

Title: Contingency Panel - Schools in Financial Difficulties 2018-19

Date: Tuesday 18 June 2019

Author: Janaki Try – Senior Accountant – Education

Contact officer: Janaki Try
jtry@buckscc.gov.uk
01296 383063

Schools affected: All mainstream maintained schools

1. Purpose of this report

1.1. This report updates members of Schools Form on the decisions of the contingency panel at its meeting on Friday 1st March 2019 for the financial year 2018-19, and the outcome of the appeals made as result of those decisions. The report also outlines the recommendations by the Contingency Panel.

2. Background

2.1. At its meeting on 15th January 2019, Schools Forum agreed the new terms of reference and details of support for schools when submitting applications, including:

- That each application from a school should stand on its own merits as presented. It is recognised, that in the past, some applications were not as robust as others and that a model template be made available to schools to aid them when drafting their applications.
- Panel Membership – increase Schools Forum members from 2 to 3 to provide sufficient views and expertise as required in the reviewing process.
- That sufficient time is built into the process between the deadline for applications and the Contingency Panel meeting, to review the paper work and to request additional information from schools if required.
- Clarification of dates when the Panel will meet.
- Clarification that an application for SEN funding will fall outside the scope of the Contingency Fund and will not be considered.
- Deletion of old wording, no longer applicable, referring to 'Applications for funding for other reasons'.

3. Outcomes of the Panel

3.1. The budget available, agreed through mainstream maintained schools dedelegation for 2018-19, was £437,311. The table in the appendix lists the anonymised applications from schools, the panel's decisions on funding, and the outcomes of any appeals. All claims came from primary mainstream maintained schools.

- 3.2. The panel considered applications from 24 primary schools requesting £816,746. The panel agreed to allocate £228,926 at the meeting and subsequently allocated a further £2,326 on appeal. Total allocation £231,252 along with £405 administration costs left a -£205,657 underspend which was transferred to reserves at 31st March 2019. Please note, the appeals payment for £15,010 was made this financial year and is a commitment against this reserve balance.
- 3.3. Last year's contingency meeting considered bids from 19 schools totalling £600,742 with £278,603 being allocated to successful applications.
- 3.4. Similar to last year, successful bids included unforeseen staffing costs, additional costs arising from safeguarding issues, pupil premium for traveller children and costs associated with additional pupils up to a maximum of 7/12 AWPU. Unsuccessful applications included bids that did not meet the eligibility criteria and for SEN related provision. SEN applications were referred to the SEN team for their consideration.
- 3.5. Given the total on reserves for unspent contingency budgets is now £401,488, the panel recommended that £300,000 of the reserve is refunded back to schools on a per pupil basis. The Panel also noted that new funding for 2019-20 dedelegation money is £428,171, and this together with the reduced reserve of £86,478 should be sufficient to meet eligible applications

4. Recommendation

- 4.1. Schools Forum to note the report.
- 4.2. To agree the panel's recommendation to refund maintained schools £300,000 of combined underspent budgets as detailed in 3.5 above.