



Achieving together in faith

Estates Strategy Plan

2023 - 2028

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Holy Cross Catholic MAC Estates Strategy Plan

Background:

The Academies Trust Handbook 2021 states that trusts must establish a control framework and that the framework:

“Must plan and oversee capital projects ”

Initial capital allocations brought into the MAC on academisation by individual schools have remained with each school. These are the Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) allocations previously held by the Diocese and passed to schools at academisation. Any capital balances remaining at the end of the 2020/21 academic year will remain with schools.

There are then two ongoing sources of capital funding:

School Condition Allowance (SCA)

Multi Academy Companies (MACs) and other groups of academy trusts with at least 5 academies and more than 3,000 pupils, receive School Condition Allocation (SCA) funding to deploy strategically across their estate to address their priority maintenance needs. The ESFA have decided that the information they have collected through the Property Data Survey programme (PDS) about the condition of schools correlates well with pupil numbers, which are also a proxy for the size of the estate that needs managing on an ongoing basis. Therefore, responsible bodies get a core condition funding component based on pupil numbers, currently £146.00 base rate per pupil (based on 2020 pupil numbers).

Additional allocation is then made based on pupil weighting, location factors and the last school condition surveys conducted by the ESFA (which are different to the MAC Condition Surveys).

Where the school is recently built, the SCA allocation is paid at 50% for the first 10 years. For the Holy Cross MAC this means that St Thomas More Catholic School will only receive 50% contribution until approx. 2024. When the new builds at Cardinal Newman (opening 2025 - tbc) and Bishop Ullathorne (opening 2026 - tbc) their SCA will drop to 50% for the next 10 years.

The SCA replaces Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) grants from the ESFA for large MACs, and as such Holy Cross MAC is not allowed to bid for any additional CIF funding.

SCA funding is provided as a lump sum at MAC level with no individual break down per school.

SCA cannot be spent on ICT (unless that is a part of a larger project)

Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)

Devolved Formula Capital remains based on a per Academy basis but paid centrally as a lump sum to the MAC..

It is calculated at £4000 per school plus £11.25 per weighted pupil. (2020/21 figures)

DFC can be spent on ICT and will form the base of the ICT Strategic budget.

MACs/Trusts are expected to have a suitable plan that demonstrates the strategic use of the allocated funds across their estate, and will have to report to the ESFA on their use of funds at the end of the financial year.

This document lays out that policy.

How Holy Cross Catholic MAC intends to distribute SCA across the estate:

The Holy Cross Catholic MAC recognises that there are capital needs in each individual academy.

However, it is also recognised that the age and state of repair of each School will not be directly related to pupil numbers. It has therefore been decided that the MAC should create a central capital fund for strategic funding of specific projects and also as a buffer to meet any unexpected capital needs at a specific school.

Capital Funds Management process

- i) All School Condition Allowance funding will be retained centrally and allocated across the estate to meet the areas of greatest need across the MAC. The MAC will aim to ensure all schools receive some funding however the main capital spending will be targeted at the areas of greatest need, or the areas that create the greatest benefit, across the MAC.
- ii) Devolved Formula Capital will be retained centrally at MAC level to fund ICT improvements across the MAC Estate.

Where a school has revenue reserves that are greater than 10% of their total income, then it is expected that the reserves (above 10%) will be utilised prior to the use of any centrally managed capital.

How the MAC will spend the SCA allocation:

In conjunction with each school the MAC Team will compile a list of priorities for each school site. Priority will be given to health and safety matters, outstanding condition items, and items that provide school improvement.

Capital projects relating to Health and Safety will be considered as the primary priority for capital spend. Thereafter the basic priorities of 'safe, dry and warm' will form the basis of prioritising condition-based capital spending. School Improvement priorities that enhance and promote better learning environments will also be included where possible.

The decision to prioritise projects on each school's list will be taken by the CSEL/CFOO after consulting with the Headteacher/LGB, subject to approval by the Resources Committee and Board where necessary.

The MAC Central Team will then present the Capital Spending Plan to the Directors' Resources Committee for approval to proceed to tender. The MAC's Capital Advisors (currently EXI) will then organise the tender and present costs for approval to the committee. A main summer holiday spending plan will then be agreed, with smaller projects outside of that timeframe when possible. Smaller or unexpected items of capital expenditure will be approved throughout the year according to the MAC Combined Scheme of Delegation.

To be capitalised items must generally be over £2000 and considered to have a life that is longer than the financial year in which they are purchased. This can include Plant/Machinery, Furniture/Equipment and in the case of DFC - ICT Hardware/Software.

Capital can be used to finance a refurbishment/improvement project but cannot be used simply for repairs.

Should a school have any questions about whether an item can be capitalised they should in the first instance consult with the MAC Chief Finance and Operating Officer (CFOO).

Once purchased the school will add the capital item to the School's Fixed Asset Register

Centrally Managed MAC Funds / Devolved Formula Capital:

Devolved Capital Allocations for all schools will be pooled centrally and this central fund will then be held for ICT works across the MAC.

SCA Allocations will be pooled centrally and allocated across the MAC Estate to address the areas of greatest need, to attempt to 'level up' ICT provision across the whole MAC estate.

New Build Schools

Where a school is being rebuilt under the DFE School Rebuilding Programme capital will be focussed mainly on any Health and Safety matters that arise, and any other significant issues that threaten the opening or smooth operation of the school prior to the new build being available.

Monitoring/Review:

The Holy Cross Catholic MAC recognises that there is a delicate balance between ensuring there is cash available for emergency works to be carried out when required, and utilising Capital funds to improve the Schools in order to avoid emergency works. As such, all capital funding decisions made will be reviewed annually by the MAC Resources Committee to monitor effectiveness of spend, capital reserves balances, and building conditions within the MAC.

The Resources Committee will continue to monitor and evaluate how capital funds are distributed on an ongoing basis.

Policy confirmed by Resources Committee: Jan 2023.

Policy Review date: February 2025.