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**Capital Funding for Voluntary Aided Schools – Archdiocese of Birmingham**

**Introduction**

The Department for Education (DfE) has recently notified all Responsible bodies, which includes the Archdiocese of Birmingham of the capital allocations for 2020/21.

The new School Condition Allocation (SCA) is the capital grant that replaces LCVAP for voluntary aided schools. Further information can be found on the DfE website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capital-funding>

A further electronic link is provided below to the DfE spreadsheets which provides the actual grant allocations by each Responsible body:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879249/School_Condition_Allocations_2021_Publication_File__April20.xlsx>

**Capital allocations and responsibilities**

The table below provides detail of the allocations for 2020/21 to the Diocese.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Responsible Body | Devolved Formula Capital (allocated to individual schools) | SCA - Floor Protection | Total SCA Grant 2020/21 |
| Archdiocese of Birmingham | £1,017,610 | £403,855 | £5,135,382 |

The Diocese will allocate the capital funding to its VA schools in accordance with the DfE’s conditions of grant; Capital grant provided by the Secretary of State through the School Condition Allocations mechanisms, for the purposes of maintaining and improving voluntary-aided schools prioritising keeping school buildings safe and in good working order by tackling poor building condition, building compliance, energy efficiency and health and safety issues.

As the Diocese will be held accountable for spending public money, I would draw your attention to the following exert from the terms & conditions of the SCA grant which is a contractual agreement between the DfE and individual Dioceses.

*“Part II of Schedule 3 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides that the Governing bodies are responsible for maintaining an environment that is safe and in good working order for children to learn, and are expected to prioritise tackling poor condition, addressing building compliance issues, and dealing with health and safety and energy efficiency issues. Dioceses must play an oversight role in ensuring that governing bodies are upholding these responsibilities. The Funding is not intended to cover capital expenditure which falls outside the responsibilities set out in Schedule 3.*

*Schedule 3 limits the amount of any grant paid to 90% of the expenditure unless the Secretary of State agrees exceptional circumstances apply.”*

 So what does this mean for Catholic VA schools?

All schools must contribute 10% toward the costs of a project. The Diocese must also use the following criteria to determine which projects can be funded from SCA grant;

* tackling poor condition issues
* addressing building compliance issues (statutory testing & maintenance)
* dealing with health and safety issues
* energy efficiency issues.

The DfE will be carrying out further checks, drilling down into the detail of individual Funded Activities, and so may ask for further information or supporting evidence, for example, copies of invoices, procurement documentation or completion certificates.”

**New IT System to manage the Capital Allocation**

As you may be aware, the LCVAP grant funding and the IT system that we have historically used to manage individual projects, *VASIS* have now been retired by the DfE. The Catholic Education Service, supported by Church Market Place and Dioceses have procured an IT system known as *Statlog* which will be used nationally to administer the SCA grant and projects from April 2020.

Future development of Statlog will also enable schools to also purchase licences to use the system. The cloud based platform provides a suite of modules to manage buildings, sites or whole portfolios. An electronic link is provided below for your information: <https://www.statlog.co.uk/>

Initially, the BDES team will administer the system. Individual building consultants will also be given read only access to projects they are managing on behalf of a school. This will enable consultants to provide up to date live reports to a school on the progress of their project through the numerous approval stages.

**Accountability for spending public money**

To prepare for receipt of SCA grant, we have been reviewing our processes as we will be held directly accountable to the DFE for spending public money.

The BDES website has been updated to include a revised suite of documents which includes;

* a trustee approval form which must be completed for all capital projects on Catholic school sites, regardless of the funding source – with the **exception of SCA** funded projects as these projects will be covered by a single approval form for trustee consideration.
* A consultant approval checklist that schools will be asked to complete should they be using a new consultant for the first time.
* A contractor approval checklist that schools will be asked to complete in the exceptional circumstances where schools appoint a contractor directly. We would anticipate where consultants have been appointed by the school to manage a project that these minimum contractor checks are carried out by the consultant.
* A post completion review that all schools will be asked to complete once a project has finished on site and returned to Toni Guest via email t.guest@bdes.org.uk

An electronic link is provided below to the BDES website for ease of access to these documents: <https://www.bdes.org.uk/buildings.html>

Separate instruction has been provided to those consultants on the BDES approved list, should the consultant you choose to use not be included on the BDES website, please do share this information with them.

**Next Steps**

The BDES team is preparing a draft programme of work based on the bids submitted by VA schools and the criteria now published by the DfE. We expect to be in touch with all schools to inform of the outcome of bids in the next couple of weeks.

Should you have further queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of the team:

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