

Item 4

TITLE OF REPORT: New Growth Funding Procedure

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to bring to Schools Forum the draft updated Growth Fund Procedure.

Background

The Growth Fund is a portion of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block which enables local authorities (LAs) to support schools with significant in-year pupil growth which is not otherwise immediately recognised by the lagged funding system.

Prior to the National Funding Formula (NFF) the Department for Education (DfE) did not provide discrete growth fund allocations to LAs; Gateshead therefore set aside a portion of the overall Schools Block funding settlement to meet the calculated requirement for growth. This has meant that the Growth Fund was able to increase/decrease to meet the required demand - subject to the overall affordability of the Schools Block. Since the NFF the DfE have provided growth allocations equal to LA's spend in the previous year.

From 2019/20 the DfE has provided Growth Fund allocations on a formulaic basis for the first time. This means that the level of growth funding Gateshead receives will be directly linked to the increasing number of pupils one year to the next on a middle super output area.

It is a requirement of DfE, that if a local authority wants to hold a central growth fund then they must have a DfE approved growth fund procedure. The current Growth Fund procedure was approved by Schools Forum in July 2019.

With the continued pressure on year 7 places within the Borough there has been a need to review the Growth Fund procedure once again.

To try and make the procedure fit for purpose several proposed changes have been made which for clarity have tracked on the updated draft procedure in appendix 1

Proposal

It is proposed that Schools Forum members review the updated draft Growth Fund procedure (appendix 1) and debate any changes to be made or

rescinded. If Schools Forum members consider the updated procedure fit for purpose, they may wish to approve the updated Growth Fund procedure to enable the procedure to be sent to the DfE for approval. Within the authority proforma tool there is the ability to add any growth funding allocation to the recoupment tab, however in order to ensure that Gateshead retain the full flexibility and opportunity to provide growth funding at the earliest opportunity that this facility is not used and the authority pay all eligible payments to all schools locally.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Schools Forum

- Reviews the attached draft updated Growth Fund procedure
- Recommends any changes to be made or rescinded
- If the draft procedure is fit for purpose Schools Forum should approve the procedure and this will enable the procedure to be sent to the DfE for compliance checking.
- Payment of growth funding be retained locally to enable maximum flexibility.

For the following reasons:

- To comply with Schools and Early Years (England) Regulations
- To ensure the updated procedure is fit for purpose
- To retain local flexibility

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GROWTH FUND PROCEDURE Updated for 2020/21

INTRODUCTION

GROWTH FUND INTRODUCTION

From 2019/20 the Dedicated Schools Grant contains a formula for growth funding in schools by comparing the most recent October pupil numbers to the previous October pupil numbers at the middle supper output level to calculate the growth in pupil numbers. Local authorities are able to either use some or all of this growth funding or add additional funding from the schools block to create a Growth Fund to support schools which are required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need within the authority or new schools. The Growth Fund can also support pre-opening and reorganisation school costs. The Growth Fund may not be used to support schools in financial difficulty. As the Growth Fund is within the schools block it is only available for pupils aged 5-15 in mainstream schools. It cannot be used to support growth for under-5 or post-16 pupils or special schools.

The Growth Fund is ring-fenced so that it is only used for the purposes of supporting growth in pupil numbers to meet basic need for the benefit of both mainstream maintained schools and academies. Any funds remaining at the end of the financial year can be rolled forward into the following year's growth fund.

Any growth or expansion due to parental preference will not be eligible to be funded from the growth fund, i.e. if pupils could be accommodated in another primary school within a 2 mile radius of the growing primary school, secondary schools to be reviewed on a case by case basis.

GATESHEAD CRITERIA FOR ACCESSING GROWTH FUNDING

A growing school is defined as:-

- A school where there is a planned increase in Planned Admission Number (PAN), and which has not had the full set of admission in-take. For example, an increase in PAN in September 2019 may still be having an impact in 2025/26.
- A school where the capacity has been increased, with planned expenditure on buildings, which has been agreed/supported by the Local Authority.

- A school where an increase in pupil numbers has been agreed with, and specified by, the Local Authority as a consequence of a delay in the opening of a new school or implementation of a capital programme that would have increased the size of a neighbouring school.
- A school/academy carries out a formal consultation at either the request of or supported by the Local Authority to increase their PAN.
- A school that admits pupils above their PAN to accommodate pupil numbers within the Local Authority at the request or supported by the Local Authority
- Schools that admit pupils in year groups other than reception or year 7 because of a closing school at the request of or supported by the Local Authority
- A new school that has been created with the support of the Local Authority and takes children in for the first time in either reception or year 7

PREDICTED OR ACTUAL GROWTH

Where the predicted numbers for a Primary School (excluding nursery classes) for the following September show an increase of more than 16 pupils or 10% of their total roll, due to basic need, that requires the running of an additional class, schools may be able to access additional funding.

Where the predicted numbers for a Secondary School for the following September show an increase of more than 40 pupils or 8% of their total roll (excluding Post-16), due to basic need, that may require the running of an additional class or higher than anticipated staffing levels, they may be able to access additional funding.

Where reception or year 7 numbers increase to the extent that an additional class or classes are required. These instances will be reviewed on an individual basis. Where a school takes pupils not in reception or year 7 due to a closing school at the request of or supported by the Local Authority, there will be no lower limit on this number.

Where a school takes pupils over their PAN in reception or year 7, historic patterns of year 7 intake will be taken into account as well as children from other LA's.

Children moving as a result in parental preference or moving into the area will not be funded. If these children start school on a non standard date, (Start of the autumn term for all schools and start of spring term for reception age children), as these children will be captured in a schools mobility data.

LEAD IN COSTS

New schools will be allocated an amount of £68,700 (2021/22) that can be used as the governing body see fit to fund any lead in costs and initial resources. This funding is in addition to the lump sum included within each school budget share.

To recognise that schools may require this funding prior to opening, funding is available to schools up to one year (three terms) in advance of the planned opening date. The funding will be phased as follows or paid in the term before opening as one payment:

- £20,000 three terms prior to opening
- £20,000 two terms prior to opening
- £28,700 the term before opening

In the event that the academy trust does not proceed with the new school and withdraws academy sponsorship, then any allocation made should be repaid in full to Gateshead Council within 10 working days of notifying Gateshead Council that the sponsor has withdrawn.

FUNDING A NEW SCHOOL – BUDGET SHARE METHODOLOGY

To calculate the pupil led factors for a new school's budget share, data relating to pupils attending an existing local school deemed most suitable will be used. It could either be a school with the same or a similar catchment area or a school with anticipated similar characteristics. Business Partner – Schools in consultation with Educationgateshead and Schools Forum will decide the most appropriate data set to use.

FUNDING FOR GROWTH

When applying for growth funding, schools will be required to provide evidence that an additional class or tutor group would be required to meet increasing numbers. (Views will also be sought from appropriate Education Gateshead officers).

Allocations will be calculated per additional pupil using the applicable AWPU rates for Primary, Secondary KS3 and Secondary KS4 pupils.

Amounts payable to maintained schools will be pro-rata for the 7/12th period September to March. Amounts payable to academies will be for the full academic year as academy budgets run from September to August. For new schools this will be dependant on their opening date.

An upper threshold will also be applied so no primary school can receive more than £40,000 and no Secondary schools more than £68,500 for the 7/12th period September to March and no Primary academy can receive more than £65,000 and no Secondary academy more than £111,400 for the full academic year.

For school receiving funding for taking pupils from closing schools not in reception or year 7 funding will be based on the average per pupil funding of that school. Maintained schools will receive 7/12th funding and academies for the full academic year.

Initial growth funding allocations would be based on admissions data and demographic forecasts to aid schools with budget setting (May/June). Where there is uncertainty or disagreement around the predicted pupil numbers, funding will not be allocated until receipt of the actual October census data.

The LA will undertake a mid-year review, based on the October Census, but no additional funding would be allocated to schools where funding had already been agreed unless actual growth was at such a level that significant additional costs had been incurred. In instances where schools had not qualified for additional funding based on the original estimates, additional funding would only be allocated if the school could demonstrate additional costs had been incurred to support the additional pupils.

In instances where actual growth was at lower levels than original estimates schools will not be subject to claw-back on any funding already allocated.

Where the growing school numbers require more than one additional class (numbers over 50) funding caps will be doubled.

AMENDMENTS

It is possible to amend the criteria for allocating growth funding during the year where this becomes necessary, however the revised criteria must be submitted to the EFA for compliance checking and must also be approved by Schools Forum before the revised criteria can be implemented.

Appendix A – Examples

Primary School A - Growth Funding Example

October Census 2018 195 pupils
Predicted September 2019 Numbers (Based on Admissions data and Demographic Forecasts) 216 pupils
Increase 21 pupils in reception
Increase % 10.8%
Growth Funding Allocation per Pupil £2,817.22
Estimated Additional Funding (7/12ths- Sept 19 to Mar 20)
£34,510.95, therefore would be funded at £34,510.95

Primary Academy B - Growth Funding Example

October Census 2018 225 pupils
September 2019 Numbers (Based on Admissions data and Demographic Forecasts)
251 pupils
Increase 26 pupils in reception
Increase % 11.5%
Growth Funding Allocation per Pupil

£2,817.22

Additional Funding (Full academic year) £73,247.72, therefore will fund at £73,247.75.

Secondary Academy D - Growth Funding Example

October Census 2014 1,374 pupils

October 2018 Numbers (Based on Admissions data and Demographer's Forecasts)

1,415 pupils

Increase 41 pupils

Increase % 3%

Increase in KS3 31

Increase in KS 4 10

Growth Funding Allocation per KS3 Pupil £3,841.81 = £119,096.11

Growth Funding Allocation per KS4 Pupil £4,385.81 = £43,858.10

Additional Funding (Full academic year)

£162,954.21

Capped to overall limit

£111,400