



Report to Schools Forum

Date: 6th December 2022

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Proposed De-delegation for School Improvement

Recommendation

To agree the proposed de-delegation for School Improvement activity at a rate of £2.40 per pupil in 2023-23

1. Background

Since 2017, the Local Authority School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering grant has been allocated to local authorities to support them in fulfilling their statutory school improvement functions and their school improvement expectations as set out in the Schools Causing Concern (SCC) guidance which require councils to monitor performance of maintained schools, broker school improvement provision, and intervene as appropriate. This grant has been used since 2017 to fund the Side by Side Offer to Buckinghamshire schools.

Since 2017 councils have also been permitted, with the agreement of their local schools forum, to de-delegate funding from their schools' budget shares, to fund the provision of additional school improvement services. These are activities that go above and beyond their core school improvement activities, and may include, for example, providing or funding access to school improvement support. Buckinghamshire Council has not, as yet, requested to de-delegate funding for these additional services as it has funded both core and additional activities from the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage Grant.

Following the [Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded](#) consultation in January 2022, the DfE announced the reduction the grant by 50% for the FY 2022/23 and that the grant would end in FY 2023/24.

Buckinghamshire Council have built up a reserve of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage grant over FY2020/21 and FY 2021/22 where Side by Side support for schools was restricted due to the pandemic (see **Appendix 1**). It is forecast that the reserves will be £1,466,065 at the end of this financial year and that, at proposed spending rates, this reserve will be spent before the end of FY2025/26.

To fund both all school improvement activities, both core and additional, the government included provision in Part 7 of Schedule 2 to the [School and Early Years Finance \(England\) Regulations for FY 2022-23](#) which allows councils to de-delegate for all improvement expenditure. Buckinghamshire Council propose a phased introduction of de-delegation for both core and additional school improvement activities from FY2023/24.

In line with the announcement on the cessation of the grant funding, a charge for Side by Side support for academy schools was introduced at 50% of direct costs in FY2022-23 and 100% of costs in FY2023-24 onwards. De-delegation for additional school improvement activities would support maintained schools only; academies wishing to ‘buy in’ to the services would be required to purchase at a traded rate.

School Improvement team capacity

The size of the School Improvement team has increased over academic year 2021/22, resulting in a increase in capacity from one Advisor per 118 schools to one Advisor per 58.8 schools.

September 2021 - the School Improvement and Traded Delivery Team in schools was as follows:	
1 x School Improvement & Traded Delivery Manager	Total number of Schools in Buckinghamshire 236
2 x FTE School Advisers	118 schools per Adviser
September 2022 - the School Improvement and Traded Delivery Team in schools is now as follows:	
1 x School Improvement & Traded Delivery Manager	Total number of Schools in Buckinghamshire 237 (Kingsbrook Academy opened September 2022)
4 x FTE School Advisers	58.8 schools per Adviser
0.4 x School Adviser	

2. School Improvement Support for maintained schools

1. Core School Improvement Support:
 - a. This is delivered through Side by Side and includes:
 - 3 Headline Visits and up to 9 days of funded SSPC/ABLE support for Prevention schools,
 - 5 Headline Visits, up to 18 days of funded SSPC/ABLE support and up to 18 days of funded SSLC support for Intervention schools (inclusive of HLVs),
 - A Headline Visit to every maintained enhancement school every year.
2. Additional School Improvement Support:
 - a. **The Buckinghamshire Challenge Programme.** In partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation’s Unity Research School, the Buckinghamshire Challenge Board deliver an exciting and innovative programme of support to enable schools across Buckinghamshire to raise the achievement and attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

The aim of the Buckinghamshire Challenge is for all participating schools to have robust strategies for addressing disadvantage, specifically:

- to understand the impact of educational disadvantage on their own pupils,
 - to understand how to best address long term disadvantage and the challenge of the pandemic on pupil attainment in their own schools,
 - to build a long term, sustainable, schools-led source of knowledge, experience and application in raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils in Buckinghamshire.
- b. **Liaison Group Projects** - Funding for liaison groups to research and develop robust strategic for addressing disadvantage in their own local areas
- c. **Side by Side Conference Programme** - The School Improvement Team will develop and administer a comprehensive annual conference programme. The programme will be tailored to the needs of Headteachers and senior leaders in Buckinghamshire and cover the most pressing strategic issues.
- d. **STEPs Champion Network for primary schools** - STEP is a training programme to support schools in developing whole school positive behaviour strategies and practices for early intervention, and to safely manage complex or challenging behaviour within their own setting.
- For School Improvement activities for maintained schools that will continue to be funded from base budget and traded income, please see **Appendix 2**.

3. Cost of Core Side by Side Support per year for Maintained Schools

a. SSLC, SSPC and Headline Visit costs for intervention and prevention schools

	Intervention	Prevention	TOTAL
Cost per School	£15,300	£4,650	
Estimated Number of Maintained Schools	20	20	
Side by Side Cost for Maintained Schools	£306,000	£93,000	£399,000
Enhancement Visit Costs (based on 94 visit)			£ 47,000
TOTAL FOR MAINTAINED SCHOOLS			£446,000

b. Additional Side by Side projects costs per year

Project	Annual Cost
The Buckinghamshire Challenge Project	£20,000
Liaison Group Projects	£70,000

Side by Side Conference Programme	£ 5,000
STEPs Behaviour Management Training	£25,000
TOTAL	£120,000
<i>Assuming 50% engagement by academies funding 20% of the cost</i>	-£24,000
TOTAL FOR MAINTAINED SCHOOLS	£96,000

c. Total core and additional Side by Side school improvement costs

Support for maintained schools	Annual Cost
Side by Side brokerage costs for intervention and prevention schools	£446,000
Additional projects	£ 96,000
TOTAL	£542,000
Per pupil cost	£16.01 per annum

- If funding from school improvement is drawn only from the reserves, the reserves would be completed before the end of FY2025/26 (see Appendix 1).

4. Phased Introduction of de-delegation for Maintained Schools

- Buckinghamshire Council appreciate the high additional cost to maintained schools of this service that has previously been funded through government grants. De-delegation could therefore be introduced gradually over the course of 6 years, using the grant reserves to support the school improvement work for maintained schools.

	% cont.	£ contribution	£ reserves	Per pupil costs
FY 2023/24	15%	£ 81,300	£460,700	£2.40
FY 2024/25	25%	£135,500	£406,500	£4.00
FY 2025/26	45%	£243,900	£298,100	£7.20
FY 2026/27	65%	£352,300	£189,700	£10.41
FY 2027/28	80%	£433,600	£108,400	£12.81
FY 2028/29	100%	£542,000		£16.01

5. Options

- Buckinghamshire Council propose three options for discussion:

Option One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full de-delegation for Side by Side to start from FY2023/24. • Reserved School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage Grant monies to be re-allocated to other school improvement activities/projects • Schools Forum to be consulted with regards to school improvement priorities for maintained schools.
Option Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-delegation is phased in between FY2023/24 and FY2028/29 (as per point 4 above). • Reserved grant monies are wound down over the same period to supplement the school improvement funding to support maintained schools to the forecast annual spend.
Option Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserved grant funding is used exclusively to support Side by Side school improvement until it is exhausted (current forecast to be during FY2025/26 – see Appendix 1, point 6). • Full de-delegation for Side by Side from this time onwards.

6. Assumptions

- The above calculations demonstrate the principle of the proposed de-delegation.
- Forecast spend on Side by Side costs vary each year based on a number of different factors including number of schools requiring support as determined by risk assessment and the number of support days used by each supported school etc.
- The numbers will need to be recalculated each year to take into account:
 - the actual spend in the previous year,
 - the number of academisations per year, and therefore the number of remaining maintained schools in Buckinghamshire,
 - the School Improvement costs associated with the number of remaining maintained schools.
- Should the spend in any one year be below forecast, Buckinghamshire Council propose to adjust the de-delegation amount in the following year. If there is an overspend, due to an increased number of schools requiring support, then the overspend will be funded from the reserves, which will therefore be spent faster.
- This model is based on the current School Improvement Strategy which delivers improvement through Side by Side deployments. Changes to the School Improvement model may need to be made to take into account evolving strategic direction, the national landscape and changing local needs.

- De-delegation cannot be made for maintained special schools or nurseries.



Appendix 1

1. Current Number of Intervention and Prevention Schools – Academy v Maintained

	Intervention	Prevention	TOTAL
Maintained	15 (54%)	15 (65%)	30
Academy	13 (46%)	8 (35%)	21
TOTAL	28	23	51

2. Number of maintained schools

Primary	135
Secondary	5
Cross-Phase	4 (1 mainstream, 3 special)
TOTAL	144

- For forward planning, the number of maintained schools has been set at 134 which takes into account the 10 schools currently academising.
- In pupil numbers this is **33,856 maintained, mainstream pupils**.

3. Current Reserves

Current School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage Grant Reserves	£2,005,800
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4. End of Financial Year 2022/23 – Forecast Spend

Forecast spend Side by Side FY2022/23	£839,418
Additional grant income (May, Sept & Nov)	-£299,683
Draw-down from reserves	£539,735

5. Reserves remaining at the end of this financial year

Current School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage Grant Reserves	£2,005,800
Draw down from reserves	-£539,735
TOTAL RESERVES end of FY2022/23	£1,466,065

No inflation increase included

6. Life of reserves if used exclusively to cover costs of School Improvement Support for Maintained Schools.

Reserves at end of FY2023/24	£924,065
Reserves at end of FY2024/25	£382,065
Reserves at end of FY2025/26	-£159,935

Appendix 2

School Improvement programme of support for maintained schools to be funding from base budget and traded income:

1. **Additional 'New to Headship' Headline Visit** - Recognising the challenges for new Headteachers and the importance of enhanced support during a Headteacher's first year in post, a New to Headship Headline Visit will also be offered to all maintained schools with either:
 - A 'new to post Headteacher' for academic year 2022/23 (including those headteachers moving from an interim position to a permanent post);
 - A 'new to Buckinghamshire Headteacher' for academic year 2022/23.
2. **An 'Early Career Headship' programme** for the cohort of new Headteachers.
3. **Team Around the School Support** - In order to support schools during a challenging period, Team Around the School support is offered to all maintained schools facing a significant need. Team Around the School meetings are convened by the School Improvement Team, who build a strong team from within the local authority to support a school undergoing a particularly difficult set of circumstances. Formal meetings are held at regular intervals (monthly or half termly) and all are held to account for the quality and pace of the improvements by the Chair, who will normally be a senior member of the Education Team.
4. **Rapid Improvement Group meetings** - These can be convened by the School Improvement Team with the purpose to regularly monitor impact of intervention support with the supported school's Headteacher, Chair of Governors, the SSLC. This will be chaired by the School Improvement Advisor.
5. **Support during Ofsted Inspections** - All maintained schools also benefit from support during Ofsted inspections, and attendance from a member of the School Improvement Team at Ofsted inspection feedback sessions. The School Improvement Advisor will support the process through a pre-inspection discussion with the Headteacher, availability for telephone support throughout the inspection period and a discussion with the Lead Inspector on day two, regarding supported development work.
6. **Attendance at one day of interviews for Headteacher Interview** - School Improvement Advisors will support the recruitment process for a new Headteacher in maintained schools by attending the final interviews and representing the local authority as part of the interview panel.

Appendix 3 – Impact of Side by Side

Impact of Side by Side on Ofsted Judgements – Ac. Year 2021/22 and 2022/23 to date

- During academic year 2021/22 - 19 intervention or prevention schools had an Ofsted inspection. These schools were classified as either significantly or moderately 'at risk' of a requires improvement or inadequate judgement at their next inspection
 - Three of the inspected schools increased their judgement from requires improvement to good - all three schools had strong engagement with the Side by Side process.
 - Of the intervention and prevention schools who were deemed to have strong engagement in the Side by Side process, just under 65% either retained their good judgement, despite significant issues at the school, or increased their judgement to become good.
 - Of the five schools with strong engagement who did not obtain a good judgement, the majority had experienced significant leadership disruption and issues in the months prior to the inspection. Although the overall effectiveness judgement did not achieve good, each of the five schools achieved a good or better judgement in at least two of the inspection elements, with two school achieving good in four of the elements. Safeguarding was a limiting judgement in one of the schools who had brokered an independent safeguarding review. Side by Side work continues with these schools.
 - Of the two schools with amber engagement levels, both schools saw their judgements decline.
 - Of the three schools with no Side by Side engagement, one retained their judgement and two schools saw their judgements decline.
- Of the two Intervention and Prevention schools with strong Side by Side engagement and have been inspected so far during academic year 2022/23:
 - One has moved from requires improvement to good.
 - One has retained a good judgement.
- **Perception of Impact of Side by Side – Supported School Leadership**
 - The perceived impact of Side by Side from Supported School Leaders is assessed termly and feedback remains extremely positive.

