NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting:	Thursday 19 November 2026
Title of report:	**2027-28 School Funding: De-Delegation – School Improvement**
Type of report: Delete as required	For decision
Executive summary: Including reason for submission	The report provides LA proposals requesting de-delegation of funding (buy back for maintained nursery schools, special schools and PRU) from school budgets in the 2027-28 financial year to fund statutory services for the provision of school improvement core activities to maintained schools.
Budget / Risk implications:	Potential risk to the school improvement services and resources provided to schools from April 2027.
Recommendations:	As detailed in Section 5 in relation to voting on the options for the de-delegation of funding for LA maintained primary and secondary schools and buyback options for maintained nursery schools, special schools and PRUs for the provision of school improvement core activities to maintained schools for the 2027-28 financial year.
Voting requirements:	De-delegation (buy back for special schools and PRS): LA maintained primary, secondary and special schools and PRS only (in relevant phase)
Appendices:	N/A
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Presenting officer: If not the originator	Louise Wilson

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1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report presents proposals for the de-delegation of funding in relation to the provision of LA core school improvement statutory functions for the 2027-28 financial year. These services have been funded from de-delegated funds in the 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years as a result of the removal, by the DfE, of the LA School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant from the 1 April 2023.

1.2 The Schools Forum is asked to consider the report. Relevant phases of LA-maintained schools are asked to vote on recommendations for the de-delegation of funding from school budgets / buy back (for special schools and PRS) for the 2027-28 financial year to fund statutory service provision for the delivery of school improvement core activities.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 On the 29 October 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) launched a consultation "Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded". The consultation proposed a 50% reduction to the LA School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant for the 2022-23 financial year, followed by full removal of the Grant in the 2023-24 financial year. The consultation also proposed making provisions within the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations for the 2022-23 financial year to allow local authorities to fund all of their school improvement activity (including all core school improvement activities) via de-delegation from schools' budget shares. In January 2022, the DfE subsequently confirmed their intention to implement the consultation proposals for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years.

2.2 The local authority received £843.4k of funding through the School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant in the 2021-22 financial year. The Grant was reduced to 50% (£371.7k) in the 2022-23 financial year and fully removed for the 2023-24 financial year. The North Yorkshire Schools Forum has approved the de-delegation of funding for each financial year from 2023-24 to fund statutory service provision for core school improvement activities for maintained secondary and primary schools, and the request for a buy-back arrangement for special schools, PRS and maintained nursery schools.

2.3 De-delegation applies only to LA-maintained schools. Where services are able to be de-delegated, the budget is, technically initially delegated to all schools and academies. Services for de-delegation have to be approved by Schools Forum and, if approved, the funding is removed from maintained schools' budgets before final school budgets are issued.

2.4 The amount that can be de-delegated depends on the number of academy conversions; if there are more conversions of schools to academies the total sum de-delegated will reduce.

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3.0 LOCAL AUTHORITY USAGE OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MONITORING & BROKERING GRANT AND ASSOCIATED DE-DELEGATED FUNDING

3.1 The School Improvement de-delegated funding for primary and secondary schools for the 2026-27 financial year is £638,303. A further £35,460 has been provided through the buy-back of the core School Improvement service by special schools, PRS and maintained nursery schools.

3.2 The NYC School Improvement (SI) Service is structured to enable all LA maintained schools to receive an allocation of adviser days to focus on school improvement priorities. In September 2026, there are 172 LA maintained schools; each school is provided with a graduated offer of monitoring, challenge and support that is designed to guide schools through their improvement journey, focusing on stability, capacity building, growth and collaboration. Schools that require support to stabilise or build capacity typically receive a higher allocation of Senior Education Adviser (SEA) time that ranges from 4 (category 1) to 12 (category 4) days in the 2026-27 academic year. In total, following a review of schools' needs in summer 2026, there are 1,387 senior education adviser days allocated to schools. The team of 10.35 FTE SEAs (reduced from 13 in 2024-25 and from 12 in 2025-26) are managed by three Principal Advisers (Monitoring) who are in turn line-managed by a Head of Service. In addition to managing the school-based SEAs, the Head of Service, and Principal Advisers (Monitoring), have oversight of service priorities and specialist teams including early years, safeguarding, attendance and PSHE and well-being. The SI team also provides strategic oversight of the Professional Governance Service.

3.3 In addition to core school improvement work, the service supports the LA to meet its statutory duties in relation to safeguarding, primary assessment and moderation, SACRE, headteacher recruitment and induction and attendance. Beyond this, SEAs support headteacher recruitment and performance management. The service offers a menu of traded activity through NYES. At all levels, advisers work alongside other council services, acting as a link to schools, for example in strategic planning, schools finance, schools HR, Health and Safety, SEND and Inclusion and the Virtual School. Members of the SI team support the work of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NYSCP) through their attendance at sub committees and linking their monitoring activity to the partnership's Section 175 audit process. Advisers and SI leadership work alongside Ofsted, DfE, four Diocesan bodies, MAT leaders and the range of other stakeholders and system partners across the county.

3.4 The de-delegated funds form a significant part of the income associated with managing the service. Additional income is received through the Early Years DSG, public health funding, previously agreed de-delegated funding to support schools causing concern and an allocation from the council's net budget.

3.5 The impact of the School Improvement Service is evidenced through the strong and improving performance of North Yorkshire state-funded schools at Ofsted. Since September 2024, when 89% of North Yorkshire state-funded schools were judged good or better at their most recent inspection, outcomes have remained consistently strong under the renewed Ofsted framework.

3.6 Since November 2025, 35 North Yorkshire state-funded schools have been inspected under the renewed inspection framework. The outcomes demonstrate particular

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strengths in inclusion and personal development. All 35 schools (100%) met the expected standard or better for inclusion and personal development, reflecting the county's commitment to ensuring children and young people feel they belong and can thrive in their educational settings.

3.7 Outcomes are also secure in other key areas, with 94% of schools inspected meeting the expected standard or better for attendance and behaviour, 88% achieving the expected standard or better for curriculum and teaching and 85% achieving the expected standard or better for leadership and governance.

3.8 North Yorkshire continues to demonstrate sustained strong performance in relation to safeguarding. All schools inspected met the safeguarding standard, and no school has been judged inadequate for safeguarding for four consecutive years.

3.9 These outcomes are particularly noteworthy given the increased rigour of the renewed Ofsted framework, which is designed to evaluate schools against a more detailed set of standards. The shift from a largely 'best fit' model of inspection to one where schools must consistently demonstrate that they 'securely meet' the expected standard or better across evaluation areas has raised the evidential threshold.

4.0 DE-DELEGATION PROPOSALS FOR STATUTORY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT CORE SERVICE PROVISION

4.1 LAs are required to make a clear statement of how the funding is applied for a de-delegated service. The Schools Forum considered the methodology to be adopted for the de-delegation of funds for the 2026-27 financial year. The following principles were adopted in the decision of the approved methodology:

- The de-delegated funding recovered from each sector broadly reflects the costs of service delivery to the sector i.e. there is no funding cross subsidy between the primary and secondary sectors.
- The de-delegation funding recovered reflects, as far as possible, the standard core school improvement services that each school receives irrespective of phase or size.
- The level of de-delegation funding recovered has some regard to the size of school i.e. funding recovered has a degree of proportionality to the size of the school.
- The de-delegation methodology complies with DfE prescribed funding requirements. These requirements do not allow for the LA school improvement risk rating for a school or a school's Ofsted rating to be used as the methodology for de-delegation. They also do not allow a percentage "top slice" to be applied to schools' budgets as the de-delegation methodology.

4.2 The following methodology was adopted for the de-delegation of funds for core school improvement service statutory functions for the 2026-27 financial year:

	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Lump Sum Per School	£3,360	£3,360
Amount Per Pupil	£2.47	£3.00

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4.3 The DfE schools' revenue funding operational guidance states that de-delegation does not apply to special schools, maintained nursery schools, or PRUs. Where de-delegation has been agreed for maintained primary and secondary schools, the DfE presume that the local authority will offer the service on a buy back basis to those establishments that are not covered by the de-delegation. For the 2026-27 financial year buy-back of the core school improvement statutory service was offered on the following basis:

- Maintained nursery schools – Primary methodology
- Special Schools and PRU – Secondary methodology

4.4 The local authority proposes to de-delegate the funds for the core school improvement statutory service provision for the 2027-28 financial year based on the methodology and funding principles agreed by the Schools Forum for the 2026-27 financial year.

4.5 It is proposed to increase the de-delegation unit values and per pupil amount by 3% - please see table below:

	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Lump Sum Per School	**£3,460**	**£3,460**
Amount Per Pupil	**£2.54**	**£3.09**

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 LA-maintained primary sector Schools Forum members are asked to approve the de-delegation of funding for the statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2027-28 financial on the basis of a lump sum per school of £3,460 and a per pupil amount of £2.54.

5.2 LA-maintained secondary sector Schools Forum members are asked to approve the de-delegation of funding for the statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2027-28 financial on the basis of a lump sum per school of £3,460 and a per pupil amount of £3.09.

5.3 LA maintained school members of the Schools Forum are asked to support the LA requesting maintained nursery schools to approve the buyback charge based on the Primary School de-delegation methodology for the statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2027-28 financial year.

5.4 LA maintained school members of the Schools Forum are asked to support the LA requesting special schools and PRS to approve the buyback charge based on for the Secondary School de-delegation methodology for statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2027-28 financial year.

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