

# Agenda Item 7



## REGULATORY AND OTHER COMMITTEE REPORT

<b>NAME OF COMMITTEE:</b>	Lincolnshire Schools Forum
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	22 April 2015
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	School-Led School Improvement
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<b>IS REPORT CONFIDENTIAL?</b>	No

### SUMMARY

This report provides Schools Forum with an overview of the future commissioning arrangements for school improvement in Lincolnshire. This is focussed on embedding an integrative, school-led system, to establish a Lincolnshire Learning Partnership, delivering a tiered approach to school improvement, including; peer review, quality assurance and appropriate governance arrangements to drive the strategic vision for education in Lincolnshire.

To support schools in engaging with and driving this approach forward, a school development fund has been established between the Council and CfBT Education Trust (CfBT). The reports recommends for the Schools Forum to consider proving further support to schools through allocating funds from the 2014/15 DSG underspend.

## **DISCUSSION**

To consider the establishment of a fund for one-off and/or recurrent expenditure to support schools in being able to embed self-improvement and to collectively achieve more for both their own school and for their partners.

### Overview:

There has been much interest and research at a national level into the development of a self-improving, school-led education system. There has been a transformation in the roles and responsibilities of schools as they move towards a school-led education system.

The role of head teacher is changing significantly and many head teachers, including those in Lincolnshire, have shown they are willing and able to develop a culture and practice of reflection and enquiry within and beyond their schools that underpins self-improvement.

Schools are taking an increasing role in initial teacher training, the selection and training of school leaders, school improvement and evidence-based continuing professional development (CPD). These changes are evolving partly because headteachers are realising that by working collectively they are able to achieve more for both their own school and for their partners.

Teaching School alliances are at the forefront of this change both nationally and in Lincolnshire. There are nearly 600 teaching schools in England; these are outstanding schools that work with others to improve the workforce and quality of local schools. They are represented nationally by the Teaching Schools Council (TSC), a self-elected body that is now also responsible for the designation of new teaching schools.

Teaching schools and their alliances work with National Leaders of Education (NLEs) and national support schools (NSS) to help shape a self-improving system through many ways including peer review, sharing data and evidence-based practice, supporting schools in difficulties and, as necessary, full academy sponsorship. There are over 900 NLEs across the country and they are working with 1,600 Local Leaders of Education (LLEs), almost 5,000 Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) and just under 300 National Leaders of Governance (NLGs).

These system leadership roles give professionals more responsibility for school improvement, putting the sector in control of its own strategic direction. There is strong evidence that Teaching Schools themselves and their teachers benefit when they work to support other schools.

The National College for Teaching & Leadership used to commission and develop training programmes like the National Professional Qualifications for Middle Leadership, Senior Leadership and Headship. Now these programmes are delivered by licensed providers across the country, in conjunction with schools. This new flexibility means that schools can develop leaders with the skills they need to succeed locally.

Local authorities and Teaching Schools are encouraged to take the lead in designing and delivering bespoke CPD that has a direct impact in the classroom, building on existing research and using evidence to support CPD and to develop practice.

Nationally, the school-led system is becoming a reality with more schools collaborating and improving one another.

*Lincolnshire Learning Partnership School-led Approach Proposal:*

With the existing contract with CfBT ending in the near future and the current issues concerning Lincolnshire schools performance compared to the national picture, Children's Services have engaged Lincolnshire Headteachers, the DfE and research & evaluation organisations to promote a school-led approach to school improvement.

The benefits of schools working together to lead school improvement are well-established. They have led to a broad range of bespoke professional development opportunities, specialist expertise, innovative school improvement and improved outcomes in teaching and learning, progress and attainment, and inspection.

A task and design group of head teachers from across Lincolnshire have worked extensively on designing a system for sector-led self-improvement, exploring national systems and developments surrounding the sector-led approach.

Consultation has taken place with a range of stakeholders, including head teachers and governor workshops.

In essence, a school-led approach will establish a collaborative Lincolnshire Learning Partnership, delivering a tiered approach to school improvement, including peer review, quality assurance and appropriate governance arrangements to drive the strategic vision for education in Lincolnshire.

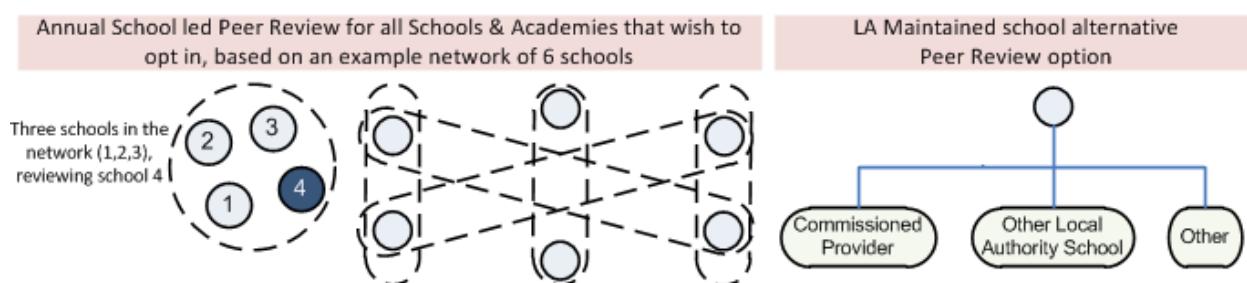
**Tier One: Peer Review and School to School Improvement**

Peer review has demonstrated its effectiveness as a tool in raising standards across many different sectors. Head teachers in Lincolnshire have been vocal in their desire to see this process as key to their future working together. It allows head teachers to be engaged in such an intense process of formative and summative evaluation and although, professionally challenging, it is hugely rewarding. In response to this, Peer Review is established as the foundation of the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership with the aim of ensuring we know our own and each other's schools well. In doing so, we can identify and share excellent practice and also those schools requiring early intervention or additional challenge.

To support Headteachers in being equipped to carry out peer review, a number suppliers will be commissioned to provide training to Headteachers on how to complete a successful peer review programme . This training will be free of charge to all maintained schools and also to those academies that choose to join the partnership. It will increase access to peer reviewers in Lincolnshire as well as increase the capacity of individual head teachers to precisely identify and focus their own school improvement activity.

Excellent practice across Lincolnshire will be identified as a result of peer review and fed into the national DfE network of Specialist Leaders of education (SLE), local leaders of education (LLE), National Leaders of Education (NLE) and National Leaders of Governance (NLG). This would ensure the best practice is nationally and regularly quality assured.

The Peer Review will cover specified areas ensuring a full and equitable review takes place in each school. It is expected that schools will engage in school to school improvement activities following peer review and, naturally, networks of head teachers will continue to share and utilise best practice in addition to this. The outcomes of peer review will primarily be used by head teachers to affirm or refocus school improvement activity and will also be monitored to identify excellent practice and support for those schools requiring early intervention or additional challenge.



### Tier Two: Monitoring Outcomes and establishing a Network of Excellence

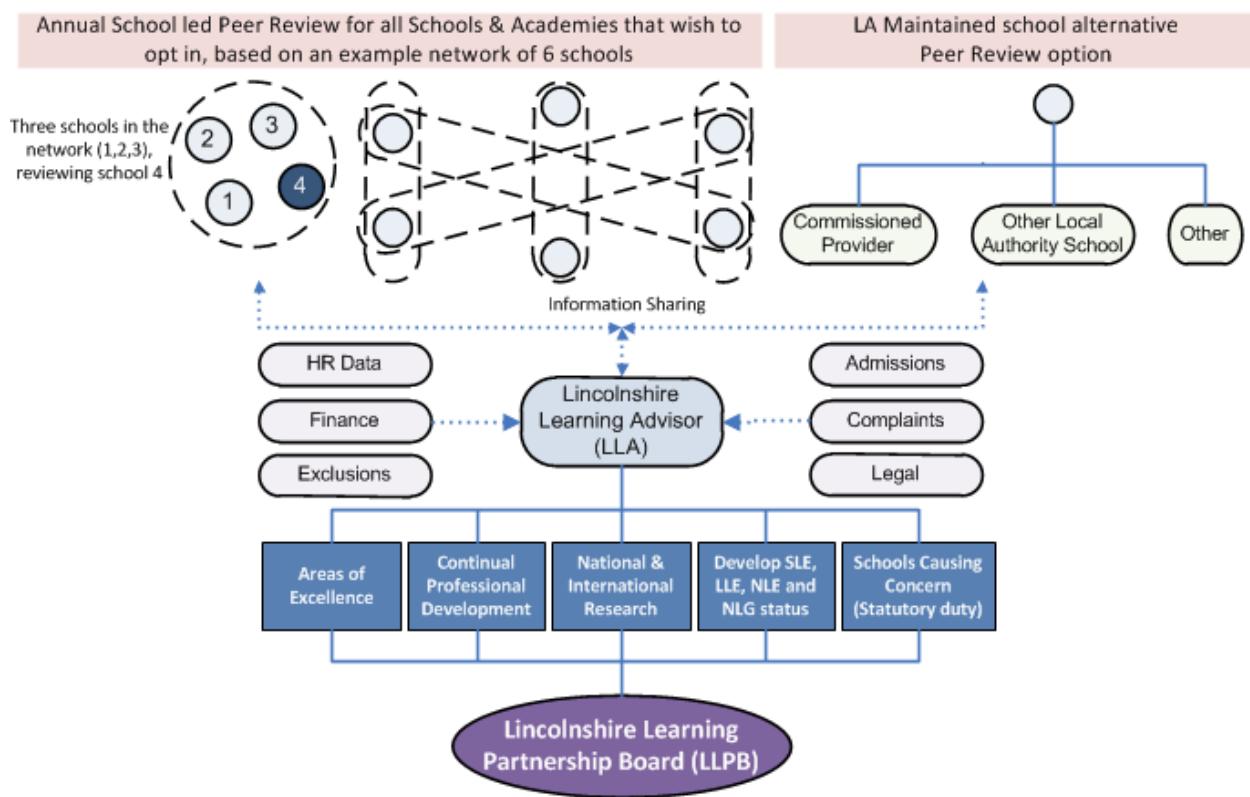
As the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership matures, it will become an alliance of Lincolnshire schools challenging each other to do better and supporting weaker schools to improve. The peer reviews will raise aspirations and drive professional accountability, as well as highlighting professional development needs at a school and local authority level.

It is essential that this valuable information is captured and that networks of excellence, led by schools, are used to improve Lincolnshire's whole system performance. This can be achieved through effective learning partnerships, rigorous and relevant professional development at all levels and quality assurance processes for school-to-school improvement.

In order to undertake this work, Lincolnshire Learning Advisors (LLAs) will be appointed to add capacity and drive improvement. Their role will involve monitoring all schools in Lincolnshire to identify excellent practice, those requiring early intervention or additional challenge and CPD requirements for the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership schools. They will engage in national and international research to find proven solutions and effective approaches to challenges faced by schools in the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership.

Where excellent practice is identified, LLAs will ensure this is recognised and shared through the national conduit of SLE, LLE, NLE and NLG status. Working alongside the Lincolnshire Learning Board and Lincolnshire's Teaching Schools, LLAs will ensure all schools in the partnership are kept at the forefront of national and international research, progress and statutory change.

LLAs will initially support peer review by ensuring rigour and challenge, advising headteachers when necessary. Lincolnshire Learning Advisors will gather information and triangulate all available key performance indicators at a school and local level to support and advise the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board in their strategic decisions. LLAs will have a wider remit including monitoring and data analysis at a countywide level.



### Tier Three: Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board

The Lincolnshire Learning Partnership aims to provide all schools in Lincolnshire with a professional learning partnership rooted in peer learning and development. It will build knowledge, capacity and practice across Lincolnshire, using all available resources.

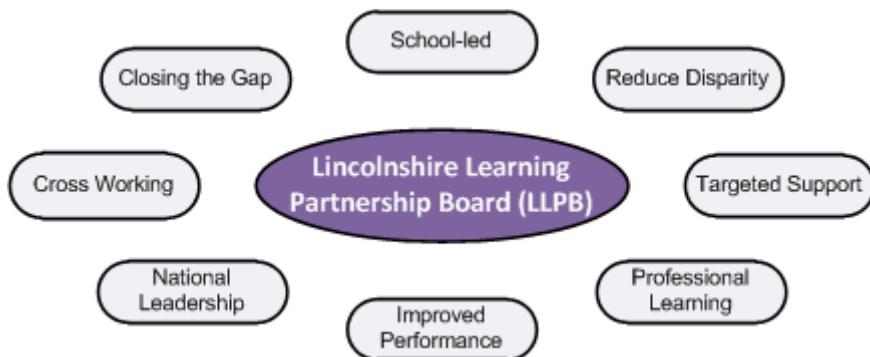
In order to ensure effective strategic leadership of this system, which can evolve over time, the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board (LLPB) will be established and will be charged with ensuring the performance of schools in Lincolnshire improves.

The LLPB will be led by the Council and will have representation of head teachers, with an appropriate skill-set and proven track record in school improvement, across all sectors. The LLPB will reduce the risk of isolation by offering schools access to a professional learning partnership and opportunities for working across the system. In addition to this, it will provide targeted support for schools identified as needing it by the Lincolnshire Learning Advisors or from regular scrutiny of up-to-date data, including identifying specific support arrangements for those schools classed as Schools Causing Concern.

Board members will be required to represent their organisation, cluster or sector but to always work collaboratively to deliver the holistic aims of the partnership. The Membership of the Partnership Board will be seventeen, aiming to consist of:

- a. An independent chair appointed by LCC (Chief Officer for Learning).
- b. Vice-chair – A representative of Lincolnshire County Council Children’s Services team.
- c. Six primary head teachers (representing 3-11 years) to be self-nominated, screened against a specified skill set and elected by primary head teachers, at least one to be maintained and at least one to be academy and a mix across localities and nature of school
- d. Three secondary head teachers to be self-nominated, screened against a specified skill set and elected by secondary head teachers to represent a mix across localities and nature of school
- e. A special school head teacher to be self-nominated, screened against a specified skill set and elected by special school head teachers, either maintained or academy
- f. A Chair of Governors be self-nominated, screened against a specified skill set and elected by chairs of governors
- g. **A head teacher representative of Schools Forum to be elected by the Schools Forum**
- h. A head teacher representative of Faith Schools to be self-nominated, screened against a specified skill set and elected by faith schools
- i. The Regional Schools Commissioner or head teacher representative
- j. A head teacher representative of the Lincolnshire Teaching Schools

Right of attendance at each meeting will be extended to the Director of Children’s Services or a representative for the Director of Children’s Services. Members of the Board will commit to a term of three years, with a view to reappointment. Members can be reappointed for another term. Reappointment will be staggered to prevent potential loss of knowledge and expertise.



The national move towards a sector led self-improving system is set and there has been extensive work put into creating the conditions to enable this. Many of Lincolnshire’s leaders have shown they are willing and able to develop a culture and practice of reflection and enquiry within and beyond their schools that underpins self-improvement.

Funding to Support Schools:

To enable schools across Lincolnshire to continuously self-improve in a sustainable and integrated manner, it is acknowledged that additional funding will be required. Through the Council's agreement with CfBT, a non-recurrent school development fund has been established of c£0.297m, targeted to support schools in engaging with and developing a sector-led approach.

It is requested that the Schools Forum provide £0.5m of additional funding from the 2014/15 DSG underspend to support this ongoing development. This will create a total fund of c£0.797m, proposed to be targeted towards:

Type	Description	Estimated Cost
LCC/CfBT	Project Management & Delivery of Task and Design group	£76,000
	Contribution to Peer Review Training*	£221,000
DSG	Contribution to Peer Review Training*	£192,000
	Ongoing Development Fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engaging national and international best practice</li><li>• Leadership progression</li><li>• Improving Governance</li><li>• Effective Professional Development focussed on county wide strategic improvement priorities</li><li>• Excellence funding – a specific fund dedicated to the establishment of excellence networks and sharing of best practice</li></ul>	£308,000
*Final costs will not be known until the tender evaluation is complete at the end of April 2015.		<b>£797,000</b>

It is proposed that expenditure against the ongoing development fund will be agreed by members of the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board, with the Chair (LCC Chief Commissioning Officer for Education) having the accountability for monitoring and management of the fund.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Schools Forum is recommended to:

1. Support the sector-led approach to self-improvement across Lincolnshire.
2. Identify/elect a Schools Forum member to act as a representative on the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board.
3. Agree to the establishment of the proposed DSG fund to support the model going forward.
4. Agree to the development areas proposed for potential further improvement.
5. Identify additional areas for development for which the fund can support.
6. Agree for the Chief Commissioning Officer to be responsible for the authorisation, monitoring and management of expenditure against the fund.

## **APPENDICES - these are listed below and attached at the back of the report.**

N/A