

PUPIL GROWTH FUND (BASIC NEED) 2014/15 CRITERIA

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval from the Schools Forum on the criteria to be used for making payments from the Pupil Growth Fund (Basic Need) for 2014-15.

Information and Advice

2. Further to the consultation on school funding for 2014-15, a pupil growth fund (basic need) of £150,000 was created for the 2014-15 financial year by a top-slice of the funds allocated to the primary sector through the local funding formula. The growth fund will be ring-fenced for the specific purpose of assisting primary schools meet the initial non-staffing costs associated with the building and creation of additional classroom spaces provided as a direct result of the County Council's Basic Need Schools Places programme, within the primary sector and will be for the benefit of both maintained schools and academies.
3. The fund will not be permitted to be overspent. Any funds remaining at the end of the financial year must be added to the following year's DSG and reallocated to maintained primary schools and academies through the local funding formula.
4. The local authority is required to produce criteria on which the growth fund is allocated. The criteria should set out the circumstances in which a payment could be made and provide a basis for calculating the sum to be paid. The Schools Forum are required to approve the criteria, and must receive regular updates on the use of the funding.
5. Schools Forum will be aware that there is increasing pressure on school places and that the County Council has embarked on an ambitious programme of expanding existing schools in areas where the supply of pupil places does not meet demand. Whilst it will not always be possible to completely satisfy demand in some areas, the County Council can at least alleviate pressure where providing additional teaching spaces is physically and legally possible.
6. School capacities can be increased by building new classrooms, remodelling interior areas to create more teaching spaces, or a combination of both. Some school capacities simply cannot be increased due to site constraints and/or other regulations.

7. The supply and demand of school places is analysed on an annual basis, using historical data together with projected demand for places at each school and in each of the LA's planning areas. Where a school or area is considered to be under particular pressure during the 5 year period for which we are able to assess demand, this triggers a sequence of events, including the conducting of feasibility studies, which ensure that a potential school expansion is possible.
8. The design and build cycle ideally culminates in additional places being made available by the start of the new school year and typically will allow a school admission number to be increased from that time. Therefore, the new classrooms will start to be used for a period of up to 7 months before the school benefits from the funding provided via the normal formula funding route, which would not arrive in school budgets until the start of the next financial year in April.
9. From the point when the new teaching spaces are formally completed, the school will incur a number of non-teaching costs that they would not normally have budgeted for, until the start of the new financial year in April.

Proposed qualification criteria for receiving funding

10. Schools will only receive funding if they have their capacity increased as a direct result of the County Council's Basic Need School Places programme and at the instigation of the Local Authority. Officers in the Support to Schools Service Place Planning Team will discuss with schools in the Basic Need Programme the availability of the fund and will determine the number of additional classroom spaces that would qualify for the funding, should the expansion take place, and which of the below funding levels apply in each case. Schools will not need to apply for financial support from this fund.

Basis of financial support

11. The following allocations will apply:

- £1,000 for each newly built classroom space as a contribution towards energy and cleaning costs
- £1,500 for each new classroom space as a contribution towards teaching and learning resources

12. Examples:

- *School A* has a two classroom extension provided through a new build project. The school will receive a £2,000 contribution towards energy and cleaning costs and a £3,000 contribution towards teaching and learning resources.
- *School B* has two new teaching spaces created as a result of internal modification. The school will receive £3,000 contribution towards teaching and learning resources but nothing towards energy or cleaning costs, since the space available has not been increased.

13. All payments to be a single one-off payment. Energy/cleaning contributions will be reduced by 1/7th for each month that the new space(s) are not in use by the school beyond September. The teaching/learning resource element will not be reduced.

Report of expenditure to the Schools Forum

14. A report detailing the schools and academies that have received payments from the pupil growth fund would be presented the Schools Forum at each ordinary meeting.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Schools Forum:

- 1) Approves the proposed criteria for the distribution of the Growth Fund (Basic Need) for the 2014-15 financial year.

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