

CONDITION BIDS FOR SCHOOLS

Eligibility Criteria for 2012 to 2013



Introduction

This document:

- Invites schools to submit evidence of building backlog liability
- Invites the submission of bids for consideration for condition, suitability and legislative change funding in 2012/13
- Provides the funding criteria
- Provides details of the bidding arrangements for schools
- Sets out the different arrangements for schools that are voluntary aided, foundation or academy.

Invitation

Part 1

In order that the Council can build on the body of evidence it holds on the backlog maintenance within the city, we are calling on schools to submit evidence of liability for the most pressing issues as understood by the school governors and/or trustees.

Part 2

Schools are also invited to put forward proposals for consideration of funding that will assist in addressing condition, suitability and legislative change issues in school buildings. The Council has set the funding available at £500K per year for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15.

Funding Conditions

- Total Grant contribution to any one project will be **100% for primary, special and secondary schools**. Bids with a contribution from Devolved Formula Capital or any revenue funding will be looked on favourably and will receive a score in the added value section during the prioritisation process.
- Minimum level of grant allocated will be **£3,000**. There will be no upper limit per project, but projects with a value over £100K will be considered for funding from separate allocations.

The Council will prioritise the allocations in-line with the following proposed benefits (these are listed in order of the Council's current priorities):

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- **Tackling the highest priority condition items:** This is defined by the Council procured condition survey P1 and high P2/3. Alternative surveys or other parties' judgments can be used, however, you should provide full details of these and you should understand that independent advice which has been purchased is the most useful to make allocation judgments by.
- **Tackling issues created by legislative change:** This is works that the school needs to undertake to comply with legislation, for example, works identified by fire risk assessments, or required to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act or asbestos regulations. Projects will be assessed against their health and safety impact and the risk exposed in the breach of legislation.
- **Enhancements to a project in procurement:** This is where a proposed project will address condition backlog maintenance and/or fit for purpose issues as defined in the asset management plan. These will be judged by the impact that would be achieved in project delivery.

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- **Reducing the impact of fit for purpose problems:** These have previously been known as Suitability Impacts and have been defined in the Suitability Survey. Examples of this would be temp removal or improving environmental conditions of spaces. This will be judged on the removal of impacts.

Financing

Funding will be allocated to schools budgets when an appropriate order has been submitted to the Council. To prove the works have been completed, final invoices should be submitted to the Council. Outstanding funds not supported by invoice will be clawed back.

Funding Agreements

The DfE are placing higher level of accountability on local authorities to have in place a formal funding agreement. As a consequence, before funding can be allocated to a school, the governing body will be required to sign a funding agreement committing the school to more formal conditions of funding.

Bidding Process/Arrangements

- The bid pro-forma (PDF) can be downloaded online at the Plymouth City Council website: www.plymouth.gov.uk/capitalplanning. You should have received an electronic version of the bid pro-forma via Email, if you did not, please contact Dan Mckintosh – 01752 307533.
- Returns are to be submitted and received no later than 5pm on 20th February 2012. Please Email completed pro-formas to capital.planning@plymouth.gov.uk or send by post to Dan McKintosh, Windsor House, Floor 2, Plymouth, PL6 5UF.
- The bids will be ordered by the Strategy for Change team and will be assessed by Council officers against priorities in consultation with the Schools Forum Premises Sub Group.
- On the conclusion of the agreed bids the Strategy for Change team will seek the necessary corporate authority and political approvals in order to notify schools.
- The Strategy for Change Team will contact schools to confirm allocations at the earliest opportunity once approvals have been given, in order for schools plan resources and project management.
- Funding agreements will be sent to schools and once this agreement is signed, allocations will be made direct to schools' budgets.

What sorts of bids are likely to be supported?

- Funding will be directed to support work and projects that are 'condition' and 'fit for purpose' based, i.e. proposals that will meet most urgent need. The highest weighting will be given to projects that address an evidence based priority 1 or 2 condition or health and safety item.
- Further priority will be given to projects where the school can genuinely demonstrate that it can't afford alternative options. The evidence of the option appraisal undertaken and the avenues pursued in trying to resolve the issue will be important.
- Evidence that the school has allocated its funding to reducing its backlog maintenance in the past and that it uses revenue funding to apply the correct level of ongoing maintenance, will be considered.
- Value for money is a consideration and condition funding may be added to other funding to meet wider strategic benefit.
- Preference will be given to bids for larger projects that could not be undertaken solely through Devolved Formula Capital.
- Bids should relate to the school's Accommodation Development Plan.

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- Bids that comply with legislative change will receive additional weighting.
- When planning, schools should be aware that condition bid funding **must** be spent in the financial year allocated. Concerns about the spending of funding in the year of allocation should be raised with the Strategy for Change team at the earliest opportunity. Bids that appear to be undeliverable in this respect will receive a negative weighting.
- Please note that bids should not be combined to create a larger project. Instead schools are not prohibited from making a number of bids and should do so if necessary. Separate bids should be made on a separate form.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: I don't think there is much money available is it worth my time in bidding?

A1: Every year we receive many bids that seem to be simply chasing money; these don't really make the grade. It is also true that many of the successful bids are ones that we know about in advance, this is not because knowing about these issues makes it easier for us to assess the bid, but usually because contact has already been made about a genuine need. If it is a matter that has concerned you enough to contact the Council about it is likely to be a matter that needs addressing. Please do not assume that because you have raised an issue in the past it will be considered, the authority does not have the resources to bid on behalf of a school.

Q2: Ofsted have told us we need to do this work, why is it not seen as a priority in condition?

A2: Ofsted are not building surveyors and will not professionally assess building condition. An Ofsted judgement will not make a matter a priority over health and safety or legislative issues that need addressing in a school. This means that Ofsted will not be the best organisation to make these judgments

Q3: My condition survey identifies so much work that needs doing we will never be able to afford it all.

A3: This is the same for any organisation. Identifying backlog maintenance is not an uncommon issue and is often a function of not applying sufficient revenue funding to a recurrent maintenance regime. It will not be necessary to tackle the total backlog in a five year plan but you should plan for the most pressing issues and understanding what these are and aligning your proposals will be the best way of gaining funding support.

Q4: What will happen if I can't spend the funding in the year allocated?

A5: In the past we have found ways of supporting individual schools that have failed to spend the funding and on a case-by-case basis work with the school on a solution. However, doing this means that another school is not getting the funding in this 'new' year and it does beg the question how urgent the project was if it has not been spent a year later. With the shortness of capital funding available we have to be much stricter, so it is very likely that the answer is that you will lose it.

Q6: What happens if I submit a bid after the deadline?

A6: In the past bids received late have not been considered, on the advice of Schools Forum. However, we understand that in certain circumstances submitting a late bid is unavoidable, so with in reason we will consider late bids but they will receive a suitable priority reduction, during the ordering process.

Q7: How will I know if you have received my pro-forma?

A7: Every pro-forma we receive (whether a bid is made or not) will be acknowledged, either by email or phone. If you submit a pro-forma and you do not receive an acknowledgement within 48

hours, please contact Dan McKintosh on 01752 307533 to confirm receipt. Please note, only proformas that have been acknowledged will be considered.

Voluntary Aided Schools

The funding used to create the Council's condition bidding pot comes from the maintained sector. Voluntary Aided schools are not therefore permitted to submit bids for this funding, as they have separate funding opportunities available to them. At a recent Locally Coordinated Voluntary Aided Pot (LCVAP) meeting both the Church of England and Catholic Diocese agreed to target PI condition work as identified in the local authority condition surveys. Voluntary Aided schools which have projects that they would like to undertake should contact their Diocese Buildings Officer.

Foundation Schools

Schools that are foundation with or without a trust are eligible as maintained schools. The school will be the freeholder of the property and therefore the grant has a claw back liability should the property or land in which the funding is invested be transferred to another party. This is relevant for those schools that are considering becoming an academy.

Academies

Capital for academies remains unclear until the outcomes of Sebastian James' Review of Education Capital are put into place. Funding received by the authority for capital maintenance has been reduced in line with those academies transferring from authority control; therefore this condition funding is not available to Academy schools and should seek guidance from PfS.

What do I do now?

In the first instance, consider filling in Part I of the condition bid, this will not take long and will set out for the Council what your number one building issue is. Then set about considering the criteria above. Does what you have written in Part I meet these criteria and you are unable to divert funds to deal with it? If the answer to this is yes, then you should consider bidding. For further advice and guidance or assistance with your bid please contact Dan McKintosh on 01752 307533, or Michelle Endacott on 01752 307426.