

SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT FORUM

Report of: Dianne Nielsen

Subject: Growth Fund

Date: 13 November 2019

1.0 Purpose of this paper

- 1.1 Due to the increase in Secondary School places from September 2019, it was recommended by the DfE to create a Growth Fund. The purpose of this report is to propose a policy for allocation of funding for planned pupil number increases from the Growth Fund.

2.0 Growth Fund

- 2.1 The ESFA allows the Local Authority (LA) with the agreement from Schools Forum, to top slice the DSG - Schools Block to create a Growth Fund to support schools which are required to provide extra places for the pre-16 pupils in order to meet basic need within the authority. Please note this is to meet need in terms of planned admission arrangements as previously agreed in advance by the LA.
- 2.2 The Growth Fund may not be used to support schools in financial difficulty or general growth due to popularity. No allocation will be made to a school/academy where the school/academy:
- has surplus places and then takes additional children up to the PAN
 - admits over PAN at their own choice
 - admit extra pupils where those pupils have a reasonable alternative school place
 - is directed and/or requested to admit additional pupils as a result of errors, appeals, fair access protocol, SEN, LAC etc as these numbers will be low on an individual school basis.
- 2.3 Local Authorities must fund all schools (maintained and academies) on the same criteria.
- 2.4 Criteria for allocating growth funds should contain clear objective trigger points for qualification and a clear formula for calculating allocations along with a criteria to set out the circumstances in which a payment could be made. Please refer to the attached **Appendix** for the proposed criteria. This will determine allocations of growth funding to schools and academies.
- 2.5 The LA also is required to consult Schools Forum on the total to be top-sliced from the schools block.
- 2.6 Where growth funding is payable, maintained schools will receive funding for pupils above the threshold to reflect the period September to March only (as additional funding will then flow through the October pupil count) and September to August for

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academy schools (as additional funding does not flow through until the start of the next academic year).

- 2.7 The School Management Forum will receive update on how the Growth Fund is being spent. It is proposed that any underspend is carried forward in to the following year to support the Growth Fund.
- 2.8 The Growth Fund will be reviewed annually and will be subject to potential changes resulting from the introduction of the national funding formula and/or a decision taken locally by the Schools Management Forum.

3.0 Funding Requirement 2019/20

- 3.1 No growth fund was created for the 2019/20 financial year, therefore no funding was available from the DSG to fund growth within 2019/20. As the schools block for 2019/20 was all committed into the schools budget share, a growth fund cannot be created in year, therefore the Local Authority has funded additional growth places for the period September 2019 to March 2020. In order to fund the places in the 2020/21 financial year, it will be necessary to create a growth fund.

4.0 Required Topslice

- 4.1 92, year 7 places were required from September 2019 which need to be supported from April 20 until August 2020, it is proposed that a further 60 year 7 places will be required from September 2020. The indicative proposed topslice requirement for 2020-21 will be in the region of £308,700, the final figure will be reviewed when schools AWPU's have been set.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 That Schools Management Forum agree the proposed criteria for the growth fund to support planned increases in school places.

Schools Growth Fund Criteria

- a. Schools/Academies will only be able access the fund where they have had an increase in their PAN at the request of the local authority to meet a lack of available space in the local area as part of the planned changes agreed in advance.
- b. The actual funding allocated to a school will be based on the **actual** number of increased pupils on roll, not based on the increase in the PAN. Therefore, the actual numbers will be the number of pupils on roll at the starts of the Autumn term in comparison to the number of pupils funded in the individual school budget share (ie the last October census).
- c. All places are funded once the increase in the pupil admissions (in line with PAN) is more than 15 places.
- d. The amount to be funded per pupil will be based on 7/12's of the "Basic Entitlement Funding" (AWPU) for the age group of the pupil for maintained schools.
- e. Where places are commissioned by the LA at an academy in Middlesbrough, a full 12 months support will be provided, in recognition that increased pupil numbers in academies will not feed through into their budget until the following September.
- f. Increases in admissions that meet the agreed criteria will be funded automatically and do not need to be considered by School Forum.
- g. It is proposed that if circumstances require a different approach, that these are presented to Forum with additional information in order that a separate decision can be made concerning access to the growth fund.
- h. Where there is a dispute over the funding amount, this will be presented to the Forum for a final decision.
- i. This continuation of this criteria is subject to potential changes resulting from the introduction of the national funding formula and / or decisions taken locally by the Schools Forum.