

Date: 05 July 2018	Item 8	Type of report: For decision
Report title:	2018-19 Falling Rolls Fund	
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Executive Summary

This report looks at the Falling rolls fund and a bid received for funding.

Schools Forum Actions

The Schools Forum is recommended to

- agree that the current review group continue to look at the falling roll fund
- agree the terms of reference for the Falling Rolls review group
- agree to that the above group should consider the bid received.

1. Background

1.1 The Local Authority identified the need to set aside £100k to be used to support schools with falling rolls. This was approved by the Schools Forum at its budget setting meeting in January 2018. All schools can make bids to the fund for support.

1.2 The overall purpose of the fund is avoid a school with falling rolls making teachers redundant to only employ more teachers as pupil rolls start to rise again within a two year period.

1.3 The Schools Forum has previously agreed the Local Authority criteria by which bids can be granted. The criteria are as follows:

- Judged Good or Outstanding at their last Ofsted inspection (this is a mandatory requirement).
- Surplus capacity exceeds 30 pupils or 20% of the published admissions number.
- Local planning data shows a requirement for at least 50% of the surplus places within the next 2 years.

- Formula funding available to the school will not support provision of an appropriate curriculum for the existing cohort.
 - The school will need to make redundancies in order to contain spending within its formula budget.
 - It does not have a surplus balance in excess of 5% of its school budget share as at 31 March 2016 and 31 March 2017 (or the relevant academic years in the case of academies).
 - Schools who meet the above criteria in 2017/18 will be able to prepare a Business case that, after checking by officers, will be submitted to Schools Forum for a decision taking into account the funding available in the falling pupils fund. Any agreed funding will be for a specified number of surplus places (within the planned admissions number) at 75% of the relevant AWPU rate.
- 1.1 The criteria has not been updated for 2018/19. There is a group of Headteachers who are looking at the criteria and the long term future of the fund, however that is not operating with a clear terms of reference.

2. Received Bid

- 2.1 A bid has currently been received from a school. There has been no other bid made on the Fund at this current point in time. The bid from the school is for the first year (2018/19) funding of £59k, with a further funding in the next two years of £50k each year. In total the bid is for £159k over three years.
- 2.2 Potentially there could be more bids on the fund that may put it in deficit. As seen the growth fund has a forecast underspend of £180k. The schools receiving funding are detailed in item 6 on this agenda. Originally it was planned that the fund (£600k) would be fully spent, however the reduction in pupil numbers reduction has not justified all the additional growth fund. Those schools who were to receive money have all be written to, too alert them of the situation
- 2.3 If Schools Forum agree, this underspend could be used to support the falling rolls fund. One of the difficulties of the current criteria is the requirement the local planning data shows a requirement for at least 50% of the surplus places within the next 2 years. This is a subjective opinion. Further the current projection indicates that the pupil rolls will fall and not increase for sometime. If this criteria is relaxed significant numbers of schools could apply for benefit from the fund. The fund currently stands at only £100k and number of benefices would be limited.

- 2.4 The growth fund is underspent and resources transferred to the falling rolls funds if the Forum agreed. With rolls falling there needs to be the right balance to allow growth in one are but account for reductions in pupil numbers elsewhere.
- 2.5 There is a further fund - the Schools in Financial Difficulty and this also provides funding to schools who are facing redundancy payments. These schools are likely to have falling rolls as well

3. Terms of reference

- 3.1 A proposed terms of terms of reference for the group will be tabled at the meeting.
- 3.2 The current group is made up of : Manda George (who is the chair), Rebecca Sherwood, Nicola Howard, Anita Gallagher and Pia Longman.

The minutes of the first meeting is attached in Appendix B