

## **Criteria for the allocation of additional funds to support schools facing financial difficulties**

### Outline of the scheme

School Funding Regulations allow for additional funds outside the normal operation of the Funding Formula to be provided to schools considered to be in financial difficulty. In agreement with the Schools Forum, de-delegated funding has been set aside in the School's Budget for this purpose. The criteria to be used to allocate this funding has also previously been agreed, and a school would qualify for additional financial support if, in the opinion of the Council's Director responsible for schools and the Council's Director responsible for finance, they:

1. were unable to set a balanced budget and were in need of a licensed deficit arrangement at the start of the relevant financial year, and/or
2. were in or likely to fall into one of the Ofsted categories of causing concern, including serious weaknesses or special measures.
3. Were a 1 form of entry school judged good or better that have more than 5% empty places

Where additional funding is agreed, it is on condition that the senior managers and relevant governors of each school attend regular monitoring meetings with officers of the Council, provide such financial and other information that is requested, and do not make any significant deviations in spending, either in magnitude or by type without the approval of the Council's Director responsible for schools.

Before any proposed allocation of such funds is passed on to relevant schools, they are reported to and agreed by the Schools Forum. However, this can cause uncertainty and result in a delay in releasing resources to meet an immediate need.

### Powers delegated to the Director responsible for schools

In order to allow funds to be allocated within an appropriate time scale it is recommended that a set of principles be agreed by the School Forum which allows the Council's Director responsible for schools discretion to allocate funds up to but not exceeding a set level dependent on the Ofsted category of the school. Any such allocations would subsequently be reported to the Schools Forum.

The level of allocation of funds would be:

1. schools judged to have serious weaknesses (up to £20k per year)
2. schools deemed to be in need of special measures (up to £50k per year)
3. schools at risk of either judged to have serious weaknesses or entering special measures (up to £30k per year)
4. 1 form of entry schools judged good or better that have more than 5% empty places (up to £20k per year per school and £40k in total)

With a maximum value of aggregate allocations of £150k in any one financial year without the express approval of the Schools Forum.

Allocations will only be agreed where the relevant school has demonstrated insufficient funds exist within the budget to fund the required actions or activities.

Arrangements to support and monitor schools also includes:

1. a Declaration of Concern (DoC) where a school is at risk of being judged as Requiring Improvement or inadequate at its next inspection.
2. following this a Rapid Response Board is established for the first 12 weeks. Where effective action is being taken this is then monitored through a Standards Monitoring Board (SMB) on a termly basis. Where required there is an independent chair.
3. the SMB reviews evidence provided by school leaders and LA staff after 12 weeks and a decision made as to whether leadership are taking effective action following the DoC.
4. an SMB is also established where schools enter an Ofsted category of concern (judged to have serious weaknesses or placed into Special Measures)
5. the processes are clearly shared within the Learning and Improvement Strategy / Annex A School Improvement

Where the school is unable to fund these actions from its own delegated budget the SMB can request that additional resources be sought. Any such requests are approved by the Council's Director responsible for schools. Funds would be allocated to the school from those held for schools in financial difficulty Where schools enter an Ofsted category of concern (judged to have se

**Approved by the Schools Forum on 15 July 2021.**