

TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE 26 APRIL 2012

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO SCHOOLS IN, OR IN DANGER OF
ENTERING AN OFSTED CATEGORY
(Director of Children, Young People and Learning)**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that the Schools Forum agrees a set of principles to be applied by the Director of Children, Young People and Learning related to the allocation of funds to schools in, or in danger of entering an Ofsted category from the retained budget for schools in financial difficulty.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **The School Forum AGREES the set of principles and arrangements as contained in the report related to the allocation of funds to schools in, or in danger of entering an Ofsted category (paras. 5.4, 5.5, 5.6).**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that schools receive resources in a timely manner to meet needs, including those that arise through school inspection.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Offering a lower level or no financial support to the schools, but this is considered inappropriate as support is required to assist schools in achieving improved outcomes for children and young people.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Current position

- 5.1 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, funding of £0.304m 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 Director of Children, Young People and Learning and the Borough Treasurer, 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 likely to fall into one of the categories of causing concern, including notice to improve and special measures without additional financial support

Unrestricted

- 5.2 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 Director of Children, Young People and Learning.
- 5.3 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.

New proposals

- 5.4 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 Director of Children, Young People and Learning 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.
- 5.5 The level of allocation of funds would be:
- schools issued with a Notice to Improve (up to £20k per year)
 - schools deemed to be in need of special measures (up to £50k per year)
 - schools at risk of either being issued with a Notice to Improve or entering special measures (up to £30k per year)

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

- 5.6 Where schools enter an Ofsted category of concern (Issued with a Notice to Improve or placed in Special Measures) the LA establishes a Management Intervention Board (MIB). The Board has an independent chair and senior officers of the LA as members. The headteacher and Chair of Governors of the school also attend the MIB to report on progress. A support plan outlines the actions to be taken by the school and the LA in order to effect rapid improvement. Where the school is unable to fund these actions from its own delegated budget the MIB can request that additional resources be sought. Any such requests are approved by the Director of Children, Young People and Learning. Funds would be allocated to the school from those held for schools in financial difficulty.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant statutory provisions and duties are referred to in this report

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The financial implications arising from this report are set out in the supporting information and the Borough Treasurer is satisfied that based on previous trends sufficient funds exist to finance this proposal.

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

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Not appropriate at this stage.

Contact for further information

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