

Service and Charges Consultative Paper for Schools' Forum 21 January 2016

1. Background

The Learning and Skills Service consulted schools on the proposals affecting school improvement services in the document *School Improvement Service Report 2015*. This was sent to all schools during early autumn 2015. The report was also discussed during the heads' strategic event 6 October 2015 and comments were invited. The report described the arrangements for services to schools, particularly relating to school improvement.

The report was updated in the light of (minor) amendments and then approved by Scrutiny and Cabinet.

The relevant section from this report is copied in the Appendix, below.

2. School improvement services provided by the Local Authority

The report identified the following categories of service:

- a. Core service to schools (applies to all schools¹);
- b. Entitlement for schools;
- c. Provision for vulnerable schools and schools causing concern;
- d. Education Performance Board;
- e. Rutland Area Education Collaboration Programme. (This includes regular strategic events for head teachers and chairs of governors.);
- f. Additional provision.

The report also indicated where charges are to be made (see below).

3. Purpose of Charges

The Local Authority, in addition to meeting its statutory obligations, needs to tailor its provision for schools to match their varying needs. To achieve this, the LA will provide a range of services at no charge; additional services will be charged at a rate which covers costs.

4. Charges proposed

No charge will be made by the Local Authority for items: a; b; c²; d; e.

Charges will be made for services additional to that provided under c. and for item f at the enhanced rate.

5. Services for *Vulnerable Schools and Schools Causing Concern*

Under item c. (vulnerable schools and schools causing concern) the LA offers a specified service of development support (see further paper). This will be provided as follows:

- **LA maintained schools** receive this service at no additional charge;

¹ "All schools" means state schools (LA maintained, academies, free schools) and independent schools.

² Where independent schools are identified in this category, the schools will be charged at the standard rate.

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- Where LA maintained schools opt **for further support** this will be made at the enhanced rate;
- **Academies and free schools** will be charged at the enhanced rate;
- **Independent schools** will be charged at the standard rate.

6. Choice of Service Provider

Schools are encouraged to identify the best provider for any additional services they procure, giving due regard to quality, local impact and partnerships, e.g., teaching alliances, and cost. It is likely they will fund any additional services from their own budget, possibly in collaboration with other schools or partners.

7. Rutland Special Funding Arrangements

The Schools' Forum agreed to earmark funding for school improvement; a figure which would be matched by the Council. In the first year (2015/16) this would amount to £50k in total (£25k from DSG; £25k from Council). This will then be reviewed and, if considered appropriate, will rise to £100k in total.

Schools in difficulty may require additional resource. It is proposed that a proportion of this fund is allocated each year to named schools which are identified as vulnerable and causing concern³. This figure is likely to vary in the light of the numbers and sizes of schools and any competing priorities. This school improvement budget may be used by those schools to buy the additional services they require from their chosen providers in agreement with the Local Authority⁴.

8. Consultation

The LA wishes to consult upon its charging and non-charging arrangements and proposes to do this via the Schools' Forum and direct discussion with head teachers and governors.

³ Schools will be identified using the school categorisations agreed in the *School Improvement Service Report 2015* (categories green / amber / red).

⁴ This is likely to be agreed at the Strategy Meetings which are a core element of the support for vulnerable schools and schools causing concern.

APPENDIX

The relevant section of the report is copied below:

“The school improvement policy and practice will be amended to clarify core and entitlement activity (items a-e). It will also indicate charges made for:

a. Core service to schools

The following will apply to all schools:

- **Annual table-top review** of standards and consideration in relation to Council vision, policies, statutory powers and services;
- **Comparative review** by Education Performance Board;
- **Strategic consideration of each school** in the corporate strategic planning of the Council as well as its planning for education;
- **Access to Council services** described as under “Entitlement” below;
- **Services for special needs children** in line with statutory requirements and Rutland policy;
- **Overview by Lead Member** for Schools.

b. Entitlement for schools

The Council will provide, *unless declined by schools*:

- **Education Specialist Officer** attached to each school/academy;
 - **Two review visits from Education Specialist Officer** per year to review learner outcomes, progress, school and partnership priorities;
 - Participation in Rutland area **education collaboration programme**;
 - **Representation** on Education Performance Board;
 - **Telephone advice** from Education Specialist Officer;
 - **Access to advice on pupil admissions.**
- c. **Provision for vulnerable schools and schools causing concern**
- **A sliding scale of support and challenge** is available, designed to match the needs of schools facing difficulties. Please see appropriate policy and statements of provision level.

d. Education Performance Board

Cf. the remit of this Board is to review standards of education and all provision within the County. It may recommend to the Council action to be taken affecting policy, strategy provision – including organisation – and evaluation.

e. Rutland Area Education Collaboration Programme

This programme is a core element of the strategy for education in Rutland. It fosters and formalises collaboration between all education providers in the Rutland area. It provides a forum for action for all players to maximise their whole system leadership, creating and sustaining an environment of high achievement beyond the individual school. The core members are the schools in Rutland and their partners beyond the County.

Core matters of education strategy and decision-making are discussed in this programme.

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In practical terms, this means a regular and developing programme of activity focused on formal collaboration between schools and actions that are best achieved across a range of schools. Participants are head teachers of schools and chairs of governors as well as County officers and Members. Other senior school leaders or substitutes may be invited by the Council.

Details of the activities of this Programme will be available on the County website for education.

f. Additional provision

- Schools are encouraged to use the range of inter-school support, including the Teaching School Alliances.
- Where requested, further support can be provided by the Education Specialist Officers at additional cost.

Charge will be made for f. (Additional provision) where the service is brokered or provided by Rutland County Council.