



Report to Schools Forum

Date: 21st March 2023

Title: Report from the Schools Specific Contingency Panel

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Recommendations:

Schools Forum is asked to:

- 1. Note the outcomes of the Schools Specific Contingency Panel meeting.**
- 2. Agree the proposal to hold a further meeting in May 2023 to consider claims for exceptional energy costs.**
- 3. Agree the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the Schools Specific Contingency Fund for the 2023-24 financial year.**

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. This report updates members of Schools Form on the decisions of the Schools Specific Contingency Panel at its meeting on 28th February 2023 for the financial year 2022-23.

2. Contingency Fund Applications

- 2.1. The budget for 2022-23 is £437,839 based on balances rolled forward from previous years. There was no de-delegation from schools in 2022-23.
- 2.2. The group considered applications from 13 schools totalling £421,974. Having considered the evidence presented by schools the panel agreed payments of £103,906. There is one claim where further evidence is required and this has been deferred to a future meeting (proposed in May – see section 3). All schools have been notified of the outcome of their requests. No appeal requests have been received to date and Schools Forum will be updated of the outcome of any appeals in due course.

2.3. Appendix 1 shows details of anonymised applications and payments agreed for this financial year.

2.4. Similar to previous years, successful bids included unforeseen staffing costs, pupil premium for traveller children and costs associated with additional pupils up to a maximum of 7/12 AWPU. Unsuccessful applications were those in which the case was not made according to the Terms of Reference.

3. Claims for Energy Costs

3.1. Schools Forum had previously agreed an amendment to the Terms of Reference for the contingency fund to enable claims for energy costs to be considered if schools are projecting an overall deficit for the financial year and were able to demonstrate that high energy costs had contributed to that deficit.

3.2. 3 schools submitted a claim for assistance with energy costs and 1 school highlighted energy costs as a contributory factor in its forecast deficit but did not include energy costs within the claim.

3.3. As schools have not received energy charges for the second half of the financial year in many cases it was not possible for claims to be sufficiently evidenced and therefore the panel was not able to consider those claims at the February meeting. Panel members did recognise, however, that this has been a significant cost driver impacting on the financial position for schools.

3.4. It is proposed that a further meeting of the panel be held in May 2023 to consider claims for the impact of energy costs in 2022-23. Schools will need to have closed the 2022-23 financial year with an overall deficit and must demonstrate that energy costs were a significant contributor to this.

3.5. Draft terms of reference for this meeting are included as Appendix 2 to this report.

3.6. As there is to be no further de-delegation from schools for the contingency funding in 2023-24 the panel was mindful that an amount needs to be retained in the fund for the 2023-24 financial year.

3.7. It is proposed that the minimum amount to be rolled forward for 2023-24 contingency claims should be £250,000 therefore the maximum amount to be available for the energy claims process will be £78,000 should the other unresolved claim be successful. Claims will be paid out at a maximum of 50% of the amount claimed however if the eligible claims exceed the amount available the amounts are to be scaled down.

4. Schools Specific Contingency Fund Terms of Reference

4.1. The Panel agreed that the terms of reference for the contingency fund should be reviewed to include

- a) Support for energy costs are to be removed from the terms of reference for 2023-24 as high energy costs will no longer be considered as unforeseen costs.
- b) References to Covid-19 expenditure to be removed from the terms of reference.
- c) Section Costs for long term absence of non teaching staff if they are key roles that the school cannot cover internally.

4.2. Appendix 3 to this report shows the proposed updated terms of reference.



Appendix 1

Table 1: Contingency Decisions 2022-23		
Contingency bids for Financial Year 2022-23		
Anonymised list of 13 schools		
	Requested	Agreed 28/02/2023
1	£33,893	£16,947
2	£77,692	£7,500
3	£26,464	£5,084
4	£22,387	£0
5	£29,120	£0
6	£42,705	£12,905
7	£54,466	£24,005
8	£46,300	£0
9	£4,104	£2,052
10	£60,313	£25,628
11	£2,770	£1,616
12	£13,396	£6,360
13	£8,365	£1,809
	£421,974	£103,906
	Budget 2022-23	£437,839
	C/f from 2021-22	£0
	Total Available	£437,839
	Balance for Unresolved Claims and Appeals and to carry forward to 2023-24	£333,933