School Sustainability and Sufficiency

# De-Delegated Contingency Funding

## School Organisation Strategy Group Activity 2024-25

Schools Forum has asked for an update on Successful Contingency funded work during 2024-25. This has included:

* Finding Ways Forward conferences, including phase sessions and planning areas sessions
* Creation and development of toolkits and guidance for organisational change, developing partnerships PAN reductions
* Schools supported to submit permanent PAN reduction expressions of interest and capping requests
* Proactive conversations initiated and facilitated; secondary schools collegiate EOI proposal, groups of schools’ partnerships, Executive Headteacher arrangements developed and arrangements to support vulnerable schools with sustainable futures.
* The Amalgamation of Rachel Keeling and Globe Schools
* Federation of Children’s House and Old Palace Schools
* 7 schools applied for LDA
* 7 further schools will be applying for Licensed Deficits
* An annual delivery plan for SOSG work has been established, Dr Helen Jenner to sit on the School Organisation Strategy group as in independent advisor

## Licensed Deficit Application Project

The Licensed Deficit Aplication Project (LDAP) continues to support schools that may be in financially vulnerable position, providing financial assurance for any Licensed Deficit Applications, and that budget processes are robust in line with Schools Financial Value Standards (SFVS). The project requires continued support from the independent consultants to ensure success through finaincaial sustainabbilty. This support focuses on:

**School Organisation & Strategy**

* Guidance on reducing spending with minimum effect to teaching or pupil outcomes.
* Helping schools plan strategically to meet Licensed Deficit Agreements (LDA) or avoid deficit altogether.
* Reviewing SRMA reports to identify key recommendations.
* Advice and support to implement organisational change (e.g. partnerships)
* Advice and guidance around changes to teaching and staffing models aligned to curriculum models.
* Support with new potential income streams.

**Financial Analysis, Planning & Modelling**

* Support with financial risk modelling, sustainability, and changing pupil numbers.
* Budget planning and advice for returns and SFVS.
* Guidance on Licensed Deficit Applications and Avoidance Plans.

**Financial & Strategic Monitoring**

* Priority monitoring and guidance for schools in deficit.
* Monthly check-ins to track budgets, address overspends and mitigate risks.
* Stronger financial monitoring, including budget profiling, cash flow, and project management.
* Detailed quarterly reviews to ensure spending is on track.

**What Schools Experience**

* Monthly review call/meeting (phone, team, or online).
* Termly detailed review to inform Governing Body reports.
* For deficit schools: monthly progress and termly review reports must go to the LDA Project Board.
* Annual budget and strategy advice using DfE benchmarks.
* Coaching, mentoring, options appraisals, and project management (as agreed).
* Greater scrutiny of Quarterly Returns from the LDA Project Board.

## Timeline

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| June 2025 | 24 further schools (including eight academies) have met one or more of the three SOSG ‘at risk’ triggers.   1. the quality of education is below standard, as determined by an Ofsted key judgement of ‘requires improvement or inadequate’. 2. In year income does not meet expenditure and school surpluses are reducing and will “run out” within the next three years, with no matching organisational change plan (or have already). 3. More than two year groups have 15% + vacancies, or more than 35 vacancies in a 1 FE school   LA early communications sent out highlighted risk, mitgation and sustainability planning. |
| June – July 2025 | Final list of three further schools identifed as being ”at risk” following Year End outcomes and receipt of three year plans.  LDAs confirmed by the LA.  Those schools were informed that that LA is engaging consultants to arrange meetings with the schools to better understand their issues. |
| September 2025 | Submission of LDAs. |
| Novemeber / December 2025 | LA conducts further review of the 24 schools that previously met ‘at risk’ triggers and others following the autumn pupil census and Q2 returns. |
| Spring 2026 | LA to meet with schools causing continuing concern, schools provide risk assessment and recovery plans. |

## Maintained Nurseries Project

There are now three maintained nursery schools in Tower Hamlets.

Of the three, two continue to face significant challenges and consider themselves to be vulnerable, with licensed deficits. Nursery schools are being supported through the LDA Project to confirm robust budget processes and to consider organisational change and/or new formal partnerships as the best solutions for their communities. This approach will ensure financial assurance and protect nursery provision into the future. This includes:

• Columbia Market Nursery continuing to explore explore possible partnerships in the local area, including potential academy trust links, or a move into the PVI sector

• Alice Model Nursery School continuing to explore possible partnership options with maintained primary schools.

## Appendices

Appendix 1 Consultant Projected Costs V4