

Schools Accountancy Support Team – Service Offer

Schools in Financial Difficulties

Version 1.0 – October 2019

Contents

Purpose of the Service Offer	2
Support Summary.....	2
Service Offer - Period Covered	4
Schools Accountancy Support Team Responsibilities.....	4
Governing Body/ School's Responsibilities.....	4
Monitoring and Quality Assurance	4
Contacting the Schools Accountancy Support Team.....	4
Issues and complaints procedures	4

Purpose of the Service Offer

The purpose of this agreement is to:

- Set out the support provided by the Schools Accountancy Support team to maintained schools in deficit
- Set out the responsibilities of both parties in the agreement
- Set expectations for the support to be given to recipient schools
- Set out the arrangements for monitoring and quality assurance
- Lay out the process to be followed in the event of any issues related with the Service

Support Summary

The Schools Accountancy Support Team will be providing the following support to the schools identified as predicting a deficit outturn from their Q2 forecast in November and/or their provisional three year forecast submission in March.

Timescale	Action	Outcome	Responsibility
Q2 – November (in-year forecast)	Desktop review of all schools' submitted forecasts/plans and schools' explanation for deficits	High level risk analysis report for all maintained schools	Schools Accountancy Support team
3 year budget plan – March	Desktop review of all schools' submitted forecasts/plans and schools' explanation for deficits	High level risk analysis report - those predicting deficit positions are deemed to be at risk within the three year period	Schools Accountancy Support team
Q2 – December 3 year budget plan – April	Confirmation to the governing body that deficit budget has been submitted and Schools Accountancy Support Team will take action	Letter sent to governing bodies	Finance Business Partner (Schools)
Q2 – December 3 year budget plan – April	Deficit recovery process initiated	Schools Accountancy Support Team contact schools	Schools Accountancy Support Team

Timescale	Action	Outcome	Responsibility
Q2 – Spring Term 3 year budget plan – Summer term	Initial visit to high risk schools by Schools Accountancy Support Team	Support provided to enable the governing body to develop their school's recovery plan	School in partnership with Schools Accountancy Support Team
Q2 – Spring Term 3 Year budget plan - September	Robust recovery plan within three years submitted to Schools Accountancy Support Team	Full recovery of deficit within three years	Governing Body
Q2 – Spring Term 3 Year budget plan - September	Schools Accountancy Support Team agree school's recovery plan is robust and viable	Formal notification to the governing body that a licensed deficit has been agreed	Finance Business Partner (Schools)
Q2 – Spring Term 3 Year budget plan - September	No recovery plan or a non -viable recovery plan submitted by the school	First stage notice of concern to governing body that the plan is non- viable and one year monitoring process initiated	Finance Business Partner (Schools)
Ongoing	Monitoring schedule agreed with school	Submission of monthly monitoring reports and narrative to Schools Accountancy Support Team	Schools
Ongoing	Termly monitoring visit with Schools Accountancy Support Team and governing body scheduled	Evidence provided that the recovery plan is on track	Governing Body
Summer term	Outturn review : outturn in line with forecast	Schools Accountancy Support Advisor schedule visit with governing body	Governing Body
Summer term	Outturn review : outturn significantly different from forecast - Formal notice of concern issued	Visit from Finance Business Partner (Schools) to meet with relevant parties.	Governing Body

Service Offer - Period Covered

The period covered by this service offer is ongoing and support to individual schools remains in place until the school has fully recovered its deficit position.

Schools Accountancy Support Team Responsibilities

Contact notes of each meeting will be forwarded to the school within two weeks. Regular contact with the school will be maintained and a visit schedule established after the initial meeting.

Governing Body/ School's Responsibilities

The school is responsible for the formulation and implementation of the agreed recovery plan. Any variances from the plan should be notified to the Schools Accountancy Support Team in writing as soon as possible.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

As part of this agreement in order that the Schools Accountancy Support Team is able to support schools in deficit, it is important that schools provide the team with accurate and timely information. The Schools Accountancy support Team will co-ordinate with other services within the authority to ensure that a consistent and cohesive approach is applied to supporting schools. The Schools audit team will also have access to briefings and school notes if requested.

Contacting the Schools Accountancy Support Team

The Schools Accountancy Support Team can be contacted by telephone on 01296 382222 Option 3 or email schoolsfinance@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Issues and complaints procedures

In the first instance all comments should be directed to:
Janaki Try, Finance Business Partner ((Schools) – janaki.try@buckinghamshire.gov.uk