

Oxfordshire County Council
Schools Forum – 7 November 2018
Extension of Growth Fund to include Secondary Schools 2019-20

Settings		Sector		Voting Entitlement (for decision papers only)	
Academies	✓	Foundation Stage		PVI Representative	
Maintained Schools	✓	Primary	✓	16-19 Representative	
PVI Nurseries		Secondary	✓	COTO Representative	✓
Special Schools		Special		Maintained Primary School Representatives	✓
Local Authority	✓	16+		Academy Primary School Representatives	✓
Schools Forum	✓	High Needs		Maintained Secondary School Representatives	✓
				Academy Secondary School Representatives	✓
				Pupil Referral Unit Representative	
				Special School Representatives	
				Nursery Representative	

For Decision

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This paper seeks approval to extend the budget for and conditions of allocation of local authority's Growth Fund in 2019-20.
- 1.2 The information contained within this report is based on the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) document Schools revenue funding 2019 to 2020 operational guide published in July 2018.

2. Recommendations/Actions/Decisions for Schools Forum

Schools Forum is asked to:

- 2.1 Note this report.
- 2.2 Approve the additional allocation of budget provision of £240,000 to £360,000 to the Growth Fund
- 2.3 Agree, for 2019-20, the additional conditions under which allocations from the Fund can be made to secondary schools as detailed in section 5.

3. Background

- 3.1 The local authority may deduct an amount from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools block to create a Growth Fund to support schools which are required to provide extra pupil places within the authority. The growth fund is a ring-fenced amount to be used only for the following purposes

- 1) Supporting growth in primary aged pupil numbers to meet basic need
- 2) Supporting growth in secondary 11+ to 16+ aged pupil numbers to meet basic need
- 3) To support additional classes to meet infant class size regulation and
- 4) To meet set-up and diseconomy of scale costs of new schools.

Any fund is to be for the equal benefit of maintained schools and academies.

- 3.2 Currently the local authority has Fund arrangements in place to deal with points 1), 3) and 4) above. These Growth Fund arrangements, budget and allocation criteria are, as required by Regulation, annually presented to and approved by Schools Forum. The existing Fund proposals are the subject of a separate paper to Forum.
- 3.3 Currently there is no funding or criteria covering point 2) above – “Supporting growth in secondary 11+ to 16+ aged pupil numbers to meet basic need”.
- 3.4 The local authority would be required to produce criteria and propose a budget level to be reviewed and agreed by Schools Forum annually. The ESFA will check the criteria for compliance with the relevant regulations.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 The recent annual increases in pupil numbers in the primary aged sector are now moving, though to a lesser extent due to significant movement of pupils to the private sector at aged 11+ has begun to appear within secondary schools. It therefore seems appropriate to propose an extension to the local authority’s existing Growth Fund to provide financial support to appropriately qualifying secondary schools.
- 4.2 In order, to keep the process as simple as possible, similar in nature to the criteria used for primary schools and avoid “reinventing the wheel” a review of existing other local authority schemes, utilising the approaches and findings of those schemes, has been undertaken and the proposed scheme summarised below has been distilled from those schemes.
- 4.3 It is generally recognised that secondary schools are able to prioritise costs based on locally identified requirements (what extras are needed) and in most cases, will be accommodate an additional class within their existing curriculum model, school structure and support services and personnel.

5. Proposal for Secondary Scheme

- 5.1 Funding will be for permanent growth only and will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the local authority Admissions Team.
- 5.2 Growth will be at the local authority's request and apply to permanent growth only, involving the creation of a new class and to meet basic need. Schools will need to manage temporary bulge year groups and admissions above the school's published admission number. By using this approach this will ensure that the funding specifically contributes to identifiable increased costs – curriculum structure, support staff and management.
- 5.3 For those maintained schools eligible, funding will be paid for appropriate years at a fixed sum of £70,000 per year. This representing approximately 7/12 of Basic Entitlement for a standard size class. Due to the funding regime used for academies, covering academic rather financial years, and using a similar approach for primary schools, the academic year funding would be the full £120,000.
- 5.4 The funding is intended to provide a contribution toward additional resources required to initially set up and run the new class. Future years funding will be part of the budget share as the pupils will be included in the following October census.
- 5.5 All-through schools will be funded according to the relevant primary and/or secondary growth fund criteria.
- 5.6 School numbers increasing due to parent popularity will not be eligible for Growth Fund monies.
- 5.7 The fund is not intended to address budgetary issues arising from longer term increasing number.
- 5.8 The fund would be available to all schools funded through the LA's DSG Schools block.
- 5.9 Any scheme would be introduced from 1 April 2019.
- 5.10 Any unspent allocation on the Growth Fund at year will form part of the provision set aside to meet future new schools' set-up and economy of scale costs.

6. Allocation – Creation of Fund

- 6.1 Funding used to finance primary growth and new schools' set-up and associated costs is generally committed until 2021-22. See previous

Schools Forum papers on these subjects. Therefore, additional funding will be required to finance the extension of the Growth Fund.

- 6.2 The amount can be top sliced from DSG Schools block to create funding for this purpose. The total funding to be made available is to be agreed by Schools Forum.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 At present it is difficult to gauge the number of secondary schools that could be eligible for this type of funding. An initial comparison of old data indicates that possibly two or three schools may seek support. It is likely, that as the majority of secondary schools are academies that the top slice required from the DSG Schools block would be between £240,000 and £360,000. Schools census data is due to be available within 4 weeks and with this data a more precise position can be calculated.
- 7.2 Section 251 documentation, recording how local authorities deploy their Dedicated Schools Grant, identifies most authorities operating a Growth Fund but not necessarily involving secondary schools. A review of amounts identified by other local authority schemes indicate that between £0 and £107 per pupil is held for Growth Fund activities with Oxfordshire's current reduced scheme represents £7 per pupil. Setting additional funding aside as identified in paragraph 7.1 above would increase Oxfordshire's per pupil amount to between £8 and £12.
- 7.3 The additional funding required would be taken from the Schools block through the secondary schools' formula allocation – Basic Entitlement.
- 7.4 The growth Fund scheme amendment and amount would be reviewed and agreed annually.

7. Background Documents

- 7.1 Schools revenue funding 2019 to 2020 operational guide – July 2018
7.2 Early Years and School Finance Regulations 2018

8. Contact Details of Lead Officers/Authors

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact:

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