

Date of issue: 6th November 2023

MEETING	SLOUGH SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE AND TIME:	THURSDAY, 9TH NOVEMBER, 2023 AT 9.15 AM
VENUE:	VIRTUAL MEETING

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS

The following Papers have been added to the agenda for the above meeting:-

* Item 7a was not available for publication with the rest of the agenda.

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
7a	Growth Fund 2023-24 update	1 - 6

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Schools Forum 9 November 2023	
Report from the Executive Director of People (Children)	
Growth Fund 2023-24 update	
Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
No. of Appendices:	1
Contact Officer(s):	<p>Tony Madden Development Manger Email: Tony.Madden@slough.gov.uk</p> <p>Neill Butler Interim Strategic Finance Manager – Children’s Email: Neill.Butler@slough.gov.uk</p>

This report is for information and relates to all Schools Forum representatives

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide schools forum with an update on the Growth Fund for 2023-24.

2 Recommendation

It is recommended that Schools Forum:

2.1 Note the updated allocations of Growth Funding for 2023-24 as shown in Appendix A.

3 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 In approving the top slice for the Growth Fund for 2023-24 Schools Forum were aware that a healthy contingency sum was included to meet create new places to meet in-year pressures.

4 Supporting Information

Primary Places

4.1 Birth numbers have reduced year on year since the peak in 2010-11 and 2011-12. This has created a surplus of places in primary schools overall although this is not spread evenly across Slough’s planning areas.

- This **west** planning area has seen the largest fall in birth numbers. A number of schools have already reduced their admission numbers, it is likely that a further reduction or two will be required over the next few years.

The current surplus places are above our 'target surplus' in all year groups. No additional capacity is required. May 2023, the surplus capacity in Reception was 16%.

- The **central** planning area is under pressure in many primary year groups. For May 2023 5 of the 7 current year groups have less than our target surplus. This indicates that further capacity is required in this planning area.

May 2023, the surplus capacity in Reception was 4%. Based on birth data the demand for Reception places will remain at current levels for the next 5 years (dipping for 2025-26).

- The **east** planning area is very popular and attracts pupils from other planning areas. 5 of the 7 current year groups have less than our target surplus. This indicates that further capacity is required in this planning area.

May 2023, the surplus capacity in Reception was only 1%. Demand for Reception is forecast to reduce over the next 5 years based on birth data but numbers on roll may not reduce due to popularity.

- 4.2 There is a sustained pressure on places in the Central and East Planning Areas as in-year applications have risen to their highest ever levels. This has required that the LA open 2 bulge classes at the start of the school year, it is possible that further capacity will be required in 2023-24 and future years.
- 4.3 An issue has emerged recently whereby schools have managed partially filled classes down to a level where one less teacher is required in a specific year group. When this happens in areas with a pressure on places it can have an impact on the Growth Fund. To replace a 'lost' class with a bulge class would cost the Growth Fund up to £109K at 2023-24 rates.

Secondary Schools

- 4.4 The population growth has been impacting secondary schools for some years and 3 new secondary schools and an all-through school have opened. In addition, 2 non-selective schools plus one grammar school have undergone expansion funded by the LA. Slough's other three grammar schools have all increased their PANs.
- 4.5 The peak in Slough's birth numbers reached Year 7 in 2022 and 2023. The increases mentioned above provide sufficient capacity for this peak and the need for additional places is not expected. This will be monitored as the rate of in-year applications may change this position.

2023-24 Funding Requirements

- 4.6 Projected requirements for 2023-24 are shown in Appendix A. The top slice agreed in January 2023 was £565K. This is the last year of commitments for permanent expansion projects at Wexham and Westgate Schools. 2 bulge classes have opened at Godolphin Junior and Marish Primary to ensure all pupils continue to be offered suitable school places.
- 4.7 There remains just under £180K contingency once commitments are excluded. It is hoped this is sufficient to cover all new places that may be required by March 2024.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The financial implications have been detailed in the body of this paper.

6 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Paying academies for the whole year in advance rather than in 2 tranches – this was discounted as it crossed 2 financial years.
- 6.2 Showing academic years on a single sheet rather than based on financial years – discounted as it was less clear how the Growth Fund would fund April to August payments to academies.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 Local Authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential.

8 Equality Implications

- 8.1 Not applicable

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2023-24 Estimated Growth Fund Allocations (£)

Based on the financial year April 2023 to March 2024

APPENDIX A

Date: Oct 2023

	2022-23 rates	2023-24 rates
Primary AWPU	3,544.58	3,641.00
Pupils per Class	30	30
Full Year Growth Funding Per Class	106,337.40	109,230.00
All schools (Sep - Mar)	62,030.15	63,717.50
Academies (Apr - Aug)	44,307.25	45,512.50

	2022-23 rates	2023-24 rates
Secondary AWPU (KS3 KS4 average)	5,315.94	5,460.00
KS3	4,998.70	5,134.00
KS4	5,633.17	5,786.00
Pupils per Class	30	30
Full Year Growth Funding Per Class	159,478.05	163,800.00
All schools (Sep - Mar)	93,028.86	95,550.00
Academies (Apr - Aug)	66,449.19	68,250.00

2023-24 BUDGET		
Top Slice from the Schools Block	agreed with Schools' Forum Jan-23	565,000

FORECAST EXPENDITURE 2023-24

School	Status	Remaining years	Number of funded places	Apr-23 to Aug-23 liability	Sep 2023 - Mar 2024	TOTAL COMMITMENT
Permanent expansions						
Wexham School	Non-Academy	Last year	60	0	191,100	191,100
Apr-Aug 2023 commitments						
Westgate (permanent expansion)	Academy	Last year	30	66,449		66,449
Ryvers (+2s)	Academy	Temporary	10	tbc	tbc	tbc
Contingency projects - agreed						
Godolphin Junior bulge (11 months)	Academy	Bulge	30		54,615	54,615
Marish Primary bulge (12 months)	Academy	Bulge	30		63,718	63,718
Remaining contingency						
Secondary bulge class plus 30 extra primary places (10 months)	Academy	Bulge & +2s	60		113,763	113,763
Total			220		245,715	489,644

PROJECTED UNDERSPEND (Financial year 2023-24)

£75,356

Notes:

- 1 Schools' Forum have expressed a preference for an underspend rather than a higher top slice be requested at a later date
- 2 Wexham School is the last permanent expansion project funded by the Growth Fund, 2023-24 is the last year of support for the expansion
- 3 Westgate completed their expansion last year but their funding for Apr-Aug 23 is deducted from this year's Growth Fund
- 4 Ryvers created classes of up to 32 after Easter 2023 - numbers not yet confirmed
- 5 Godolphin Junior and Marish Primary opened bulge classes to assist with the pressure on places in certain year groups

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