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| DSG CENTRALLY RETAINED PROPOSAL 2019-20 | | | |
| Title of proposal | Asset management – Landlord Assurance & Support | | |
| Contact name & job title: | | **Contact tel:** | **Contact email:** |
| Andrew Brown (Corporate Estate & FM Client Manager – Corporate Property) | | 01473 264250 | andrew.brown@suffolk.gov.uk |
| Annual budget £ | | 2018-19  (for information) | 2019-20 |
| £646,240 | £646,240 |
| Which phase does this support? | | Primary | Secondary |
| √ | √ |
| Estimated amount per pupil £ | | Primary | Secondary |
| £7.12 | £7.12 |
| What are the benefits of Schools Forum agreeing this proposal? (Please give details of the service provided). | | | |
| Background  Services carried out under the general heading of Landlord Assurance and Support are delivered to ensure that Schools and the County Council comply with Health and Safety legislation and can meet its statutory obligations under The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2017.  Although many schools in Suffolk are now run as Academies the County Council as freeholder and landlord has a continuing interest and role with regards to all school premises across its estate. As such the Council has a duty to ensure children in Suffolk are educated and wishes to know that this takes place in a safe, secure and protected environment, be this an Academy or Maintained School.  The Landlord Assurance and Support service has been designed to fulfil this role by ensuring services and support are in place and available to all Maintained Schools and Academies. The service has been developed over many years, working with both schools and academies, providing day to day support and also serves as an insurance service when required in emergency situations.  With regard to most academies the County Council is also the freehold owner of the premises, which are subject to a 125-year lease. The leases reserve the right for the council to enter premises, and to require academies to seek landlord approval for structural changes to the properties. This is to check that tenants are complying with their obligations and in extreme cases to step-in and take corrective action in the event of a serious incident or failure to enable the property to remain healthy safe and open.  By agreeing to this proposal, schools, academies and the Council can collectively ensure that the Landlord Support and Assurance service is maintained for the benefit of the children of Suffolk.  Practical Help  In support of a general desire to minimise losses of continuity of education and to promote the well-being of the children of Suffolk, this Council offers to provide day to day support and assistance to Maintained Schools and Academies. Such support is crucial, but particularly so in the event of major incidents, to ensure children’s safety and the early recovery of their education, where this has had to be suspended. In this respect this service acts as an insurance and can step in to provide support and assistance at these critical times.  In order to provide a robust Landlord Assurance and Support service this funding enables Suffolk County Council to retain a team of specialist “Property Advisers” and support staff who provide a wide range of advice, services and practical measures to both Academies and Maintained Schools. This service is delivered on behalf of Suffolk County Council by Vertas Property Management (VPM), acting as the Councils agent and services include:   * A 24/7 Property Support Line taking emergency calls and organising contractors to attend and complete repairs in both Maintained Schools and Academies. * Compliance Checks. * Access to leading maintenance providers. An extensive procurement exercise has been completed to ensure such providers have a customer focused approach and are available to carry out a range of planned, reactive and preventive maintenance all in accordance with statutory requirements. This competitive contract procurement and ongoing proactive management ensures optimum quality and rapid response engineering and building fabric services to give you confidence that best value is achieved. * A range of service packages to fully support Maintained Schools and Academies in meeting their statutory duties in the areas of planned preventative maintenance and health and safety. In addition, they offer a flexible range of “Bolt-on Services” to support Maintained Schools and Academies. * Their Health and Safety teams work closely with Suffolk County Councils Corporate Health & Safety team developing policies around Asbestos Management, Fire Safety and Water Hygiene. They can complete Fire Risk Assessments and Health & Safety Audits, as well as providing day to day health and safety advice. * Premises Management training to ensure Maintained Schools and Academies understand their role in meeting legislative requirements. There are both face to face and e-learning options available. * In addition, to the day to day responsibilities around Health & Safety this resource can be drawn on in times of emergency to ensure schools are closed for the minimum period of time and pupils and staff are safe. Whilst this is the responsibility of academies in practice the council will step-in to assist in ensuring a rapid response and resolution to problems. * Review and support Landlord Consents process for Maintained Schools and Academies where the schools wish to carry out a variety of refurbishment and construction works. They have knowledge and expertise to ensure that work is completed in compliance with legislative requirements and records are kept up to date across the SCC property portfolio. * Quality Accreditation to ISO9001   Advice & Signposting  As well as practical advice Suffolk County Council can “sign post” Schools and Academies to online resources, suppliers and other bodies who are able to offer further assistance and if require can support discussions with the HSE.  Some examples of this approach include:   * The Grenfell Tower Fire – following this tragedy the council reviewed all schools within its area and helped individual schools identify potential areas of risk. Whilst it is understood that the DfE approached academies directly for this information the County Council, as landlord, still reviewed all records held for both Maintained Schools and Academies in relation to this. * Concrete failures associated with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) products. Again all records held relating to Maintained Schools and Academies were reviewed in relation RAAC products. * Investigate and collate information requested from DfE, such as the recent Asbestos Management Assurance Process (AMAP). The County Council holds historic records, and these can be accessed through this service, saving school leaders valuable time. * Asbestos incidents – where contractors have negligently disturbed asbestos in schools the council has provided emergency advice on initial measures required to minimise exposure, helped to engage appropriate contractors and provided advice on official notifications and assisted in discussions with the HSE, if required. * H&S advice and information is made available to all Suffolk schools through the Suffolk Learning website on a range of topics including Property issues. * Relevant H&S alerts are provided to all schools through the Suffolk Learning website and Suffolk Headlines (weekly schools email) e.g. HSE visits re Asbestos * Property related H&S advice and guidance in emergency circumstances.   The Council and Vertas act as a conduit for communicating changes to statutory requirements and offer practical advice on how to respond in such circumstances.  Examples of this include:   * Regulations governing oil storage * The control of Legionella (Water Hygiene) * Asbestos Management * Gas testing * Electrical Test & Inspection (T&I) * TM44 regulations relating to air conditioning systems   Ongoing Services to Maintained Schools & Academies  To further reinforce the service and its responsibilities the Council is intending to annually write to all Maintained Schools and Academies on Council owned land requesting they confirm that they are complying with basic property requirements, such as maintaining an asbestos register, undertaking regular water hygiene testing, seeking landlord consent for all structural changes, complying with building regulations, using contractors that are suitably qualified etc. In the event that returns are not or are inadequately completed the Council is likely to exercise its right to inspect the premises.  Whilst the intension here is to confirm that all Maintained Schools and Academies are complying with statutory requirements and the terms of their lease this service aims to support and guide them to ensure this is the case.  The table below details the services free to Maintained Schools and Academies through the Landlord Assurance & Support service.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Landlord Assurance and Support Services** | **Maintained Schools** | **Academies** | | Statutory Compliance review | **** | **** | | Access to a Property Advisor (PA) and 24/7 professional and technical property management advice and support | **** | **** |   Additionally, VPM have designed a range of bespoke Service Packages, which are available to both Maintained Schools and Academies and can be purchased to assist the Premises Responsible Person (PRP) in carrying out their statutory and mandatory responsibilities to keep their premises healthy, safe and open.   * Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) - bespoke to each site to keep assets working efficiently and identifying faults. * Electrical installation condition survey and Category 1 repairs to meet Statutory requirement to BS7671 for a safe electrical installation. * Natural Gas safety test & report (5 yearly) To ensure gas pipework installations meets statutory requirements under “The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulation dated 1998” * Inspection of air conditioning systems (over 12kw) in line with TM44 requirements (5 yearly) Required to ensure the energy efficiency of AC systems under “the Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations” * Responsive Maintenance 24/7 within 3 hours   Continuation of this funding will ensure that the Landlord Assurance and Support Service continues and is delivered via Vertas Property Management (VPM) and their expert teams. This funding is used in its entirety to contribute towards the overall costs of the VPM “front line” Property Advisers and support staff, ensuring they remain available to all Maintained Schools and Academies.  This funding amounts to over 44% of the cost of maintaining this essential service and equates to the following Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Post** | **FTE** | | Management and Supervision | 2.4 | | Support Services | 1.0 | | Property Advisor | 8.7 | | Health and Safety Quality and Environment | 4.3 | | | | |
| What will be the impact if Schools Forum does not agree to this proposal? (Please explain the consequences for the funding and delivery of the service(s) provided if the request is not approved). | | | |
| Funding for this service is essential to ensure that the Council, Maintained Schools and Academies continue to comply with Health and Safety legislation and are able to meet statutory obligations associated with running the buildings used by Maintained Schools and Academies.    Without this funding there is a significant risk that the service could not be provided at the necessary levels as Vertas Property Management would not be able to maintain its core staff. If this were the case, then the other services that Vertas currently offer, such as maintenance packages to ensure statutory duties in the areas of planned preventative maintenance and health and safety would not be available and Maintained Schools and Academies would have to make alternative arrangements.  Also, any emergency response to Maintained Schools and Academies when an incident occurs could not be maintained without this funding. In such circumstance’s the impact on schools and school leaders of having deal with such an incident could be considerable. Responsibility and the time to organise contractors, specialist services, as well as potentially dealing with the HSE would all fall to the school, without the Landlord Support and Assurance service being in place. | | | |
| How will the expenditure be monitored? | | | |
| The provision of this service is undertaken via a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Suffolk County Council (SCC) and Vertas Property Management (VPM). The SLA defines the service levels and scope of work which VPM provides to SCC, and the Council’s Corporate Property Team monitor the delivery of this through close contract management and regular contract management meetings. The contract with VPM includes a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which they must comply with and because the service involves compliance with statutory obligations there are clear tangible outcomes that are monitored. These KPIs are also regularly reported to the Council’s Safety Health and Wellbeing board (SHAW board) for discussion. As statutory obligations change the service is changed accordingly to ensure ongoing compliance.  Vertas also carry out their own customer satisfaction surveys, and that completed in 2017 scored the Property Management Services at 66.53% Good and Excellent. A new survey is due to be sent out in February 2019. | | | |
| How will the impact of the proposal be evaluated? (Please also include an equalities impact assessment for children or other people who have one or more of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010). | | | |
| The most efficient and effective way to ensure compliance with these statutory obligations is to coordinate and deliver this service centrally through one team. Non-compliance is not an option and would most likely lead to significant fines and risks to the effective and safe running of Suffolk’s Maintained Schools and Academies. | | | |