

TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE: 15 JANUARY 2015

**PROPOSAL FOR ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO
THE BRAKENHALE SECONDARY SCHOOL
Director of Children, Young People and Learning**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a costed proposal to the Schools Forum on the school improvement support plan for The Brakenhale Secondary School, following the 'in principle' agreement made in November 2014.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schools Forum:

- 2.1 **AGREES to fund the school improvement support plan from the budget to support schools in financial difficulty, aiding recovery from Requires Improvement (paragraph 5.12).**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To aid a speedy and effective recovery from the Ofsted Requires Improvement judgement.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Requiring the school to fully fund any additional support needs, if necessary through a licensed deficit. This has been discounted on grounds of affordability as the school has insufficient funds to finance the required changes.
- 4.2 Offering a lower level or no financial support, but this is considered inappropriate as support is required to assist schools in returning over the short to medium term to a stable financial position whilst at the same time achieving school improvement targets.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 5.1 The Brakenhale School was judged to Require Improvement in a Section 5 inspection during March 2014, with the subsequent HMI Section 8 monitoring visit in July 2014 finding the leadership were not taking effective action to address priorities. Subsequent to this, the headteacher has left the school.

Unrestricted

- 5.2 Interim arrangements have been put in place which currently includes an Executive Headteacher of a local outstanding secondary schools, who took up post on 6th October 2014 and will work in the school full time for the Autumn Term. The intention is that the Executive Headteacher continues on a part time basis from January 2015, maintaining overall responsibility for the effective running of the school.
- 5.3 The context and background were outlined in the previous report where the Forum agreed 'in principle' to approve additional financial support to The Brakenhale School.

Current position

- 5.4 Since the previous report an Associate Headteacher and bursar have been appointed and the Executive Headteacher has been actively identifying where savings can be made, for example a saving of £15,000 in premises costs, freeing additional resources which will be invested in teaching and learning.
- 5.5 In addition to the costs associated with the Executive Headteacher, the following support activities have also been put in place:
- An associate headteacher fulltime for two terms with responsibility for the day to day running of the school under the leadership of the Executive Headteacher
 - A head of maths part time for two terms
 - Additional English support part time for two terms
 - Ofsted inspection support and training consultancy support
 - School to school senior and middle leadership, teacher and governance support.
- 5.6 This complements officer time provided by the LA to:
- Review the staffing structures, all documentation, communications
 - Develop the pastoral and inclusion structures and systems, clarify roles and responsibilities
 - Evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of intervention strategies
 - Review CPD provision and succession planning
 - SEND Reforms – is the school prepared to implement the new reforms
 - Develop middle leadership and teaching and learning
 - Strengthen governance.
- 5.7 The progress the school is making in improving is monitored and evaluated through regular meetings with the Chief Officer for Learning and Achievement and The Director of Children, Young People and Learning and also through attendance at SCAPAP.
- 5.8 During the autumn term the following has been achieved:
- A new school development plan, informed by HMI/Ofsted priorities and additional priorities identified by staff (recruitment, retention and ethos,

the physical environment and communication). The process has been inclusive, so there is a high level of awareness and buy-in across the staff

- Appointment of a fulltime interim head of school who will work under the leadership of the EHT from January 2015 and a well-regarded bursar; appointment of new heads of English, Maths and Science underway
- Review of support staff responsibilities and deployment identifying costs which can be cut with minimal impact and re-invested more effectively
- More robust departmental structures to enable support, challenge/holding to account and succession planning
- Half termly meetings with Heads of Departments established discussing predicted outcomes for students and comparing these with student assessment data and planning interventions
- Improvements to data collection and analysis to improve target setting, new tracking system for KS4
- Structures and policies are under development which will improve planning, decision making and communication across the school community
- A practice-based professional development programme which includes
 - Coaching and mentoring for senior and middle leaders by their counterparts in the EHT's school
 - More active and widespread engagement with PIXL school improvement programme (a collaboration of school leaders which provides access to professional networks, online resources, training opportunities and development programmes)
 - Coaching, modelling and training, disseminating good practice in the maths department
 - Whole and departmental training by LA advisers and consultants.
- Scoping re-organisation of SLT staff
- Review of curriculum offer and examination entry
- Links have been made by the sixth form with the Executive Headteacher's sixth form.
- External review of Governance
- Establishment of a more professional culture with a clear expectation of high performance and holding to account is being established
- A mock Ofsted inspection is planned for early in the spring term conducted by a serving Ofsted inspector who will inspect every department and provide a written report as a baseline, allowing objective judgements to be made about improvements when the process is repeated in the summer term.

5.9 Work is underway to recruit a new substantive headteacher who is expected to be in post for September 2015. At that point the Associate Headteacher will leave the school and support from the current Executive Headteacher will be reduced to a handover and then cease as a formal agreement.

Proposals for financial support

5.10 The previous report outlined that the LA has two main options to provide financial support for schools in financial difficulty. Firstly, where it is apparent that a school is experiencing medium term difficulties that over time can be readily managed and the school return to a surplus, a licensed deficit can be agreed that allows for a temporary overspend that is eventually fully repaid.

- 5.11 Secondly, where significant budget difficulties exist, but where it is unreasonable to expect a school to be able to solve these through the management of their normal budget allocations, or where a school is at risk of falling into one of the Ofsted categories of causing concern, the School Funding Regulations allow additional funding to be provided outside the normal operation of the Funding Formula.
- 5.12 The Forum agreed that the school was not in a position to be able to take a loan for full repayment and therefore agreed 'in principle' that additional financial support should be provided from the £0.280m budget set aside for this purpose. Costing the additional support measures set out above in paragraph 5.5 indicates a required funding allocation of £0.159m in 2014-15 and £0.093m in 2015-16 which the Forum is recommended to agree. Further details are included in Confidential Annex A.
- 5.13 An annual report is presented to the Forum to review and approve funding allocations to schools through use of contingency monies that are allocated to schools, and this includes the budget to support schools in financial difficulty. Therefore, the Forum will receive regular updates on the use of allocated funds.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The financial implications arising from this report are set out in the supporting information and sufficient budget exists to meet the proposed allocation which has been taken into account in the budget monitoring forecasts that on another agenda item estimate a year end deficit on the Schools Budget of £0.295m.

Impact Assessment

- 6.3 There are no specific impact assessments arising from this report.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 There are no specific strategic risk management issues arising from this report

Other Officers

- 6.5 There are no issues arising from this report that are relevant to other officers.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Not applicable, applying agreed policy.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Not applicable.

Representations Received

7.3 Not applicable.

Background Papers

Scheme for Financing Schools

Contact for further information

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