

Item 4: Schools Block Growth Funding 2019/20

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to notify Schools' Forum that **£0.157m** of growth funding has been allocated within the Schools Block for 2019/20.

2. Background

- 2.1 Growth funding is allocated, where appropriate, within local authority Schools Block NFF allocations.
- 2.2 From 2019/20, ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) have moved to a new formulaic method that distributes growth funding on the basis of lagged pupil growth. The new approach will measure any positive growth in pupil population between the two relevant October census dates. Any positive growth will be multiplied by a primary or secondary factor and be subject to a protection and gain calculation.
- 2.3 Growth is measured at MSOA (middle layer super output) level – population areas used by the Office for National Statistics. Negative growth at MSOA level is excluded, ie there is no claw-back from schools where pupil numbers have fallen between the two October census points.
- 2.4 Between the October 2017 and October 2018 census, there has been an overall net increase of 90 pupils across secondary schools and an overall net decrease of 32 pupils across primary schools in Hartlepool.
- 2.5 Schools' Forum are required to consider and agree how the growth funding in 2019/20 is disbursed, with regard to the regulations and guidance.

3. Appropriate Use of the Growth Fund (summarised from the relevant guidance documents)

- 3.1 Use of the growth fund is restricted within the regulations to the following:
- to support growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need
 - to support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulation
 - to meet the costs of new schools.
- 3.2 Local authorities must fund all schools (maintained and academies) on the same criteria. Agreement by Schools' Forum to a transparent and consistent basis for allocation of growth funding is a requirement. The basis for disbursement of the growth funding may be different for different phases.

- 3.3 Criteria for allocating growth funds should contain clear objective trigger points for qualification and a clear formula for calculating allocations with these criteria, applying to all schools on the same basis.
- 3.4 From 2019/20, compliant criteria would generally contain some of the features set out below:
- support where a school or academy has agreed with the authority to provide an extra class in order to meet basic need in the area (either as a bulge class or as an ongoing commitment)
 - additional support where a school has extended its age range (the majority of funding would be paid through the funding formula where the local authority should seek a variation in pupil numbers)
 - support where a school has temporarily increased its pupil admission numbers (PAN), by a minimum number of pupils, in agreement with the local authority
 - support for KS1 classes where overall pupil numbers exceed a multiple of 30, by a minimum number of pupils
 - pre-opening costs, initial equipping allowance, or diseconomy of scale allowance, for new maintained schools and academies; including new academies where the school is opening in response to basic need.
- 3.5 Compliant methodologies for distributing growth funding include:
- a lump sum payment with clear parameters for calculation (usually based on the estimated cost of making additional provision for a new class, or the estimated start-up costs)
 - a per pupil rate (usually based on AWPU, and reflecting the proportion of the year which is not funded within the school's budget share)
 - a per pupil rate, with a maximum ceiling.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Schools' Forum members are recommended to
- a) note the contents of the report
 - b) agree to set the Growth Fund at **£0.157m**
 - c) set up a group of three head teachers to work with local authority officers to agree the local criteria and methodology for accessing and disbursing the Growth Fund.

A vote is required and ALL Schools' Forum members are eligible to vote.