

DECISION PAPER

SUBJECT: ALLOCATION OF GROWTH FUND TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2016-17
DATE: 11th MARCH 2015
RECIPIENT: SCHOOLS' FORUM

SUMMARY:

The DfE announced as part of their schools funding reform that Local Authorities can hold back funds previously distributed to schools in respect of growth in pupil numbers as a direct result of basic need and redistribute these by a method approved by the Schools Forum. An agreed methodology for distributing the growth fund has been in place since 2013/14. In light of recent pressures within the Dedicated Schools Grant it is appropriate to review this methodology and to propose an alternative.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Schools Forum :

- (i) Approve one of the proposed methods of allocation of resources held within the primary growth fund.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The DfE approved the redistribution of funding for basic need, this will allow the LA to support those primary schools experiencing increases in pupil numbers.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

2. The growth fund could be delegated to all primary schools as part of the funding formula however expanding schools would then be responsible for funding any extra costs from their own budget shares.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

3. Currently, primary schools that are affected by growth in the forthcoming year receive an allocation based on the increased number of classes required (assumed 30 pupils per class). The actual sum per class agreed at Schools Forum in December 2012 was £33,400, based on the costs of a teacher, an LSA and a lunchtime supervisor.
4. The ISB contingency can also be available to fund schools that experience financial difficulty as a result of an unexpected significant increase in number on roll. However, criteria for the future use of the ISB contingency is subject to a further report being presented to the Schools Forum 11th March 2015.

5. The proposals for the future level of the Growth Fund, for consideration within this report, are outlined as follows.

Option 1

Remains at the same financial level. Additional funding is based on the increased number of classes required (based on 30 pupils per class). £33,400 per extra class would be allocated, based on the costs of a teacher, an LSA and a lunchtime supervisor.

Option 2

Same methodology however the financial amount is lessor. Additional funding is based on the increased number of classes required (based on 30 pupils per class). £26,600 per extra class would be allocated, based on the costs of a teacher, an LSA and a lunchtime supervisor for 7/12's of the year.

The principal change is that option 2 takes account of the timing of the arrival of the extra class, i.e. from September and therefore only allocates 7/12's of the cost of the staff outlined.

In addition it may also be appropriate to include a further sum as a contribution toward any hardware or furniture costs associated with the additional class. This principle has not been applied previously however this has been mitigated by the current allocation being based on 12 months of staffing costs.

6. The EFA have indicated that either option detailed above would be acceptable as a method for distributing the growth fund.
7. A review of the growth fund and/or the financial level will need to take place each year to ensure there is adequate resource to fund future increases in PAN.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

None

Further Information Available From:

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