

9th June 2020

To the Headteacher and Chair of Governors at all VA schools,

Re: Change from LCVAP capital grant to SCA capital grant

Please could you share this letter with the Full Governing Body and the Business Manager (or equivalent) at your school.

With effect from 1st April 2020, the LCVAP capital grant system ceased and was replaced by School Condition Allocation (SCA) grant. The Local Authority is no longer part of the allocation process and grant is distributed by the ESFA to dioceses rather than by LA areas. As our diocese is smaller than the DfE's minimum size (at least 3,000 pupils and five schools), it has been grouped with the Diocese of Norwich. To access the grant, both Dioceses were required to formally agree to the ESFA's SCA terms and conditions, which are attached for interest.

In most other ways the SCA programme mirrors the LCVAP funding: the strategic allocation is made by the Diocese following requests for funding to support priority capital projects submitted by the schools; the grant funding is at 90% (with a Governing Body 10% contribution legally required); and VAT is not recoverable.

With the Local Authority now removed from the VA capital grant process, the DfE is looking to Dioceses to now provide them with compliance information instead, and for Dioceses to have this in a format that the DfE can review and audit. This letter details the information required and processes to be put in place for SCA funding, and it will form the basis of the Diocese considering applications for grant funds into the future.

The new systems do not change the legal responsibilities at a VA school; the Governing Body of a VA school is responsible for the premises, for health and safety, for compliance and for the proper expenditure of grant funds awarded to capital projects. With the new SCA system it is the Diocese's responsibility to ensure that the grant allocation and project prioritisation complies with the expectations of the ESFA and that allocations are only made to projects where schools have demonstrated (in a format that can be audited by the ESFA, if required) a clear need and compliance, particularly in health and safety matters.

To assist the formal planning by a Governing Body/School in premises matters, the Diocese has previously provided a template Asset Management Plan on its website: http://www.cofesuffolk.org/uploads/Template Asset Management Plan - VA.xlsx_1.xls. In future it will be a mandatory requirement for the school to supply an up-to-date Asset Management Plan and costed condition survey with any SCA bids. Please could you ensure that this formal plan is in place at your school before Christmas 2020, and that the condition survey in support of this is up-to-date and accurate.

The Diocese will contact all VA schools in December 2020 and invite requests for your priority projects that require SCA capital grant funding from the 2021-22 grant year. This request will need to be on a more formal basis than has been the case with LCVAP and we will be providing an application form nearer that time which will include a series of questions justifying the project priority and requiring the Governing Body to confirm specific matters of compliance particularly regarding health and safety.

Of course, we fully appreciate that the current Coronavirus disruption to your school will require other matters to be prioritised at this time, but please can I ask that you programme

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this matter into the work of the Governing Body and with the appropriate school staff over the Autumn term so that you are in the best possible position to access the SCA capital grant for your priority projects.

The DfE has published guidance on good estate management, which sets out the policies, processes and documents that schools should consider when managing premises effectively. The DfE recommends that Governing Bodies/schools should review the "Fundamentals of good estate management" and use the self-assessment tool referred to in the DfE guidance to assess the school's approach to the effective management of their school premises <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools>.

DFC grant and processes are unchanged.

2020-21 SCA Allocations

We are contacting schools separately to confirm the outcome of the bids submitted in March 2020. Allocations will be made in two phases- the first provisional stage will be made subject to acceptance by the Governing Body of allocation terms and conditions (template copy enclosed), which enable the Diocese to comply with the ESFA's requirements. You will need to appoint professional consultants (except in the case of projects which do not require technical expertise) to develop the design/requirements and undertake a procurement process to establish value for money. The proposed expenditure will then need to be reported to me for approval to proceed.

As ever, the value of bids exceeded the value of grant, requiring prioritisation. A variety of risk factors were considered, including statutory compliance, operational impact, implications of not funding a project upon ongoing revenue costs, and likelihood of elemental failure. In addition, consideration of recent LCVAP allocations has been factored in, to ensure that resources are shared fairly across the estate. In some cases projects have been declined, and in others there may be part allocation- feedback will be provided.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel Jones

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Encs

ESFA-Diocese SCA Terms and Conditions

Template Provisional Allocation Form