

TITLE OF REPORT: School Sufficiency Basic Need Allocations 2023/24

REPORT OF: Helen Fergusson, Strategic Director, Children's Social Care and Lifelong Learning

Purpose of the Report

1. This report sets out the position of school placement sufficiency and recommends allocations of Department for Education (DfE) Basic Need funding to individual schools in order to increase capacity within the schools.

Background

2. Local Authorities submit data to the DfE annually to enable the government to predict future schools capital funding requirements. The submission also assists the DfE to determine capacity of mainstream schools.
3. Following the closure of Thomas Hepburn Academy in 2019 all secondary schools within Gateshead have been operating above their published admission numbers (PAN) in order to accommodate the displaced pupils and the increased numbers of pupils due to housing developments within the borough.
4. Following the submission to the DfE, Gateshead have received the following allocations;
2023/24 - £12,590,361
2024/25 - £487,723
5. Given the current lack of secondary school places following the closure of Thomas Hepburn Academy in 2019 and the increasing pupil numbers both current and projected in the west of the borough, the Service Director, Education, Schools and Inclusion determined that this funding should primarily be targeted at addressing the need for secondary school places.

Proposal

6. Following meetings within a representative group of secondary headteachers a priority list, based on demand, and criteria to prioritise the allocation of funding was proposed as follows:

School	Basic Needs Allocation £m	Increase in school places per year group
Thorp Academy	4.00	60
St Thomas More and Cardinal Hume Catholic School	5.00	70
Kingsmeadow Community School	1.00	10

Recommendations

7. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i) approves the funding allocations to the secondary schools as set out in the table above; and
- ii) agrees to provide the funding to the schools on a grant funding agreement basis.

For the following reasons:

- i) To ensure best value for money for the Council.
- ii) To enable the Council to meet its statutory requirement to provide sufficient school places.

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APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. Every year the Department for Education (DfE) asks local authorities to provide a variety of data to enable Government to predict funding requirements in future years. The Local Authority returns an annual report on the capacity of maintained schools and academies in Gateshead along with the numbers of any surplus places in those schools.
2. Since 2019 following the closure of Thomas Hepburn Community Academy, all secondary schools in Gateshead have been allocating places to an enhanced PAN, which with the assistance of the DfE includes all unused space, including dedicated sixth form space to enable the Council to continue to meet its statutory obligations.
3. The review of projections along with local planning knowledge of future housing developments has highlighted that there is a requirement for secondary school placements in the short or medium term.
4. The current maximum enhanced PAN school places for 22/23 including Emmanuel College and XP Gateshead is 2293. As of the national offer day on the 1st April 2022 2283 offers were made.
5. The proposals support the Council's Thrive strategic approach.

Background

6. To address the requirement of secondary school places, discussions have taken place with secondary headteachers to agree criteria for expansion in order to maximise the places created and utilising the basic needs allocation funding in the most efficient way.

Consultation

7. All secondary schools have been consulted on these proposals as well as the Portfolio Holders for Children and Young People.

Alternative Options

8. There are no alternative options in order for the Council to continue to fulfil its statutory obligations to provide sufficient school places in the borough.

Implications of Recommended Option

9. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms the funding allocations from the Department for Education and confirms there are no financial implications arising from this report.

- b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no human resources implications arising from this report.
- c) **Property Implications** – There are no direct property implications arising from this report.

10. Risk Management Implication –

Ongoing revenue implications for schools following expansion.

Any planning issues need to be addressed before construction can begin. Individual schools will have to seek a variation in their funding agreement with the DfE.

Whilst the aim is to increase secondary school places for September 2023, the need for both planning and change in academies funding agreement as above may delay this.

11. Equality and Diversity Implications

The Equality Act 2010 consolidates the law prohibiting discrimination, harassment and victimisation. All schools must have due regard to their obligations under the act and an admission authority must not discriminate on grounds of disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation as to who is offered admission as a pupil. All schools must have due regard to their obligations under the Act and review their policies and practices to make sure these meet the requirements of the Act, even if they believe that they are already operating in a non-discriminatory way.

12. Crime and Disorder Implications – There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report

13. Health Implications – There are no health implications arising from this report.

14. Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications - The implications are considered as part of developing and implementing individual capital projects. Planned investment is expected to result in improvements throughout the Borough

15. Human Rights Implications - It is a convention right that no person should be denied the right to education, expanding secondary schools is the only way to ensure this and continue to provide both choice and diversity for parents.

16. Ward Implications - All Wards are covered by this report.