**Schools Forum**

**Item No.**

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| **Report title:** | **Monitoring & Improvement Grant Reduction Update** |
| **Date of meeting:** | **19 January 2022** |

**Executive summary**

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| The Government have announced that they are reducing the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant by 50% in 2022/23 and bringing the grant to an end in 2023/24.  For 2022/23, local authorities may request de-delegation from maintained schools for all improvement expenditure, including all core improvement activities.  However, there has not been sufficient time for the LA to work through the implications of the reduced funding to enable a decision to be taken as to whether de-delegation should be requested and the implications of such a decision.  **For information and comment** |

**School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant**

1. **School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant**

The School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant was introduced in 2017 to provide local authorities with funding to support them in fulfilling their statutory school improvement functions under Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and their additional school improvement expectations as set out in the Schools Causing Concern (SCC) guidance (collectively referred to as core school improvement activities).

The grant is allocated to LA’s on a per-school basis, for maintained schools including special schools and PRUs, for pupils aged 5-16.

In the financial year 2021/22, Norfolk County Council has received the following grant payments:

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| April 2021 | £176,162 |
| July 2021 | £117,442 |
| October 2021 | £363,372 |
| **TOTAL** | **£656,976** |

The amount of funding that Norfolk has received has been slowly reducing year-on-year since the grant’s introduction, in line with academisation of Norfolk’s schools.

1. **DfE Consultation**

In late autumn 2021, the DfE held a consultation[[1]](#footnote-1) on changes to the way that School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant will be funded from 2022/23.

The consultation proposed that there would be a phased removal of the grant over the course of FY 2022/23 following which all council school improvement activity, including core improvement activities, would be funded via de-delegation, with any non-statutory services which councils choose to continue to offer either provided on a traded basis or also funded through de-delegation.

The DfE have now published outcomes of their consultation at the link below:

[Reforming how local authority school improvement functions are funded - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-how-local-authority-school-improvement-functions-are-funded)

In their response to consultation feedback, the Government stated:

*“We recognise that there is significant concern, particularly from councils and the maintained sector about removing this additional source of funding. However, given one of the rationales of these proposals is to create greater parity between how school improvement is funded in the maintained and academies sector, which does not receive such additional school improvement funding, after careful consideration of the responses, the government intends to proceed with implementing the proposals.*

*As such, we will (1) reduce the grant by 50% for the FY 2022-23 and bring it to an end in FY 2023-24 and (2) include provision in Part 7 of Schedule 2 to the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations for FY 2022-23 which would allow councils to de-delegate for all improvement expenditure, including all core improvement activities. We will monitor the impact of the changes during the year.”*

1. **Norfolk’s Position**

The LA now needs to consider the implications of this decision given the important nature of the services currently offered to schools and the implication that withdrawing services may have upon the children of Norfolk.

It has not been possible within the short-timescale available to fully consider the alternative options available, service implications and how to mitigate these to enable the LA to request de-delegation for 2022-23, particularly given that some services, along with existing LA funds, are available to all schools regardless as to whether they are maintained or academies.

The LA will come back to Schools Forum in the future with proposals as to changes that will need to made to mitigate the removal of the grant and, if appropriate, there may be future requests for contributions for services through de-delegation / buy-back for future years.

1. [Reforming how local authority school improvement functions are funded - Department for Education - Citizen Space](https://consult.education.gov.uk/simb-grant-team/local-authority-school-improvement-funding-reform/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)