
Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: 4 March 2013
Subject: Capital allocations 2013/14 and 14/15
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Summary: To advise the Forum of the total Department for Education capital allocations to schools and the Council for 2013/14 and for 2014/15 for Basic Need and to invite the Forum to note the Council level allocations

Contact Officer: Rob Parsons

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

Reason for urgency
(if appropriate)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Forum is invited to note the overall Department for Education allocations for 2013/14 and for 2014/15 for Basic Need.

Background

1. On 1 March 2013, the Department for Education set out its capital allocations to schools and Local Authorities for the next financial year 2013/14 (and for 2014/15 for Basic Need). Whilst this is another 1 year allocation for Strategic Capital Maintenance, Devolved Formula Capital and for the Locally Co-Ordinated Voluntary Aided Programme (LCVAP), the Department has allocated 2 years of Basic Need in response to concerns from Local Authorities. There are also details of a bidding mechanism to potentially access a new Targeted Basic Need Programme to access the £982m allocated by the Chancellor in December 2012 to provide new, high quality school places in locations experiencing basic need pressures in order to prepare for further rises in pupil numbers.
2. For Central Bedfordshire, the allocations amounted to a total of £21,876,547. A breakdown of the allocations including schools DFC is set out at **Appendix A**.
3. Of note is that this is a significant increase on the 2012/13 allocation which stood at £10,677,624. However, the change in grant funding to the Council is a reflection of two significant changes to the DfE methodology for determining allocations.

4. In terms of the grant allocation for Strategic Capital Maintenance, this reflects a further reduction of approx 26% but has again been adjusted for 2013/14 to reflect the anticipated numbers of pupils within the area who will, as at April 2014, be expected to be accommodated in Academies. This also applies to LCVAP. The grant funding therefore relates only to LA maintained schools. Academies will have access to separate centrally held funding through the EFA.
5. For 2013/14, based upon the highest priority maintenance needs of schools from previous and updated condition surveys, a draft Strategic Maintenance programme can now be drawn up set against the category D1, D2, C1 and C2 works which can be afforded within the available £2,562,744 grant allocation with a focus on the external fabric of the buildings and on heating systems i.e. the need to keep the property watertight and warm.
6. As a consequence of major changes in the DfE methodology for calculating Basic Need, this funding to meet the growth in pupil numbers across all schools has increased by approximately 36%. We had previously raised concerns with DfE officials over the 2012/13 allocation to understand how this had been calculated and are pleased that the department has responded with a fairer system across all LAs by enabling Authorities to break their data down into smaller planning areas to avoid local growth areas being masked by Authority-wide data. It is also pleasing to note that the Department has responded to other concerns over the difficulties caused by a single year allocation and that a two-year allocation has been made. Clearly, and assuming this increased level continues over the rest of the MTFP period, this will have a significant positive impact on the Council's obligation to meet the need for places in the future by reducing the funding gap which currently exists. A separate "school places" report has recently been presented to the Council's Executive which set out the anticipated capital requirements over the next 5 years to meet the need for places and reflected an approx £12m shortfall over the period to 2016/17 .
7. However, the DfE have also retained a total of £982m nationally for a new targeted Basic Need programme. This funding will support the provision of new high quality school places in locations experiencing basic need pressure in order to also prepare for further rises in pupil numbers. This funding is also available to increase the number of places in special school/SEN settings where necessary.
8. As in 2012/13, there is the continuation of the shift away from support to individual schools to Authority level allocations resulting in a similar level of schools DFC in 2013/14 as in 2012/13. As with the Strategic Maintenance funding, this is for LA maintained schools only and Academies will receive their funding direct from the EFA.
9. Finally, there is a separate allocation of capital funding for the VA sector through the Locally Controlled VA programme (LCVAP) with a grant allocation of £447,723 (£497,470 at 100% levels). This represents a 32% reduction from 2012/13 which represents the number of pupils in Academies or in "modernised" schools. Given the delay in the announcements, it has not been possible to arrange a meeting with the respective Dioceses to agree the LCVAP for 2013/14, although this will be agreed before the start of the next financial year.

Recommendations

The Forum is invited to note the overall Department for education allocations for 2013/14 (and 2014/15 for Basic Need).

Appendices:

Appendix A – Schools Capital Allocations