplementary funding.

The LA responded to the government consultation raising a number of concerns relating to the Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) mechanism in place; the considerable levels of protection in the formula for some LAs in the 3 & 4 year old funding formula, which date back a number of years, which is limiting Lincolnshire receiving its entitled allocation; the introduction of a premise proxy of rates within the ACA calculation for 2 year olds, which risks potential double funding leading to material increases in funding for London areas, and the recommendation to devolve the teachers' pay and pension grant through the Maintained Nursery School (MNS) supplementary funding rate using universal hours only and not recognising the planned teachers' pay increases in September 2022 and 2023.

The consultation does propose funding increases for the sector, but with the economic challenges facing providers and schools, it is crucial that fair funding for Lincolnshire is secured. The LA is meeting with the department to discuss these matters further.

Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium will continue in the 2023/24 financial year. Rates will be published later in the year.

DSG Deficit Balances

Where a LA has a substantial in-year overspend or cumulative DSG deficit balance at the end of the financial year, a LA management plan should bring the overall DSG account into balance within a timely period. The ESFA has published a deficit recovery plan format for applicable LAs to complete. The report must be discussed with Schools Forum and signed by the Chief Finance Officer.

Conclusions

The funding announcements show an increase in per pupil funding for Lincolnshire mainstream schools. 2023/24 is the second year of the three-year funding settlement. Although the increase in funding is welcomed, there are concerns regarding the financial position of schools when considering the proposed pay awards, utility costs and general inflationary increases. The LA will be monitoring the position for the county's schools.

The HN block will continue to require careful and prudent management going forward.

The LA will continue to work through the Early Years block arrangements and funding proposals in readiness for setting provider and school funding rates for 2023/24 within the early years funding quantum.

Next Steps

The LA has received the draft version of the APT that includes October 2020 census data to enable officers to undertake financially modelling of school budgets to fully understand the impact of the funding announcements detailed in this paper. In addition, officers are modelling any further rises in FSMs and the impact this will have on affordability of the Schools block.

The sector and Schools' Forum have supported the decision for Lincolnshire to replicate the NFF due to the increased per pupil funding levels being seen in all mainstream schools. The LA plans to continue replicating the NFF in 2023/24. The fundamentals principles of the NFF are not changing for 2023/24, and such refinements are increasing the formula factor monetary values. The LA concludes at this point in time that a schools consultation will not be required for mainstream schools funding in 2023/24, as the LA plans are to continue replicating the NFF.

A final version of the APT will be released in December 2022. This tool will include October 2022 census information and will be used to calculate school budget shares for 2023/24. The Schools' Forum will be updated on the affordability position of the NFF in the January 2023 meeting. The APT will be submitted to the ESFA by 20 January 2023 for compliance.

School budget shares must be published by 28 February 2023.

The government has conducted its latest consultation on how further reforms to the NFF will be implemented, with the intention of moving to a 'hard' formula. The government expect to have moved all schools onto the NFF within the next five years, by the 2027/28 funding year. This would remove the LA responsibility in the setting of school budgets. The LA has responded to the latest consultation concluding the importance of retaining local flexibility and decision-making powers for aspects of schools funding, such as schools growth arrangements to support our statutory duty and premise-led factors. What the NFF has achieved is a move to greater consistency in how LAs are funded, which the LA considers to be extremely important in ensuring fair and equitable funding for the schools sector in each area.

Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

The affordability of the Schools block in replicating the NFF for 2023/24 will be considered through the financial modelling and completion of the December APT that contains the latest census information. The preferred options for addressing affordability (such as considering other DSG funding streams; reducing the MFG and ceilings cap) have been outlined in the body of the report.

CSSB Historical Commitment Funding started to reduce by 20% per annum in 2020/21 in line with the ESFA expectations that contracts are starting to have reached their natural conclusion. Officers are continuing to raise this with the department due to the commitment of the PFI contract (due to end August 2032). It is forecast that the 2023/24 funding levels will be sufficient to meet next year's historic commitment.

High Needs funding continues to see growth in the demand for more specialist support for young people, which is having a material financial impact on those centrally held budgets of the HN block. Although the government has again responded to the financial demands placed on the HNs block, spending levels continue to grow. The SEND Transformation Board is governing the transformational process and its key work streams, including monitoring of progress against our ambitions. The HN block will continue to require careful and prudent management going forward.

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	NFF for Schools - Update for 2023/24

Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
National Funding Formula: Government Consultation Outcomes	Report Reference: (moderngov.co.uk)
National Funding Formula for Schools – Update for 2022/23	Report Reference: (moderngov.co.uk)

This report was written by Elizabeth Bowes, who can be contacted on or elizabeth.bowes@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

Funding comparison of the NFF factors from 2022/23 to 2023/24

	Description	2022/23 Rates		2023/24 Rates *		Percentage Change	
		Amount Per Pupil	Amount Per Pupil	Amount Per Pupil	Amount Per Pupil	Primary	Secondary
1) AWPU	Primary (Years R-6)	£3,217		£3,394		2.4%	
	Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)	£4,536		£4,785		2.4%	
	Key Stage 4 (Years 10 - 11)	£5,112		£5,393		2.4%	
	Description	Primary amount per pupil	Secondary amount per pupil	Primary amount per pupil	Secondary amount per pupil	Primary	Secondary
2) Deprivation	FSM	£470	£480	£480	£480	2.4%	2.4%
	FSM Ever 6	£590	£865	£705	£1,030	4.3%	4.3%
	IDACI Band F	£220	£320	£230	£335	4.3%	4.3%
	IDACI Band E	£270	£425	£280	£445	4.3%	4.3%
	IDACI Band D	£420	£595	£440	£620	4.3%	4.3%
	IDACI Band C	£460	£650	£480	£680	4.3%	4.3%
	IDACI Band B	£490	£700	£510	£730	4.3%	4.3%
	IDACI Band A	£640	£890	£670	£930	4.3%	4.3%
3) English as an Additional Language (EAL)	EAL 3 Primary	£565		£580		2.4%	
	EAL 3 Secondary		£1,530		£1,565		2.4%
4) Mobility	Pupils starting school outside of normal entry dates	£925	£1,330	£945	£1,360	2.4%	2.4%
5) Prior Attainment	Primary Low prior attainment	£1,130		£1,155		2.4%	
	Secondary pupils not achieving (KS2 English or Maths)		£1,710		£1,750		2.4%
6) Lump Sum		£121,300	£121,300	£128,000	£128,000	2.4%	2.4%
7) Sparsity		£55,000	£80,000	£56,300	£81,900	2.4%	2.4%
Minimum Per Pupil Funding Level		£4,265	£5,525	£4,405	£5,715	2.4%	2.4%
Minimum Funding Floor		2%	2%	0.5%	0.5%		
Minimum Funding Guarantee		+0.5% - +2.0%		+0.0% - +0.5%			

* 2023/24 NFF monetary values include the 2022/23 supplementary grant allocations before the application of the percentage increase outlined above:

- Primary basic per-pupil £97
- Key stage 3 (KS3) basic per-pupil £137
- Key stage 4 (KS4) basic per-pupil £155
- Primary FSM6 per-pupil £85
- Secondary FSM6 per-pupil £124
- Lump sum £3,680

A schools baseline funding for 2022/23 will incorporate the supplementary grant funding allocations for Minimum Funding Guarantee purposes.



Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director – Children's Services

Report to:	Lincolnshire Schools' Forum
Date:	06 October 2022
Subject:	De-delegation of maintained primary school budgets 2023/24 and 2024/25

Summary:

The purpose of the report is to seek approval from the maintained primary school representatives of the Forum to the Local Authority's (LA) proposals for the de-delegation of certain budgets in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Recommendation(s):

That the maintained primary school representatives on the Schools' Forum are asked to:

1. Agree to the proposals for the use of de-delegation reserves.
2. Agree to the de-delegation of the budgets for the period 2023/24, and 2024/25 (in principle), as set out below.

Background

The Department for Education (DfE) previously introduced radical reforms to school funding arrangements in April 2013. Although LAs were required to delegate more budgets to schools as part of the reforms, they were permitted to seek de-delegation of some services for maintained schools. The government's decision to implement the national funding formula still allows the de-delegation arrangement for maintained schools to continue¹.

Key features of these arrangements include:

- Only maintained primary and secondary mainstream schools can have funds de-delegated from their budget share. Academies are therefore unaffected, and for that reason, they are not permitted to vote on de-delegation matters.
- The decision to de-delegate funds for maintained schools should be considered and voted upon separately by each sector.

¹ DfE: Schools Revenue Funding 2023 to 2024 – Operational Guide

- Where there are no maintained school representatives on the Schools' Forum for a particular sector, no decision can be made and de-delegation is therefore not possible.
- Should there be conversion of any more schools to academies, it will reduce the total sum de-delegated for a service, if the per pupil deduction remains unchanged.
- Any underspendings that arise on budgets de-delegated from maintained schools should, as a point of principle (i.e. fairness), be earmarked for the benefit of the maintained schools in that sector only.

De-delegations for 2021/22

For 2021/22 maintained primary schools agreed to de-delegate funding for:

- Contingency, i.e. termination of employment costs for schools in financial difficulty, and; exceptional unforeseen costs; and
- Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET).

No funds were de-delegated for maintained secondary schools.

The cumulative underspend reported at 31st March 2022 was £1.027m. This includes the additional one-off school advisor support fund of £0.260m² from Council funding to support with the Council's statutory duties for school improvement services to maintained schools. The LA has been able to provide this function without drawing on this reserve, however from 2022/23 it is planned to be drawn on.

Maintained primary school members of the Forum in October 2021 supported the LAs proposal to commit £0.301m of the cumulative underspend to support maintained primary schools in responding to the pandemic and addressing the learning needs of the children who have been most disadvantaged. The LA is to launch this term a two year programme to increase pupils' fluency in reading by Year 2, develop pedagogical approaches of practitioners in relation to communication and language and early reading and to provide a sustainable model to ensure the on-going development of these approaches in Lincolnshire, including the development of reading and language frameworks and assessment approaches. This is in the context of Lincolnshire's children performing less well than the majority of their peers nationally, although the gap is narrowing in Reading and Maths against national and our more positive position against our neighbours. Lincolnshire is now mid-way in the league table of our statistical neighbours, and we estimate (validated data is not available), that we are now in the bottom quartile – up from the bottom decile - compared to national. The focus is on intervening early and supporting schools in returning to school improvement activity.

The remaining de-delegated balance is £0.466m at March 2022. The de-delegation services underspent by £0.166m or 17% of the overall budget in 2021/22. The largest underspend (£0.131m) related to the termination of employment costs for maintained primary schools in financial difficulty to support their future financial sustainability. This is

² The Council has funded the additional school advisor support since its introduction in 2018/19, however going forward it is anticipated that this funding will start to be utilised.

likely to have been as a result of the pandemic and the schools focus on its recovery, which schools received additional government grants for³. Even allowing for that, it is proposed for 2023/24 to reduce the budget to £0.150m.

There are a number of variables to these de-delegation budgets: maintained schools to academy status can reduce the budgets in-year depending on their conversion date; the number of schools in financial difficulties or forecasting to be within two years, and financial support in accordance with policy to support schools with staffing changes to secure a sustainable budget going forward; supporting school leaders or providing leadership for vulnerable schools, which require a responsive solution, and interventions to make rapid, identified improvements where school finances would otherwise prevent this from happening. Even allowing for the 2023/24 funding settlement and mainstreaming the 2022/23 supplementary funding to support unforeseen costs, the rising costs within the education sector both relating to pay and energy will put pressure on school budgets. It is considered a degree of prudence is required; therefore the LA propose to retain £0.466m provision within the available cumulative underspend to support the sector. This provision will ensure certainty in de-delegation amounts for primary maintained schools where unexpected costs arise due to the delivery of services, i.e. an increased demand from primary maintained schools.

De-delegations for 2022/23

The de-delegation budgets for 2022/23 were agreed by the maintained primary school representatives of the Schools’ Forum in October 2021. The final per pupil rates using the October 2021 census (26,341 primary maintained pupils) were set at:

Contingency	£29.23 per pupil
Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)	£ 7.09 per pupil ⁴

This financed the following:

Termination of employment costs	£0.209m
Interim headteachers	£0.218m
Primary Maintained Intervention Funding	£0.253m
Intervention Locality Lead	£0.090m
Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)	£0.186m

Information regarding the current services is set out in Appendix 1.

Proposals for 2023/24

The Forum will be aware that the DfE launched a consultation late in 2021 on removing the funding for LAs School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant for school

³ Government grants include Covid catchup premium (2020 to 2021) and Covid-19 recovery premium funding (2021 to 2022).
⁴ The EMTET per pupil rate reflected the number of maintained schools and the budget requirement of £0.186m – this ensures the current staffing establishment is fully funded.

improvement activities supporting maintained schools. The grant value had expected to be £0.585m in 2022/23. The Council's school improvement activities overall in 2022/23 cost £1.188m with the amount above the grant met by core Council funding. The Council responded strongly to this consultation opposing such a change, as did Council's across the country, however the DfE has pressed ahead with the decision. The DfE's position is that the funding shortfall should be met by maintained schools de-delegations.

The Council considers its investment in the education sector as a strategic priority to enable all children to prosper across all Lincolnshire schools and supports the continuation of the current approach of strategic system leadership and direct work with maintained schools, which is considered a lean school improvement support model. The DfE has reduced the grant by 50% in the current year, which the Council is temporarily managing, with the removal of the funding entirely from 2023/24. The Council's current financial position and the rising costs it is facing in the delivery of services means a permanent solution cannot be secured to offset the grant reduction.

The LA has reviewed opportunities for general efficiencies and smarter working through both the strategic system leadership and our statutory responsibilities for maintained schools for implementation from 2023/24. The Council does not agree with the DfE solution of maintained schools bearing an 'additional' financial burden on their schools budgets, particularly at this time, therefore the Council consider it an opportune moment to review existing de-delegation budgets with an option of re-purposing to support the direct work with maintained primary schools whilst still achieving our overall objectives. The existing Council funding will continue to support the strategic system leadership for all schools and statutory responsibilities.

The LA continues to find that the most impact in schools is from additional expertise being deployed into vulnerable schools to work with leaders to add capacity and address immediate issues. In order to ensure that the most vulnerable primary maintained schools are supported effectively and in a timely fashion we have seen that the capability to deploy an additional school improvement professional into a school, for a limited period, is most effective. Our most vulnerable primary maintained schools are certainly those for which such an approach is beneficial. The Council consider the Education Locality Leads, support, monitoring, challenge and expertise to be a priority for maintained primary schools improvement, previously funded through the grant.

Last year, the primary maintained Schools' Forum members supported the LA proposal to add capacity by appointing one additional school improvement professional to work with school leaders to deliver school improvement expertise on the ground, which was financed within the current maintained primary schools de-delegation 'contingency termed' budgets.

The schools landscape continues to evolve, therefore it is important the de-delegation services are responsive to this. Through Locality Lead support to leaders and improved partnership working between schools, there is not a requirement for the interim headteachers services, which has been reflected in the 2023/24 offer.

The LA proposes to continue operating a hybrid model with capacity provided by the central team for universal maintained primary schools, including those schools in financial difficulties to be able to bid for additional specialist activity over and above this, which includes support from the primary maintained intervention fund. This would ensure that all schools requiring support to improve outcomes and be in a secure position for Ofsted inspection could receive support quickly.

It is proposed that the current contingency rate of £29.23 per pupil continues in 2023/24, which will support a hybrid model of maintaining the support to maintained primary schools from Education Locality Leads following the DfE decision to end the grant funding; the previously agreed additional school improvement capacity, and primary maintained intervention funding.

The maintained primary schools de-delegation 'contingency termed' baseline funding will continue to be flexed to respond to changes in maintained primary schools and their pupil numbers.

The remaining service budget is EMTET, which is made up of staffing costs and therefore requires a fixed budget, albeit it should continue to be reviewed annually to reflect the number of maintained school pupils and the English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils it supports. The EMTET per pupil rate will reflect the number of maintained schools and the budget requirement of £0.186m* – this ensures the current staffing establishment is fully funded.

The per pupil rates will be set at:

Contingency	£29.23 per pupil
Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)	£6.97 per pupil*

This would finance:

Termination of employment costs	£0.150m
Primary maintained Locality Lead support and Intervention Funding	£0.543m
Additional Intervention Locality Lead	£0.090m
Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)	£0.186m

These budget figures are indicative. They are based on the latest available census in May 2022 and 26,785 primary maintained pupils. The figures may change slightly due to the DfE's requirement for LAs to use the actual October 2022 census for the detailed calculations.

Proposals for 2024/25

It is proposed that the charges for 2024/25 will continue to be at the baseline amounts per pupil for the de-delegation budget.

The Schools' Forum maintained primary schools are required to agree de-delegations on an annual basis, however the LA will continue to seek agreement in principle from the Forum for 2024/25 also.

Conclusion

The outcomes from the decisions made by maintained primary representatives on the Schools' Forum will be reflected in maintained primary schools' future budgets from 2023/24.

The LA has had to respond to the DfE decision to remove the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant for school improvement activities supporting maintained schools (£0.585m) from 2023/24. The Council's funding to supporting the strategic priorities of the education sector will remain to enable all children to prosper across all Lincolnshire schools. The LA has reviewed opportunities for general efficiencies and smarter working through both the strategic system leadership and our statutory responsibilities for maintained schools for implementation from 2023/24. The Council does not agree with the DfE solution of maintained schools bearing an 'additional' financial burden on their schools budgets, therefore the Council has considered it an opportune moment to review existing de-delegation budgets with the recommendation to re-purposing funds to support the direct work with maintained primary schools (that the grant previously funded) whilst still achieving our overall objectives. It is proposed that the current contingency rate of £29.23 per pupil will continue at the same monetary value in 2023/24, as applied in the current year.

Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

The DfE require annual decisions to take place for de-delegation services. The LA does however seek an agreement in principle for a further year to provide the service with operational and financial stability. A formal decision is still required for that year where an in principle agreement has been made.

Following the DfE decision to remove the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant for school improvement activities for supporting maintained schools, general efficiencies and the Lincolnshire's de-delegation budgets will support the continuation of direct support to maintained primary schools through the Education Locality Leads along with the targeted support to the most vulnerable schools to raise standards. With the changing education landscape, the re-purposing of de-delegation funding will not impact the overall offer to maintained primary schools. Schools can at any point require extra support; therefore, these services provide a layer of protection to ensure no school is left behind.

In the event of a no decision by primary maintained Schools' Forum representatives, the LA will consider its 2023/24 proposals. The LA would be required to provide a further

paper in the next Schools' Forum meeting (January 2023). The DfE can act as an adjudicator where maintained Schools' Forum representatives do not agree to the LA proposal.

The LA has prior Schools' Forum support to provide additional school improvement activities for all maintained primary schools to support them in responding to the pandemic and overall school performance. The remaining reserves enable unexpected costs to be managed that arise due to the delivery of services.

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Details of the current service provision funded through the de-delegation budgets.

Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
De-delegation of maintained primary schools budgets 2022/23 and 2023/24 (item 7).	Agenda for Lincolnshire Schools' Forum on Thursday, 7th October, 2021, 1.00 pm (moderngov.co.uk)

This report was written by Mark Popplewell, Strategic Finance Lead – Children's Services who can be contacted on 01522 553326 or mark.popplewell@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

This page is intentionally left blank

Details of current service provision

Schools in financial difficulty and exceptional unforeseen costs

Schools in financial difficulty

The LA's Staffing Reduction panel with key disciplines represented continues to meet (virtually) to consider requests for redundancies and access to those funds. The LA's policy of charging schools for a share of redundancy costs, includes a potential contribution to be made from this budget for maintained schools that are likely to overspend within the next two financial years if no action is taken.

In 2021/22, redundancy expenditure was £0.131m for maintained primary schools against the budget of £0.221m – this supported 4 maintained primary schools.

At the end of March 2022, 8 primary maintained schools were in a financial deficit.

Intervention Support (schools in financial difficulties)

The DfE expects a de-delegated budget for exceptional unforeseen costs to finance those costs which it would be unreasonable to expect governing bodies to meet.

Further detail on the use of the following funds is set out below:

Interim Headteacher Team

The purpose:

The LA interim headteacher team support schools where an interim leadership solution is needed or schools who find themselves in a vulnerable position and require external support to strengthen leadership capacity to drive improvement. As well as providing interim leadership support, all new headteachers or acting headteachers in maintained schools are able to attend a comprehensive induction programme where they are able to learn about all aspects of school leadership with other colleagues across Lincolnshire.

In 2021/22, interim headteacher team expenditure was £0.221m for maintained primary schools against the budget of £0.258m

The interim headteacher team:

- Provide part or full time interim headteachers in schools where the headteacher is absent and no leaders from within the school are able to step into the role
- Are usually deployed in schools deemed as vulnerable by the LA or graded by OfSTED as Requires Improvement or Inadequate to support rapid improvement
- Spend varying amounts of time in each school as this is determined by the school's own capacity for sustaining the improvements
- Provide a programme of leadership induction for all new headteachers in maintained schools.

Primary Maintained Intervention Funding

The purpose

The Intervention Fund supports maintained primary schools to make rapid, identified improvements where school finances would otherwise prevent this from happening. The funding enables schools identified as vulnerable, to continue to be good schools or to rapidly improve to become a good school.

Amount of funding received and spent

For 2021/22, £0.281m funding was utilised against a budget of £0.336m. These needs were identified through a combination of locality leads, interim headteachers, call-in or strategy meetings.

Schools bid for specific amounts and send in plans which detail the amount, the reason and the expected impact of the additional funding. The school has to show that they do not have the funding in their own budget to enable them to make the necessary improvements or changes. The following process exists:

- Specific school bids that meet threshold and address school improvement priorities
- Supporting the commissioning of intervention and resources to improve outcomes for learners at school
- Ensure schools remain connected to the sector led system to support school improvement where action needs to be taken

Locality Leads would continue to suggest intervention bids where they are appropriate and support the bid writing so that it is focused on the correct priorities to have the most impact. They would continue to monitor the impact and maintain a view of the school moving forward to ensure that outcomes are improved and the legacy of the funding can be seen.

How funding was spent

The Intervention Funding budget enabled maintained schools facing financial difficulty who needed access to school improvement support. Schools were required to show that bids would be sustainable and would improve outcomes for pupils. The School Intervention Funding policy was applied consistently and appropriately over the course of the financial year. The applications were reviewed by the Head of Education Strategy and Head of School Standards.

Individual bids were very specific to each school, but activity included:

- Purchase expert teaching and leadership support to provide professional development and training for staff in areas of need
- Support external partnership and networking activity to encourage collaborative working and connection with the broader sector with a focus on Reading, Writing and Mathematics
- Curriculum development to ensure schools are well placed for providing a broad balanced curriculum
- Accessing Governance training through the Strengthening Governance Offer via National Leaders of Governance and partners

Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners

Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)

The Service Area

The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) was reconfigured in September 2011 to form the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET). The current team has a two tier structure that advises and supports schools to accommodate the needs of ethnic minority and Traveller children. The officers support schools to work with families and ensure that they are able to access services available to their children, particularly education. They support the integration of specific children as well as help schools to develop and maintain systems that are needed to provide a fully inclusive and safe environment for these particular groups of young people. The team leaders are able to offer more specific advice required by schools to support children with English as an Additional Language (EAL). The service receives positive feedback from schools, services and families.

Background to need

Approximately 10% of pupils in Lincolnshire school have English as an Additional Language. A high number of these have been in the country for a relatively short period of time or have started reception as an EAL learner. A large number of these EAL learners are in maintained schools across the county. In some of the schools there are only a few pupils making it challenging for these schools to resource the need and grow the expertise within their setting. The pandemic had a significant impact on the progress of EAL learners as they missed crucial time in school where most of them develop their skills in English through integrating with their English speaking peers. Covid-19 also impacted on the Traveller community many of whom isolated themselves to their site or home in fear of the pandemic. EMTET has been essential in supporting these families to be confident to return to school.

EMTET work with those schools that lack knowledge or experience of good practice in supporting Ethnic Minority pupils, Travellers or pupils with EAL, or where the school has tried a number of strategies and seeks specialist support for further advice. There is a growing demand for support in relation to communication with parents, children with special needs and integration of Traveller children.

The continual growth in the number of EAL learners reflects the growing number of children born in the county and starting school with English as their second language. This has resulted in a gap in achievement in the foundation stage outcomes for children with EAL compared with their peers. From September 2019, EMTET became an integral part of the county's plan to improve the outcomes for children in the foundation stage, particularly those with English as an additional language who were performing 14% below their peers. The support in early years will hopefully impact positively on the children's readiness for school.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, all visits to schools and homes ceased and the focus of the service was to ensure that schools were equipped with resources to help parents who do not speak English understand the regulations around Covid-19 and school attendance as well as resources that would encourage continued learning at home. Much of this support continues but has been adapted as children return to school. Support consists of:

- help with contacting vulnerable families whose first language is not English through bilingual volunteers
- liaising with the Traveller community to ensure wellbeing and help to reintegrate back into school
- information about COVID-19 and government guidance in various languages collated and made accessible to schools for further dissemination.
- EAL specific resources created and made available to schools to provide to families.
- the development of materials to support Ethnic Minority children's transition and reintegration into the school environment.
- work with the Early Years team to provide support around primary transition.
- continued liaison with individual families and schools to provide relevant support.
- the roll out of the 'Embrace' Programme; a series of school challenges to encourage conversations and an exploration of different ideas around race and ethnicity.
- termly online, school drop-ins to provide advice, guidance and resources to school as well as facilitate networking.
- training for other LCC school services

All school and home visits have now re-commenced and the service is operating as normal.

The Black Life Matters discussions have triggered schools to revisit their ethos and teaching around race equality and discrimination. The team have provided support and resources to schools and families and are fully involved in work that is planned for the future in this area including work linked to Prevent and challenges around the increase of right wing extremism.

The service continues to be able to adapt to current urgent need such as the recent unexpected arrival of Afghan Asylum Seekers. The team are able to aid the admission of these children and provide on-going support within the school to ensure the best possible experience for children and their families and improved changes of successful integration and progress.

The purpose of the Service

The overall aim of the EMTET is to provide a service to schools and families that support the following objectives:

- Improving the safety and well-being of Ethnic Minority and Traveller children (supporting families to find a school place and settle into education).
- Improving access to learning particularly those with EAL (advising schools of good EAL practice through training and consultancy).
- Supporting transition (supporting family's knowledge of school admissions, school systems, transport, free school meals etc.).
- Improving conditions for learning that reflect culture and lifestyle, and value diversity - training and workshops to school staff and young people, working with parents to improve integration.

Budget received/ spent

The service is funded, in part, by a de-delegated contribution (from maintained primary schools) of £0.186m. This is a fixed budget with an annual consideration of number of maintained schools/pupils.

The service has 1.6fte team leaders and 4.4fte officers all on 38 week contracts. The £0.186m funds 80% of the total service cost. The remaining part of the service supports the emergency work required do i.e. getting a child a school place, support around Traveller sites, Afghan refugees etc.

Outcomes for the Service (for the period April 2020 – March 2021)

- Supporting approximately 45 children in 34 schools through a single child referral process (this may lead to impact on wider family and/or whole class/school). 24 of these were maintained, and 10 were academies (which the latter is purchased). This number was lower than previous years due to Covid-19.
- Work with early years settings and primary school (reception) to support successful transition and readiness for school including 7 referrals from settings
- Training and consultancy advice for schools and school staff on supporting pupils with EAL and cultural awareness
- Training for trainee teachers at Bishop Grosseteste University
- Supporting the admission and reintegration of Ethnic Minority and Traveller families into school
- Supporting the home-school learning of Ethnic Minority and Traveller children
- 5 requests for Diversity and Traveller Awareness workshops with young people. These have been scheduled for delivery now school visits have been reinstated
- Providing support for Polish and Russian A Levels (buyback arrangement)
- Coordinating racial incident reporting and assisting schools to deal with racist related behaviour.
- Use of bilingual supporters to help school engage with children and families

Future Developments

- Continue providing advice and support to schools and families in the safest possible way.
- Utilise relevant technology to provide development and networking opportunities for school staff.
- Continue partnership working with the Early Years team to ensure EAL and Traveller children's school readiness.
- Liaise with external agencies to provide joint support to ethnic minority children and their families.
- Develop school initiatives to promote equality and community cohesion.
- Create resources to help schools cater for the needs of EAL and Traveller children.
- Continue online school Drop-In sessions
- Further develop and deliver the Embrace Programme
- Further develop and coordinate bilingual support for schools
- Resumed first language assessments in Polish, Russian and Lithuanian



Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director - Children's Services

Report to:	Lincolnshire Schools' Forum
Date:	06 October 2022
Subject:	Revised Schools Budgets 2022/23

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to notify the Schools' Forum of the revised Schools Budgets for 2022/23 and to seek support for the proposed use of cumulative underspending from 2021/22.

Recommendation(s):

Schools' Forum is asked to:

- (1) note the contents of the report,
- (2) to agree to the recommendation to capitalise £0.780m of Dedicated Schools Grant revenue monies for childcare sufficiency purposes by securing new childcare places, through a vote to enable it to be taken forward through the Disapplication Request process for DfE for Secretary of State (SoS) approval, and
- (3) support the Local Authority's proposed use of the uncommitted sum, as outlined in section 5.

The views of the Schools' Forum will be reported to Children's Services Directorate Leadership Team and Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement before final decisions are made.

Background

1. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced grant that can only be spent for the purposes outlined in the Department for Education's (DfE's) School's and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations.

A revision to the Schools Budget is necessary each year to reflect the under or overspending arising on the DSG in the previous financial year and adjustment to the

DSG once the Early Years figures have been confirmed. Under DfE' regulations, underspendings are carried forward automatically to the following financial year and the Local Authority (LA) must consult with the Schools' Forum over its plans to utilise underspendings, or address overspendings.

Under Schedule 2 of the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022, LAs are required to carry forward overspend to their DSG to be dealt with in the new year or future years. This would be subject to DfE oversight to ensure any overspend is recovered. LAs can apply to the Secretary of State to disregard this requirement, if it wishes to fund any part of the deficit from a source other than the DSG.

LAs with DSG deficits under the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020 No 1212), made by what is now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are required to hold the DSG deficit in a separate reserve within LAs accounts. This is now the accounting treatment that LAs must follow while those regulations are in force (up to and including the accounts for 2022/23). This statutory override currently in place does not require LAs to make provisions from its general reserves to cover any DSG deficit that exists. It is unclear at this stage what the position will be for 2023/24.

LAs with DSG deficits are required to report to the DfE on managing their future DSG spend, which is governed by the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022.

This is in the context of the increasing number of LAs who are incurring a deficit on their overall DSG largely due to overspend on their High Needs block. The DfE reported through the government's SEND Green Paper that two thirds of LAs are in deficit by the end of 2020/21, valued at over £1bn. The SEND Green Paper acknowledged the unsustainable SEND system and spending still outstripping funding.

The DfE launched a Safety Value programme in 2020/21 with agreed financial support to five LAs that have the highest DSG deficits worth £97m. This expanded to a further nine LAs worth £300m in 2021/22 and will be expanded in 2022/23 to incorporate an additional cohort of LAs. Under these agreements, these LAs are expected to agree to a plan of action to make them more sustainable in the long-term and stop deficits growing. The primary goals are appropriately managing demand for Education Health Care (EHC) plans and using appropriate and cost-effective provision. The Department's latest programme Delivering Better Value in SEND support programme is intended to complement the Safety Valve intervention programme by providing dedicated support and funding to help a further fifty-five LAs with substantial, but less severe, deficit issues to reform their high needs systems and spending.

LAs, such as Lincolnshire must ensure careful management of the DSG takes place to avoid overspending of the DSG. Section 151 officers and auditors have raised concern where growing DSG deficits without a sustainable recovery plan are impacting the overall financial position of the LA, and its going concern status. This is in the context

of financial pressures facing LA finances following the pandemic and rising inflation caused by world events.

The carry forward for 2021/22

2. The cumulative underspend carried forward at 31/3/22 was £11.969m before accounting for existing commitments of £4.331m. The uncommitted sum of £7.638m represents 1.12% of Lincolnshire's 2022/23 overall DSG (£679.872m). This position reflects the net underspends of £3.288m¹ on budgets in 2021/22 held centrally within the DSG. Details are set out per block in Appendix A.

Existing commitments

3. A thorough review of existing commitments has taken place including updating for decisions made, and prudent financial estimates of those have been made. They total £4.331m. Details are set out in Appendix B. Some commitments continue to be earmarked and refined, however as work streams are finalised or the government's position is confirmed, spending will start to take place. In addition, other financial commitments may materialise.

Proposed developments

4. The LA is seeking to utilise DSG funding to contribute towards creating new childcare places in the county for sufficiency reasons. The LA is proposing to capitalise £0.780m from the DSG reserve, which had previously been earmarked for Early Years initiatives (£0.977m). This had originated from the government's rollout of the disadvantaged 2-year-old funding. The service has considered the existing commitments against this earmarked funding in the decision to prioritise this towards capital funding.

The LA must report annually to elected Council members on how we are meeting our statutory childcare sufficiency duty, to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents. The LA undertook a series of childcare providers and parent sufficiency surveys during April – May 2022. The surveys were designed to review the availability, accessibility and sustainability of childcare in Lincolnshire.

To ensure the LA meets its childcare sufficiency duty, there are areas in Lincolnshire identified as requiring additional childcare places in the immediate future. A development plan has been produced, however capital investment will be required to support the plan. The LA has exhausted all previous DfE capital funding for early years and childcare developments and the service has a capital budget remaining of £0.040m to invest in projects where they are required to meet the childcare sufficiency duty. The Council's existing capital programme is also being reviewed to ensure it is affordable due to record levels of inflation caused by world events. As an illustration, the cost of construction for 'All Work' rose by 24.5% in April 2022 compared to one year prior, according to the Department for Business, Energy and

¹ The in-year underspend takes account of the early years 2021/22 adjustment.

Industrial Strategy (BEIS) due to rising cost of electricity, oil and many other raw materials.

Capital investment of £0.780m is sought to secure new childcare places in areas of need within the sufficiency report and childcare delivery plan. The LA recommendation to capitalise £0.780m of DSG revenue funding will require a Disapplication Request to the DfE for Secretary of State (SoS) approval. The LA has successfully received approval for such a request a number of years ago.

The Schools' Forum is asked to support the recommendation through a vote for it to be taken forward to the SoS. The Children's Services Directorate Leadership Team and Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement have approved this recommendation to proceed.

The Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report 2022 can be found through the following link: <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/early-years-education/support-childcare-providers/7>

Proposals for use of the uncommitted sum

5. The cumulative underspend (£11.969m) less existing commitments (£4.331m) and proposed developments (£0.780m) leaves £6.858m. However, as stated in paragraph 3 above, there are likely to be other commitments that arise during the year within the DSG remit that the LA will be required to respond to.

The LA proposes that the remaining sum is not committed and held in reserves due to the current spending levels in the area of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the uncertainty in the financial environment going forward. The following section provides an explanation of the LA position.

The report earlier outlines the national context of DSG deficits caused by unsustainable spending on their High Needs block reporting two thirds of LAs with DSG deficits, valued at over £1bn. The government response to the 2022/23 DSG settlement was welcomed, however the SEND Green Papers timeline for securing a financially sustainable system appears unlikely to be achieved in the short-term. Prudent management of the DSG to avoid overspending is key. Lincolnshire underspent its High Needs block by £1.964m in 2021/22, however some services were temporarily funded by other funding sources (£1.317m) and a temporary underspend on Alternative Provision free school places (£1.673m). Without this, the High Needs block would have been overspent.

The 2022/23 financial position on the DSG overall is currently forecasting to be broadly on target. The DSG, in particular the High Needs block has large, demand-led, and can be difficult to estimate budgets (e.g. SEND related budgets, including out of county placements; top up funding for EHC plans for mainstream schools; special school placements; meeting the education needs for pupils through alternative provision arrangements, and supporting the sector financially to meet unforeseen costs that were not budgeted for in delegated high needs budgets, but are subject to

government decisions to allow them to be fully quantified). In Lincolnshire there continues to be a growing trend for more specialist support for young people which is having a material financial impact on the High Needs block.

Lincolnshire's transformational work is considered fundamental to continue securing further improved outcomes for young people with SEND through a truly integrated approach, whilst also securing an offer for Lincolnshire that is financially sustainable within the central Government allocation. The SEND Transformation Board is governing the transformational process and its key work streams, including of monitoring of progress against our ambitions. The Schools' Forum received the Annual report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in the June 2022 Schools' Forum meeting, providing a comprehensive overview of Lincolnshire's position, including the transformational activities taking place. Fundamental to this is Lincolnshire's Inclusive Ambition which incorporates a system ambition that aims to ensure that the majority of children with special educational needs can fulfil their potential in mainstream settings where practitioners are clear how to meet their needs and the right support is available to do so at an early stage.

The announced increase in High Needs block funding settlement for LAs in 2023/24 is again welcomed through the 5% funding floor rise per head of population. Lincolnshire will continue to be funded through the funding floor and will be in receipt of £8.692m protection funding (£8.607m in 2022/23) above the formulaic formula. The LA is therefore mindful of future changes to the SEND system and how this could impact the financial regime, but it is hoped the government continue to manage funding changes in a planned and co-ordinated way through protection arrangements to avoid cliff-edge funding.

Lincolnshire's desire is to achieve a balanced budget on its High Needs block will ensure funding is directed to the right activities and cost-effective provision to maximise the outcomes for young people with SEND. This includes the majority of children who have SEND fulfilling their potential in mainstream settings through having the right support available including at transition points. Lincolnshire does not want to be forced into a position of making difficult decisions of retracting its comprehensive early help support package to schools, or to seek a transfer of up to 0.5% of the Schools block to the High Needs block to manage unfunded cost pressures.

The trajectory of funding for High Needs blocks is not considered to be sustainable by central Government. The SEND Green paper acknowledges the unsustainable SEND system and considers ways to address this. The outcomes of the consultation will likely have an impact on high needs funding allocated to LAs and to schools, but timescales are presently unclear.

The uncertainty of future High Needs block funding and the much tighter financial environment expected going forward; the growth still being experienced in EHC plans and the requirement for more specialist placements, and the time to allow for the transformational work to be further embedded into practices and its output including

spending levels, require the uncommitted DSG cumulative underspend to remain in place to support the LA secure a sustainable DSG budget going forward.

Appendix A highlights the areas of financial variance in 2021/22.

There remain other financial risks within the other DSG funding blocks:

- Schools block: the LA plans to continue replicating the national funding formula in 2023/24, however this will be subject to affordability, for example using lagged pupil characteristics data, and the extent this will impact the FSM Ever 6 data.
- Central Schools Services block: the funding of historic commitments in place whilst the government reduce funding by 20% each year.
- Early Years block: the growth in early years participation numbers that has been experienced during the summer term, which is being funded through the January 2022 census snapshot by the government, which is considered low, due to the pandemic. Autumn and spring data estimates will be considered for affordability in the current year. Also, financial sustainability of providers in delivering early years entitlement in these challenging economic times, which is subject to government funding levels beings set. In 2021/22, the number of available childcare places has reduced by 431 across the county.

Conclusion

This is in the context of the increasing number of LAs who are incurring a deficit on their overall DSG. The DfE reported through the government's SEND Green Paper that two thirds of LAs are in deficit by the end of 2020/21, valued at over £1bn, caused by overspends on their High Needs block. The SEND Green Paper acknowledged the unsustainable SEND system and spending still outstripping funding.

The department have made a number of changes: these include changes to the regulations on how overspends are to be managed going forward; the statutory override that is due to expire in 2022/23 which does not require LAs to make provision from its general reserves to cover a DSG deficit, although depending on their scale could impact audit opinions on an LAs going concern, and the tightened-up rules under which LAs have to explain to the DfE their plans for bringing the DSG account back into balance.

Lincolnshire remains in a strong position financially to respond to the demands, and the High Needs Block will continue to require careful and prudent management going forward. Lincolnshire is currently not in a deficit position with available reserves, however based on planned expenditure on the High Needs block and future trajectories; action is being taken to ensure spending is directed to the right activities to maximise the outcomes for young people with SEND, whilst also securing an offer for Lincolnshire pupils that is financially sustainable within its central government allocation.

The LA proposes that the remaining sum is not committed and held in reserves due to the future outlook of rising costs; a much tighter financial environment expected going forward in the medium term; changes proposed through the government's SEND Green

Paper, and the time to allow for the transformational work to be embedded into practices and its output ensuring the financial capacity is there within the DSG reserves, including temporarily managing unfunded cost pressures. The LA is not proposing to move up to 0.5% of the Schools block funding in 2023/24.

The LA must act prudently and avoid overspending the DSG.

Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

The greatest financial risk remains around High Needs block funding and spending. High Needs Funding continues to see growth in the demand for more specialist support for young people, which is having a material financial impact on those centrally held budgets of the High Needs block. The SEND Green paper acknowledges the unsustainable SEND system and considers ways to address this. The outcomes of the consultation will likely have an impact on high needs funding allocated to LAs and to schools, but timescales are presently unclear.

The announced increase in High Needs block funding settlement for LAs in 2023/24 is again welcomed, and Lincolnshire will continue to see protection through the funding floor. Lincolnshire remains in a strong position financially to respond to the demands, and the High Needs Block will continue to require careful and prudent management going forward, including the management of reserves.

The SEND Transformation Board is governing the transformational process and its key work streams, including monitoring of progress against our ambitions. It remains prudent to retain financial flexibility to support Lincolnshire in securing a sustainable financial position in the medium term, particularly with a much tighter financial environment expected going forward.

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Central DSG Budgets 2021/22 - explanation of major under and overspendings
Appendix B	2021/22 DSG commitments
Appendix C	Lincolnshire’s Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Revised School Budgets 2021/22 - October 2021	<u>(Public Pack)Agenda Document for Lincolnshire Schools' Forum, 07/10/2021 13:00 (moderngov.co.uk)</u>

This report was written by Mark Popplewell, Strategic Finance Lead - Children's Services, who can be contacted on or mark.popplewell@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

DSG Central Budgets 2021/22 – Explanations for major underspendings and overspendings

The main underspendings and overspendings per funding block were:

Schools Block

Budget	(Underspend) / Overspend £m
Admissions and Exclusions The budget funds the LA's statutory duty to operate the admissions and exclusion arrangements for Lincolnshire schools in accordance with the School's and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations.	(0.180)
Other Underspends & Overspends	(0.033)
Total	(0.213)

High Needs Block

Budget	(Underspend) / Overspend £m
High Needs Top Up and Targeted Funding A net overspend on top up funding for Lincolnshire pupils in mainstream schools with an EHC plan and targeted funding of £2.847m. The SEND transformation programme continues to have a positive impact in supporting children and young people and is reducing the upward trajectory of EHC plans against the do-nothing line, however there continued to be growing trends both nationally and in Lincolnshire, with more children requiring specialist support, from that level previously budgeted for. The government released in March 2022 the SEND Review Green paper, which outlines the government plans to overcome key challenges, which include a system that is financially sustainable. Local Authorities High Needs block funding has seen growth in recognition of these challenges.	2.847m
External SEND Specialist Placements External SEND specialist placements have overspent by £0.422m due to an increasing demand for those pupils with complex needs and a shortage of places within Lincolnshire special schools. This is being addressed through the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy by delivering an increase in the number of places within Lincolnshire special schools.	0.422
Alternative Provision The Alternative Provision new free school place funding has underspent by (£1.673m). This is a temporary underspend following Department for	(1.673)

Education confirmation that funding is only being recouped from the Local Authority for 89 places from September 2021.	
Post-16 Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD) Post-16 Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities has underspent by (£0.951m). The element 2 funding for places purchased above the ESFA place return are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, as per the guidance. The element 2. The 2022/23 budget for this area has been reduced to reflect this.	(0.951)
Services funded by Other Funding Sources Some services within the High Needs Block were funded by other funding sources: Healthy Minds contract costs met by the Outbreak Management grant (£1.000m) and Portage costs funded through the Public Health Grant (£0.317m). These are considered to be temporary underspends for 2021/22 only.	(1.317)
Other Underspends and Overspends A number of smaller variances on High Needs budgets make up the remaining underspend balance, such as Home Tuition (£0.364m), Social Emotional and Mental Health placements (£0.286m) and Alternative Provision Places (£0.394m) plus other smaller underspends on various central SEN support services (£0.248m).	(1.292)
Total	(£1.964)

Early Years Block

Budget	(Underspend) / Overspend £m
3 & 4 Year Old An underspend on the Early Years participation budgets of (£0.674m) (2.1% of budget). This is a volatile demand-led budget and has been significantly impacted by Covid-19 relating to participation numbers and hours. Funding by the government to Local Authorities has been based on termly data for 2021/22 rather than January census data since it was unlikely to be representative of attendance during the year to support provider payments.	(0.674)
2 Year Old Funding An overspend in the 2-year old provision of £0.121m has occurred due to a growth in pupil participation levels after the termly census dates of Local Authority funding.	0.121
Other Underspends and Overspends Other notable variances include an underspend on central staffing budgets of (£0.112m); a reduction in demand for allocations from the Disability Access Fund of (£0.108m) and an over allocation of central Early Years Pupil premium (£0.043m).	(0.244)
Total	(0.797)

Central School Services Block (CSSB)

Budget	(Underspend) / Overspend £m
<p>Historic Commitments The underspend relates to the historical commitments agreed with the DfE for retaining budgets for the school PFI contractual costs (£0.043m) and the centralised schools broadband contract (£0.128m). These funding streams are outside of the government's formulaic funding allocation for the Central Schools Services block. The government is reducing these budget allocations of LAs annually by 20% to remove the perceived unfairness in funding across authorities. The budgets had been set prudently to respond to this future funding implication</p>	(0.171)
<p>Uncommitted Sum This was the uncommitted sum set aside last year from the formulaic funding received from central government for ongoing responsibilities for maintained schools and academies.</p>	(0.157)
Other Underspends and Overspends	0.014
Total	(0.314)

Summary:

Budget	(Underspend) / Overspend £m
Schools Block	(0.213)
High Needs Block	(1.964)
Early Years Block	(0.797)
Central School Services Block	(0.314)
Total Underspend 2021/22	3.288

2022/23 DSG commitments

The commitments are:

Budget	Commitment £m
<p>Former Early years disadvantaged two year old funding The service has considered the existing commitments against this funding in the recommendation to prioritise £0.780m of this towards capital funding. This can be seen with the Proposed Developments section.</p> <p>The remaining funding will continue to be earmarked for Early Years initiatives to support longer term outcomes for all early years' children through targeted programmes of support (such as learning and development of children) and encouraging early years participation levels.</p>	0.200
<p>Sector-led investment The remaining funding earmarked for sector-led school improvement to fulfil the ambition of making a positive contributions to the education system in Lincolnshire. The Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board is currently considering how the remaining funds can be effectively used across the system and following the values of the board.</p> <p>An assessment of school needs will be undertaken to identify further additional support schools will require to aid their recovery and further improve educational outcomes. A report is planned to come back to Schools' Forum for consideration.</p>	0.673
<p>School re-organisations, includes extending schools and closures This funding has been earmarked to support planned growth through permanent and temporary school expansions to enable the LA to meet its statutory duty.</p> <p>The LA continues to experience growth, focused particularly on mainstream secondary schools and special schools. The LA is funded on a lagged basis for growth in schools places. It is therefore of sound financial planning to prudently earmark funding to manage this financial risk.</p> <p>This fund will support other planned re-organisations as they arise, and also significant revenue commitments, such as new schools funding (start-up and diseconomies of scale funding). New schools have been provisionally earmarked within the Council's 10 year capital programme. A draw down of £0.346m was necessary in 2021/22 responding to school place places for September 2021 after budgets were set to avoid the Schools block overspending. It is proposed that the school re-organisation provision is put back to £1.000m.</p>	1.000
<p>SEND Strategy Funding to support the implementation of the strategy in special schools to provide All Needs education to pupils with SEND in their local communities and</p>	1.334

<p>increase the number of school places. A £2.000m commitment was approved by the Schools' Forum in October 2018.</p> <p>The £2.000m commitment was established to fund the fixtures and fittings for new classroom space in accordance with the special schools reorganisation policy, along with other new building space through the SEND capital programme (such as installation of new sensory and soft play rooms, medical intervention spaces and specialist teaching facilities); decant site costs and recruitment support. A further commitment agreed to support workforce development for the sector that is to be rolled out to mainstream schools also.</p> <p>The fund will also contribute towards the cost of the increase in new special school places through the LA special schools reorganisation policy over the coming years as special schools capital schemes are completed due to the government's lagged funding arrangements. Spending for the current and next year are expected to c.£1.000m. The final schemes of the 14 special schools ambitious strategy is planned to be completed by 2024/25.</p>	
<p>Rates adjustment</p> <p>Within the current funding formula, schools receive initial rates funding based on their actual rates bill from the prior financial year. The LA consulted schools and through the Council's decision-making process it was agreed to continue funding the actual rates bill. The funding adjustment will be made in the following year for schools. The DfE will reimburse LAs for this local decision, however 2022/23 rates adjustments for schools reflected in their 2023/24 budgets will not be funded by the DfE until 2024/25.</p>	0.100
<p>Transitions from Special Schools to mainstream</p> <p>The transitions protocol includes a period of dual registration during which a £0.005m grant to the mainstream school allows provision to be made before the setting is named and the EHC plan funding is available. A quarter of the target transitions set were achieved in 2021/22. Learning has been taking place. Based on the target movement of at least 4 pupils per quarter, a budget of £0.080m per annum has been set for the next four years. This will need to be a re-occurring budget however financial capacity is currently limited in the short-term.</p>	0.320
<p>Medical Needs Strategy</p> <p>The new approach to medical needs for the LA to fulfil its statutory duty to 'make arrangement' for CYP who are unable to access school because of ill health was introduced in September 2021. Funding has been earmarked for three years, allowing a transition into the base budget. The new approach involves a stronger focus on early intervention for anxiety, impacting on school attendance, and a broader menu of resources to support CYP with this difficulty through the introduction of an Emotional School Based Avoidance (EBSA) Pathway. As part of the Pathway, EBSA Caseworkers have been set up within the Pupil Reintegration Team (PRT). They provide school staff and Governors with support, training, advice and guidance to enable schools to meet this area of need and successfully support Children and Young People's improved attendance. A multi-disciplinary panel was also introduced. Schools can refer cases to the panel where specialist</p>	0.704

<p>decision makers consider the range of options for each case and propose a package of support, which may in cases where all early and evidence-based interventions have been fully explored by the school, involve an intervention placement at Pilgrim Hospital School. The panel's run on a fortnightly basis throughout school term time. The impact of the EBSA pathway continues to be monitored and evaluated as it progresses.</p>	
<p>Total</p>	<p>4.331</p>

Lincolnshire's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

The Childcare Act (2006) requires LAs in England to ensure a sufficiency of childcare for working parents, parents studying or training, and for disabled children. Childcare sufficiency relates to the provision of registered childcare for children aged 0-14 years old, and up to 18 years old for disabled children and children with additional needs.

The duties in the act (section 6) require LAs to shape and support the development of childcare in their area to make it flexible, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of the community. This role is described as a 'market management' function, supporting the sector to meet the needs of parents, children and young people, parents, and stakeholders. Under section 6 of the act there is a requirement on LAs to produce an annual sufficiency report on the availability and sufficiency of childcare in their area. This information should be made available to parents and elected members.

To meet section 6 duties, LAs need to collect and publish information on the supply of provision and demand for childcare in their area. Statutory guidance provides clear indication of what must be included in the annual review, and what should be included. Section 7 requires LAs to secure prescribed early years provision free of charge. This provision is for children aged 2, 3 and 4 years of age. In the region of 40% of two-year-olds nationally are legally entitled to free early years provision, and all three- and four-year-olds. The Childcare Act (2016) extends the Childcare Act (2006) and the duty to provide universal entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds and 30 hours free childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds for working families.

Section 12 places a duty on LAs to provide information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents relating to the provision of childcare, services or facilities that may be of benefit to parents and prospective parents, children, and young people. The Childcare Act (2016) amends the Childcare Act (2006) to allow regulations to require local authorities to publish information of a prescribed interval, description, interval, and manner.

The LA undertook a series of childcare providers and parent sufficiency surveys during April – May 2022. The surveys were designed to review the availability, accessibility and sustainability of childcare in Lincolnshire.

Childcare providers were asked to confirm the services that they offer, to which age groups, opening hours, hourly cost, number of places they offered, and current take up. Parents were asked about the services they use and identify any areas where they were unable to access provision.

The outcome of the annual childcare sufficiency survey demonstrated that Lincolnshire is in a mixed position to meet the needs of children and families currently. Many providers have seen an increase in demand from families accessing provision since parental confidence has returned.

Surmounting staff recruitment concerns are exacerbating the pressure on the sector (as outlined in the sufficiency report) to remain open and this is being supported through a working group, under the Early Childhood Strategy Steering Group agenda. There is a growing concern across the childcare sector regarding funded education investment. The Early Years block has seen an uplift in 2022/23, however the sector say this does not reflect the cost-of-living rise and other increases including insurance, energy bills, food and staff costs across the country. This has led to staff choosing alternative career choices and leaving the sector short staffed. Childcare providers are struggling to maintain quality of provision with limited staff capacity and financial concerns. As financial pressures on childcare providers increase, there is a risk that we will see further closures in the future, ultimately impacting on our statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare.

Occupancy has increased across all sectors and age groups. Lincolnshire is in a mixed position currently, with some areas unable to meet the current needs of families. This impacts on our overarching responsibility to improve outcomes for children and ensure that there is sufficient childcare for all working parents.

The service is monitoring the market closely, particularly for the changing demands of working parents and the employment market. There is a particular focus on the out of school provision for 4–11-year-olds and a recruitment campaign to encourage more childminders into the sector. However, there is still a limited interest in this area and we need to develop additional places where areas have limited or no availability of childcare places.

To ensure the LA responds to the feedback provided, the areas in Lincolnshire identified as requiring additional childcare places in the immediate future have been included within a development plan and capital investment will be required to support childcare developments in some areas across the county.

It is expected that additional places are required in several areas in Lincolnshire and the cost has been estimated cautiously due to the growing cost of new builds and the ability to develop provision in existing properties. Other cost efficiencies have been explored and where possible, the early years team is working with schools and existing providers to expand or develop places at minimal cost. Where this is not an option, further investment is required.

The LA has exhausted all previous DfE capital funding for early years and childcare developments and the service has a capital budget remaining of £0.040m to invest in projects where they are required to meet the childcare sufficiency duty.

Investment of £0.780m is sought to secure Spalding provision and to develop new childcare places in the immediate areas identified within the sufficiency report and childcare delivery plan.

Within the DSG reserve, funding remains of £0.896m against Early Years initiatives, which had originated from the government's rollout of the disadvantaged 2-year-old funding. The

service has considered the existing commitments against this funding in the decision to prioritise this towards capital funding. This reserve funding is one-off in nature. The LA recommendation to capitalise £0.780m of DSG revenue funding will require a Disapplication Request to the DfE for Secretary of State (SoS) approval. The LA has successfully received approval for such a request a number of years ago.

The Schools' Forum is asked to support the recommendation through a vote for it to be taken forward to the SoS. The Children's Services Directorate Leadership Team and Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement have approved this recommendation to proceed.

This page is intentionally left blank



Open Report on behalf of Martin Smith, Assistant Director – Children’s Education

Report to:	Lincolnshire Schools’ Forum
Date:	06 October 2022
Subject:	Children with Disabilities Early Support Learning Provision

Summary:

To seek support for the Dedicated Schools Grant to continue funding Early Support Learning Provision which provides targeted support for Children with Disabilities aged 0-5 years.

Recommendation(s):

That the Schools’ Forum supports the funding of £234,828 per annum from the Dedicated Schools Grant for Early Support Learning Provision starting from 1st October 2023 for up to five years to 30th September 2028.

1. Background

The most recent Children with Disabilities (CWD) support service contract has been in place since 1st October 2018 and it includes three countywide services:

- Early Support and Learning Provision (ESLP)
- Targeted Positive Activities (TPA)
- Domiciliary Care (DC)

The total annual contract value payable by the Council is £1.082m of which £0.229m is apportioned to ESLP from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) of the High Needs block. The Council’s core budget funds the remaining services. The contract will cease on 30th September 2023 with no further options to extend.

Schools’ Forum is asked to support the continued DSG allocation of funding for ESLP as part of a new contract from 1st October 2023 for up to five years to 31st March 2028. The requested funding of £0.235m is in line with the 2021/22 ESLP cost (£0.230m p.a.) plus an inflationary uplift of 2% to support supplier delivery in ensuring required minimum volumes of support can still be met going forward.

ESLP service

ESLP is for children aged 0 to 5 (statutory school age) with a disability and/or complex health needs. The service is delivered from 11 children’s centres across Lincolnshire, with

coverage in each District. Families do not need a referral to access the service and are mainly signposted by the CWD Team, Early Years Care Co-ordinator (ESCO), Portage, or health care professionals (e.g. Health Visitors).

The service prepares children for education through:

- Alignment with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum, using this as a tool to support CWD to develop their communication, social, sensory, imagination, concentration, and physical skills, with a focus on closing the attainment gap between CWD and their mainstream peers; working towards as many children as possible being able to fully access mainstream provision thus minimising the need for targeted intervention.
- Providing a range of stimulating play, development, and socialisation opportunities in a safe and structured environment. Parents are not required to stay with their child.
- Providing individual and group support to parents/carers whose children attend the provision and assist them to meet their child's needs. Individual child records of achievement are maintained and shared with the parents/carers.
- Allowing families facing similar disability related experiences to come together to benefit from peer support and from the support and signposting by KIDS and other professionals.

Whilst there is not a requirement for the Council to provide ESLP specifically for CWD, this offer does support the Council's Early Years statutory duty and has the added value of offering suitable respite provision for the parent/carers of CWD.

In 2021/22, 681 sessions were delivered (more than contractual requirement, 33% were virtual due to Covid 19 restrictions). On average 83 children accessed ESLP per week, six children per session. Under the new contract it is proposed the quantity of ESLP sessions will remain the same: 13 countywide sessions a week over 46 weeks a year, each session lasting 1hr 59 mins (Ofsted registration is not required under two hours).

56 CWD were placed on a waiting list between April – June 2022. Waiting lists can form throughout the academic year but generally reduce as children move on to nursery or school; in September 2022, the waiting list reduced to 40 CWD. Approximately half of CWD accessing ESLP move on to a mainstream setting.

Feedback from parents/carers:

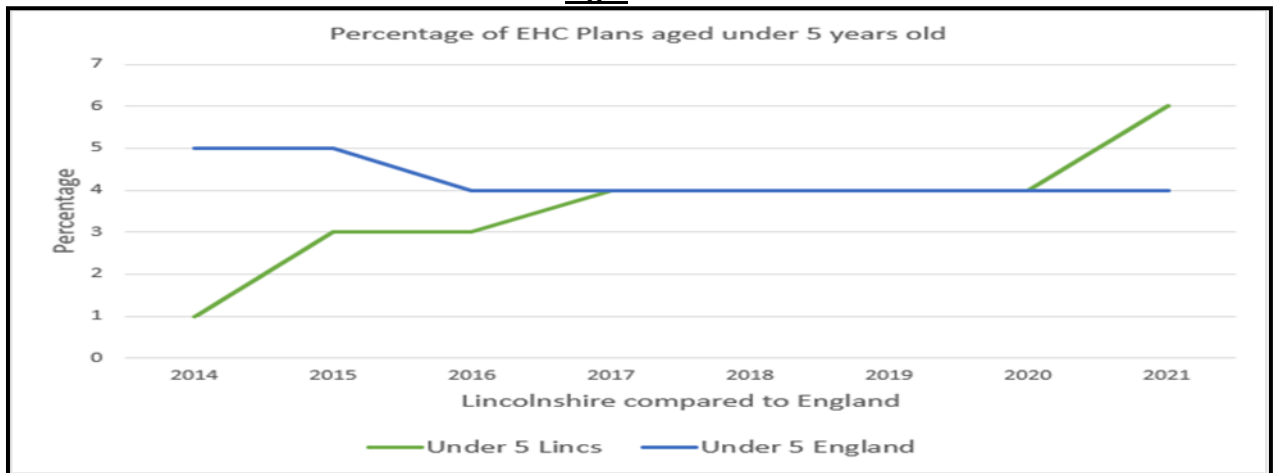
- *We are really starting to see the benefit at home of R coming here.*
- *Loves coming to sessions and I feel very confident leaving him with the wonderful staff.*
- *Thank you so much you have been a life saver.*
- *We can see a very big change in D when he comes here. Thank you very much.*
- *ESLP has been amazing for W, he has come on so much since starting here.*
- *He has learned and got more from his 2 hours a week here than he gets from nursery because you support his needs.*

Local demand

Lincolnshire has seen an increased demand on services for CWD aged 0-5 years alongside a steep increase in the amount of EHC Plans for age 0-5 years over the last seven years.

Fig.1 shows this increase in comparison with national statistics. Although only a small percentage of total Lincolnshire EHC Plans are for CWD (3.5 %), the increase in Plans is likely to increase demand of specialist services, including those for CWD.

Fig.1



If early support services such as ESLP are not provided, there is a probability more children aged 0-5 years would require additional, more costly specialist services, including education. Anecdotally, this service helps prevent children’s and families’ needs from escalating, without which may later lead to more intensive Social Care and SEND involvement.

Recommended changes

The following changes are proposed to ESLP in future:

- There is a need for improved joint working across Early Years settings to develop a more integrated model with the new Best Start contract due to start 1st April 2023. Key targets to include:
 - Ensuring the targeted ESLP service is delivered to those who need it most by widening the scope of the Best Start offer to allow those CWD that can attend the universal offer to do so. This will ensure they access the right support, by the right people, at the right time and should reduce waiting lists for ESLP.
 - Partnership working between the Best Start supplier, the ESLP supplier, and Locality Leads in Early Years to help support families to access and/or transition to the universal offer wherever appropriate i.e. not rely solely on the targeted ESLP offer and help to reduce further the number of children on the waiting list for the targeted ESLP service.
- For the ESLP offer to be more time-limited with targeted sessions, wherever possible, to support the CWD and/or family either when new to provision or for a specific occasional need e.g. a parent goes into hospital.

Conclusion

The Schools’ Forum is requested to support the continuation of DSG High Needs block funding to maintain ESLP sessions for CWD, from 1st October 2023 up to 31st March 2028, at £0.235m p.a.

Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

There is no change to provision therefore no new risks or detrimental impact to report.

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	None

Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Rosemary Akrill, who can be contacted on 07920 182307 or rosemary.akrill@lincolnshire.gov.uk.



Open Report on behalf of Martin Smith, Assistant Director – Children’s Education

Report to:	Lincolnshire Schools’ Forum
Date:	06 October 2022
Subject:	Alternative Provision Arrangements

Summary:
A summary of the Alternative Provision (AP) arrangements in Lincolnshire 2021/22

Recommendation(s):
The Schools’ Forum is invited to note and comment on the contents of the report and address any questions to the officers in attendance.

1. Background

Since the launch of the ‘Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy in 2017, the Local Authority has delivered its alternative provision (AP) through its commissioned arrangements at Springwell Academy and Build a Future (BaF). The commissioned alternative provision enables the Local Authority to deliver its duty to provide education six days after a permanent exclusion and also provide provision for educational settings as part of proactive preventative support via the Lincolnshire’s Ladder of Behavioural Intervention.

The Local Authority also has commissioning arrangements at Pilgrim Hospital School. This alternative provision provides short term placements for a pupil’s medical condition, which requires a higher level of support than their school can provide through reasonable adjustments.

Alternative Provision

The Local Authority commissions 252 places within Springwell Academy. This is across four purpose-built centres that are situated within the four localities. Springwell Grantham is located on New Beacon Road, Springwell Alternative Lincoln, on Macaulay Drive, the Mablethorpe building is a refurbishment of the old Monk's Dyke Tennyson site and Spalding was formerly the South Holland Post 16 Centre. These settings provide a relational, nurturing, and caring educational environment with staff that have expertise in supporting and teaching pupils with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) difficulties.

Due to the reduced rate of permanent exclusion, in 2021 the Local Authority was able to utilise 18 of the 252 commissioned places at Springwell as Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) special school places for primary aged children. These places have been utilised to meet the needs of pupils with Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans that were waiting for an SEMH special school place. This has avoided the need to access costly out of county or independent settings for these pupils.

The Local Authority commissions most of its secondary alternative provision places at Build a Future. This Key Stage 4 (KS4) (13-16 years olds) provision has been in place since autumn 2018 for pupils permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion. Like Springwell, Build a Future is an integral part of the Ladder. The setting offers a guaranteed 75 pupil places per annum under a block contract payment, with scope for 50 additional pupil places spot purchased at the point of need. Lincolnshire County Council therefore has scope to place a maximum of 125 KS4 pupils at Build a Future each year via this commissioned route. The service has been operating out of two centres, Hubbert's Bridge (covering the South) and West Ashby (the North). The owner, Keys, has committed to relocating from Hubbert's Bridge into higher quality premises. Therefore, this academic year (2022/23) will see all referrals going to the West Ashby while Keys are awaiting authorisation from the Department of Education (DfE) to open the new site at Elm Grange.

In addition to the Local Authority's commissioned arrangements there are a range of legally compliant alternative provision placements in Lincolnshire that, while not contracted by the Local Authority, are available for mainstream headteachers to access independently should they wish to make their own arrangements rather than follow the Ladder.

The Local Authority commissions 80 places at the Pilgrim Hospital School. This alternative provision provides short term placements for a pupil's medical condition, which requires a higher level of support than their school can provide through reasonable adjustments.

The Ladder

Lincolnshire's Ladder of Behavioural Intervention was introduced to provide educational settings with proactive support that enables mainstream settings to meet pupil's SEMH needs. The Ladder provides steps and support to ensure early intervention is proactively implemented, avoiding escalating needs that then subsequently require suspension or permanent exclusion. The Ladder continues to be embedded across the County.

The Pupil Reintegration Team (PRT) continue to be the Local Authority's key involvement overseeing the Ladder and maintaining high quality application of the process, alongside headteachers. They are also responsible for providing training, advice, information and casework support to educational settings and families in relation to suspension and fixed term exclusions.

The Ladder continues to show positive impact within Lincolnshire. The take up of places via the Ladder is showing a return to pre-pandemic numbers appearing to indicate schools returning confidence in the intervention offer:

16 Week Intervention Placements				
	Foundation & KS1	KS2	KS3	Total
17/18	14	24	27	65
18/19	20	32	24	76
19/20	25	23	11	59
20/21	17	17	6	40
21/22	13	29	16	58

While at times a small number of pupils will require more specialist support and provision, the positive outcomes for children as a result of accessing inclusive education are well documented, leading to increased social, academic, employment and life opportunities. Enabling pupils to return and remain in mainstream provision results in their improved and increased positive achievements and outcomes. There is clear evidence that the Ladder, and within this the ability of our alternative provision partners to deliver interventions that make a difference, is not merely delaying the inevitable of permanent exclusion. With 90% of pupils with no permanent exclusion a year after intervention, this is slightly higher than pre-pandemic levels and extremely positive.

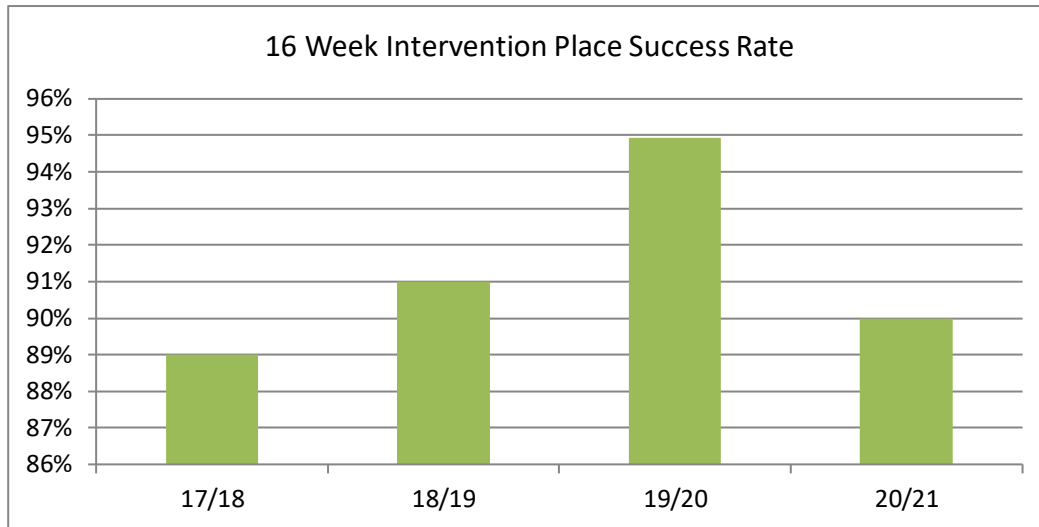
However, this drops significantly, to less than half, when considered alongside the proportion of pupils with no permanent exclusion and no transition to a specialist setting a year after intervention placement.

Lincolnshire, as per the national picture, is seeing an increase in the number of children educated in special rather than mainstream schools. However, concerningly, we are seeing a significant discrepancy in relation to children with SEMH needs. The England average sees 0.2% more pupils with SEMH needs in mainstream primary schools and 5.5% more in mainstream secondary schools than Lincolnshire. There is a significant 10.8% higher percentage of pupils in Lincolnshire with SEMH needs in special schools, which is more than double the England average. This is the first time, since the introduction of the SEND reforms, that the highest primary need in Lincolnshire maintained special schools is defined as SEMH; nationally, it ranks third behind Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Specific Learning Difficulty. SEMH as the primary need ranks second in independent sector placements in Lincolnshire behind Autistic Spectrum Disorder (38% v 46%). This is placing unsustainable pressure on our specialist settings and potentially reducing the opportunity for positive achievements and outcomes for these children and young people.

A Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Strategy is being developed in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to set out our aims and strategic direction over the next three years to support this concerning trend and its potential negative impact on our children and young people. This will sit alongside Lincolnshire's Transformation work and the High Needs Strategy.

Proportion of pupils with no permanent exclusion a year after intervention placement:

16 Week Intervention Place Success Rate	
17/18	89%
18/19	91%
19/20	95%
20/21	90%



Proportion of pupils with no permanent exclusion and no transition to specialist setting a year after intervention placement:

16 Week Intervention Place Success Rate	
17/18	68%
18/19	67%
19/20	63%
20/21	43%

	Accepted referrals	PX outcome	Special outcome
17/18	65	7	14
18/19	76	7	18
19/20	59	3	19
20/21	40	4	19

While the Ladder continues to demonstrate positive impact, it is important that strategically the key steps within the Ladder are retained. However, as with any intervention or process it is equally important to ensure it continues to evolve so that it remains **up to date and relevant**.

For the start of the new academic year (2022/23) the DfE has published two new documents that underpin the Ladder:

The Ladder is underpinned by current statutory guidance on permanent exclusion and suspensions (*Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies*

and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England) and its companion piece on behaviour (*Behaviour in Schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff*). These updated documents were published in July 2022 for adherence to from the start of the new academic year. The Ladder has therefore been updated accordingly to remain in line with the current legislation.

Lincolnshire’s Transformation work and the High Needs Strategy have been embedded within the steps of the Ladder with reference to the support that educational settings can and should be accessing via Ask SALL (SEND Advice Line Lincolnshire), the Inclusion Toolkit and Valuing (V)SEND assessment tool. Lincolnshire’s Early Help offer has also been referenced and the value of early assessment to identify holistic needs and the steps needed to meet these needs and prevent needs escalating and deteriorating.

The Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS) contract was concluding, and the service has been retendered from September 2022. The specification within the new contract continues to focus on the role BOSS plays within the Ladder and support for children and young people at risk of exclusion. However, there is an additional key focus on supporting mainstream settings with early identification, intervention, and support through a robust universal training offer. Schools can access this directly from BOSS. It will be expected that this offer has been accessed, implemented, and embedded within the school prior to any referrals for direct targeted intervention. There is also a focus on BOSS working closely with partners within robust multi-agency working to maximise positive impact. The involvement of BOSS will further embed the supported reintegration for pupils back into their mainstream setting. Working with the PRT and the alternative provision provider to maximise the setting’s ability to meet the pupils needs and therefore provide improved opportunities, achievements and outcomes for the pupil going forward.

The fee for intervention placement continues to be adjusted every year in line with AWPU increases.

Exclusions and Suspensions

The **national picture** is via data that is available on suspensions and permanent exclusions within the 2020/21 academic year across state-funded schools in England.

The rate of exclusions is the number of permanent exclusions as a proportion of the overall school population in the 2020/21 academic year. The rate of suspensions is the number of suspensions as a proportion of the overall school population in the 2020/21 academic year.

This sees Lincolnshire higher than the national and East Midlands picture in relation to permanent exclusions, while lower in relation to suspensions. This was a year that lockdown occurred within.

	Rate of Exclusions	Rate of Suspensions
National	0.05	4.25
East Midlands	0.05	4.40

Lincolnshire	0.07	3.94
--------------	------	------

As we have progressed out of lockdown, in 2021/22, as the first year schools have been open all year, we are able to consider the **local data** In Lincolnshire more fully. While also appreciating the impact of the pandemic on pupils and their education and development.

It is extremely positive to see that permanent exclusions in total are lower than they were in 2017/18 and 2018/19. Testimony to the hard work and commitment by all involved. When breaking this data down, it is extremely positive to see that permanent exclusions in Primary have remained very low with a significant decrease from 2017/18 and continued decline from 2018/19. Secondary have remained similar to the number of pupils in 2018/19, which is an increase from 2017/18.

Permanent Exclusion Comparison - School Type					
	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Primary	26	16	7	10	11
Secondary	93	105	55	71	102
Special	0	2	1	0	1
Total	119	123	63	81	114

However, the data around suspensions is concerning in 2021/22. This sees a dramatic increase from pre-lockdown years and clearly an area of consideration as we move into the new academic year.

No. Suspensions per Academic Year	
17/18	5089
18/19	5308
19/20	4002
20/21	3198
21/22	7543

2021/22 Suspensions by Term	
Term 1	907
Term 2	1347
Term 3	1061
Term 4	1302
Term 5	1361
Term 6	1565

Highest reasons 3 Reasons for Suspension			
2017/18	1.	<i>Other</i>	26%
	2.	<i>Persistent disruptive behaviour</i>	19%
	3.	<i>Verbal Abuse / Threatening Behaviour against adult</i>	18%
2018/19	1.	Other	25%
	2.	Persistent disruptive behaviour	22%
	3.	Verbal Abuse / Threatening Behaviour against adult	18%
2019/20	1.	<i>Other</i>	28%
	2.	<i>Persistent disruptive behaviour</i>	19%
	3.	<i>Verbal Abuse / Threatening Behaviour against adult</i>	19%
2020/21*	1.	Persistent disruptive behaviour	40%
	2.	Verbal Abuse / Threatening Behaviour against adult	27%
	3.	Physical assault against a Pupil	20%
2021/22	1.	<i>Persistent disruptive behaviour</i>	49%
	2.	<i>Verbal Abuse / Threatening Behaviour against adult</i>	25%
	3.	<i>Physical assault against a Pupil</i>	17%

* New Category reasons added in 20/21 and up to three reasons could be selected per Suspension

A suspension may be used to provide a clear signal of what is unacceptable behaviour as part of the school's behaviour policy and show a pupil that their current behaviour is putting them at risk of permanent exclusion. However, where suspensions are becoming a regular occurrence for a pupil there should be consideration as to whether suspension alone is an effective sanction for the pupil and rather, what additional strategies need to be put in place to address behaviour and the underlying factors that are causing the behaviour.

With nearly half of suspensions in 2021/22 for persistent disruptive behaviour this will need to be an area of development and focus in the coming academic year. While the take up of places via the Ladder is showing a return to pre-pandemic numbers, this valuable resource is available, alongside the new universal offer from BOSS, to support schools. To ensure the maximum positive impact of accessing alternative provision in Lincolnshire, the Local Authority is completing a review that will identify existing successful inclusive support and practices and inform how our alternative provision can best be developed to enable schools to remove barriers and improve targeted SEMH support and inclusion for our children and young people.

Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

In September 2021, the EBSA Pathway was launched to provide schools and other stakeholders with clarity about how to respond to the challenge of pupils presenting with Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). When attendance is compromised because of EBSA, or any medical issue, there is a statutory duty for both school and Local Authority to deliver education. The Pathway provides clarity around steps to be taken and in relation to roles and responsibilities; including what schools can expect of the LA and vice versa.

Without accurate early identification of needs, mitigation of school stressors and effective interventions, the cycle of EBSA can quickly become self-perpetuating. The Pathway focuses on facilitating a 'step-change' in how pupils are supported with their mental health and wellbeing when that drives school avoidance. It incorporates the use of the ATTEND Framework as a tool to identify the underlying reasons for absence, drawing up a Pastoral Support Plan that is then kept under regular review.

In November 2021, the EBSA casework team was formed to provide consultation, support, training and advice to education settings. The team has delivered training to school staff, across all phases of education, and to a range of children's workforce teams both within the council and external agencies. The training is aimed at increasing the skills and knowledge of all practitioners working with children and young people who may have EBSA so that there is a strong and consistent response to their needs. The casework team is collaborating with the SEND Advice line workers (Ask SALL) and they have jointly facilitated 'huddles' where schools can seek advice and guidance to 'problem solve' where they have students who require support due to EBSA.

Since the implementation of the Pathway, 171 young people have been referred to the Medical Support Panel. 67% have been supported to remain in their mainstream school. This includes comprehensive advice and recommended actions to settings and follow-up case consultation. The Pathway will continue to be reviewed and evaluated over the coming academic year to support its development.

SEND / AP Green Paper

On 29th March 2022, the Government published the SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time, a consultation on the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision system in England. The consultation set out proposed reforms to the SEND and alternative provision system that seek to address three key challenges:

- poor outcomes for children and young people with SEN or in alternative provision
- navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for children, young people, and their families and;
- despite unprecedented investment, the system is not delivering value for money for children, young people and families.

The consultation ended on 22nd July 2022.

The work and development that the Local Authority completes and takes forward will sit alongside the Governments plans within the SEND / AP green paper and be reviewed as the green paper develops into updated legislation and guidance.

Conclusion

Lincolnshire continues to be committed to improving outcomes for children and young people through the offer, access and availability of high quality support and provision. Lincolnshire's alternative provision arrangements appear to be appropriate and robust with a review taking place to ensure the provision continues to develop to meet the changing landscape and effectively and efficiently provide excellent provision and practice.

The Ladder continues to show positive impact as we adjust post pandemic, with the Local Authority leading on the co-production of an SEMH Strategy to support pupils to access fully inclusive education.

The EBSA Pathway has seen a positive start during 2021/22 and this will continue to be reviewed and evaluated over the coming academic year to support its development.

The Pupil Reintegration Team are providing robust support to settings around exclusions and suspensions, and this will continue to be developed to maximise positive impact. When linked with wider support Teams, including the newly re-tendered BOSS contact, they will continue to support schools to ensure exclusions are only taken when absolutely necessary and as a last resort. Enabling schools and the Local Authority to continue to improve overall exclusions data and pupil's access to an appropriate education and improved outcomes.

Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

The report provides information and an update relating to the alternative provision in Lincolnshire in 2021/22. The report does not relate to any decision or proposal.

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	None

7. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Kate Capel, who can be contacted on 07795968494 or kate.capel@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

This page is intentionally left blank



Open Report on behalf of Martin Smith, Assistant Director – Children's Education

Report to:	Lincolnshire Schools' Forum
Date:	6 October 2022
Subject:	Academies and Trust Update

Summary:
 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the latest number of academies and pupils in academies, and academy trusts.

Recommendation(s):
 The Schools' Forum is asked to note the contents of this report.

Background

The Schools' Forum asked for an update to be provided to each meeting on the number of academy conversions.

This is the position as at the 1 September 2022. The pupil figures are based on the May 2022 census data (i.e. the latest published). The national academy trust data is the latest available from "Get Information About Schools".

Since the effective date of the last report (1 June 2021), one school has become an academy. Leadenham Church of England Academy joined Infinity Academies Trust on 1 September 2022. This means that 78,781 (72.4%) FTE pupils are now academies.

Spalding The Priory School and Spalding The Garth School merged on 1 September 2022 and are now called Spalding The Tulip Academy.

Current Status of All Lincolnshire State Schools

	Schools		FTE	
Nursery				
All	5		366	
Maintained	5	100.0%	366	100.0%
Academy	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Primary				
All	281		57,343	
Maintained	163	58.0%	26,785	46.7%
Academy	118	42.0%	30,558	53.3%
Secondary				
All	54		48,766	
Maintained	2	3.7%	2,204	4.5%
Academy	52	96.3%	46,562	95.5%
Special				
All	18		2,148	
Maintained	5	27.8%	713	33.2%
Academy	13	72.2%	1,435	66.8%
PRU				
All	5		227	
Maintained	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Academy	5	100.0%	227	100.0%
Total				
All	363		108,850	
Maintained	175	48.2%	30,069	27.6%
Academy	188	51.8%	78,781	72.4%

There is currently one primary school formally seeking to become academy. Old Leake Primary and Nursery School is seeking to join Voyage Education Partnership. Therefore, within the next six months, there are expected to be 119 (42.3%) primary academies educating 30,731 (53.6%) pupils in Lincolnshire.

Projected Six Month Status of All Lincolnshire State Schools

	Schools		FTE	
Nursery				
All	5		366	
Maintained	5	100.0%	366	100.0%
Academy	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Primary				
All	281		57,343	
Maintained	162	57.7%	26,612	46.4%
Academy	119	42.3%	30,731	53.6%
Secondary				
All	54		48,766	
Maintained	2	3.7%	2,204	4.5%
Academy	52	96.3%	46,562	95.5%

Special				
All	18		2,148	
Maintained	5	27.8%	713	33.2%
Academy	13	72.2%	1,435	66.8%
PRU				
All	5		227	
Maintained	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Academy	5	100.0%	227	100.0%
Total				
All	363		108,850	
Maintained	174	47.9%	29,896	27.5%
Academy	189	52.1%	78,954	72.5%

Infinity Academies Trust has increased its number of academies to nine following the conversion of Leadenham Church of England Academy, and Grantham Little Gonerby Church of England Infant School joining the trust. The merger of the two Spalding special schools has reduced Community Inclusive Trusts number of academies to 12.

	Total	FTE Pupils
1 Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust	15	2922
2 Community Inclusive Trust	12	2087
The Priory Federation of Academies	12	7396
4 Infinity Academies Trust	9	2144
5 The David Ross Education Trust	8	2696
Voyage Education Partnership	8	3576
7 Greenwood Academies Trust	7	2622
Keystone Academy Trust	7	2122
Wellspring Academy Trust	7	1256
10 Anthem Schools Trust	5	2698
University of Lincoln Academy Trust	5	2543

There are thirty-five active multi-academy trusts operating within Lincolnshire and a total of 149 Lincolnshire academies that are members of multi-academy trusts. This represents 79.3% of all Lincolnshire Academies. Thirty-nine (20.7%) of Lincolnshire academies are single-academy trusts and are not members of multi-academy trusts. Eight multi-academy trusts have just one Lincolnshire academy as a member; three of these are single Lincolnshire academy multi-academy trusts. The other five also have academies that are not within Lincolnshire. Seven multi-academy trusts have two academies; four of these trusts are currently based entirely within Lincolnshire. There are fifty-two academy trusts in Lincolnshire that have less than four schools.

	National	Lincs
1 Academies Enterprise Trust	56	2
2 Greenwood Academies Trust	35	7
3 The David Ross Education Trust	34	8
4 Our Lady Of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust	32	4

The largest academy trusts nationally that operate within Lincolnshire are Academies Enterprise Trust (Fifty-six Academies, two in Lincolnshire), Greenwood Academies Trust has thirty-five academies, seven in Lincolnshire, and The David Ross Education Trust has 34, eight within Lincolnshire. Our Lady Of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust has taken on four Lincolnshire Schools and now has 32 academies nationally and the Enquire Learning Trust has thirty Academies, one in Lincolnshire,

Conclusion

The Schools' Forum is asked to note the contents of the report.

Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

The academy conversion process is fully understood and has been in place for a number of years. There are services funded either by the number of maintained schools (e.g. School Improvement government grant) and the number of maintained school pupils (e.g. de-delegation services). Future anticipated funding levels are considered through the annual detailed budget setting exercise.

The actual split between Local Authority maintained and academies has no financial risk to the Council from the Dedicated Schools Grant schools delegation budget perspective.

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	None

Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

This report was written by Ady Clarke, who can be contacted on 01522 553216 or ady.clarke@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 11

Lincolnshire Schools' Forum Work Programme

6 October 2022

National Funding Formula for schools - update 2023/24	Elizabeth Bowes	To provide the Schools' Forum with an update on the mainstream school funding
De-delegation of Maintained Primary Schools Budgets (2023/24)	Mark Popplewell	To seek approval from the maintained primary school representatives approval to the Local authority's proposals
Revised Schools Budgets 2022/23	Mark Popplewell	To provide information on the revised Schools Budget for 2021/22 and to seek support
Budget Allocation for Early Support Learning provision beyond September 2023	Rosemary Akrill	To receive a report regarding the budget allocation for early support learning provision beyond September 2023
Alternative Provision Arrangements	Kate Capel	To provide an update on how alternative provision arrangements are working
Academies and Trust Update	John O'Connor	To provide the Schools' Forum with an update on the latest position regarding the number of Maintained Schools and Academies and the pupils in them
Lincolnshire Schools' Forum – Work Programme	Tom Crofts	To provide the Schools' Forum with an opportunity to discuss potential items for future meetings, which will be subsequently, included on the Work Programme
Future Meeting Dates	Tom Crofts	For the Schools' Forum to agree their future meeting dates

19 January 2023 – TBC

National Funding Formula for Schools (2023/24)	Mark Popplewell	To update the Schools' Forum on the Local Authority's funding formula proposals for 2023/24
--	-----------------	---

School Funding Arrangements 2023/24	Elizabeth Bowes	To provide an update on school funding arrangements for 2023/24
Early Years National Funding Formula	Geraldine O'Neill	To provide a summary on the early years national funding formula for 2023/24, and to seek agreement relating to the allocation and distribution of the centrally retained budgets
Sector Led Approach for School Improvement	Sue Williams	To provide the Schools' Forum with an update on the Sector Led Approach for School Improvement
Academies and Trust Update	John O'Connor	To provide the Schools' Forum with an update on the latest position regarding the number of Maintained Schools and Academies and the pupils in them
Lincolnshire Schools' Forum – Work Programme	Tom Crofts	To provide the Schools' Forum with an opportunity to discuss potential items for future meetings, which will be subsequently, included on the Work Programme

20 April 2023 – TBC

Building Communities of Specialist Provision: Update	Eileen McMorrow	To provide the Schools' Forum with an update on the SEND Strategy
Academies and Trust Update	John O'Connor	To provide the Schools' Forum with an update on the latest position regarding the number of Maintained Schools and Academies and the pupils in them
Lincolnshire Schools' Forum – Work Programme	Tom Crofts	To provide the Schools' Forum with an opportunity to discuss potential items for future meetings, which will be subsequently, included on the Work Programme

29 June 2023 – TBC

Election of Chairman		
Election of Vice-Chairman		
Review of LSF Constitution and Membership	Mark Popplewell	For the Schools Forum to consider and update its Rules of Operation
Section 251 Budget Statement 2023/24	Elizabeth Bowes	To provide an update to the Schools' Forum regarding the budget statement for 2023/24
Annual Report - Special Educational Needs	Sheridan Dodsworth	To receive an annual report on Special Educational Needs
Annual Report on Early Years	Geraldine O'Neill	To receive an annual report on Early Years' Service
Alternative Provision Arrangements	Mary Meredith	To provide a update on how alternative provision arrangements are working
Academies and Trust Update	John O'Connor	To provide the Schools' Forum with an update on the latest position regarding the number of Maintained Schools and Academies and the pupils in them
Lincolnshire Schools' Forum – Work Programme	Tom Crofts	To provide the Schools' Forum with an opportunity to discuss potential items for future meetings, which will be subsequently, included on the Work Programme

5 October 2023 – TBC

National Funding Formula for schools - update 2024/25	Elizabeth Bowes	To provide the Schools' Forum with an update on the mainstream school funding
De-delegation of Maintained Primary Schools Budgets (2024/25)	Mark Popplewell	To seek approval from the maintained primary school representatives approval to the Local authority's proposals

Revised Schools Budgets 2023/24	Mark Popplewell	To provide information on the revised Schools Budget for 2023/24 and to seek support
Schools Broadband Services	Mark Popplewell	To provide an update to the future schools broadband arrangements available for all Lincolnshire schools
Academies and Trust Update	John O'Connor	To provide the Schools' Forum with an update on the latest position regarding the number of Maintained Schools and Academies and the pupils in them
Lincolnshire Schools' Forum – Work Programme	Tom Crofts	To provide the Schools' Forum with an opportunity to discuss potential items for future meetings, which will be subsequently, included on the Work Programme
Future Meeting Dates	Tom Crofts	For the Schools' Forum to agree their future meeting dates