

**SLOUGH SCHOOLS' FORUM**  
**11<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

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**Growth Fund 2016-17**  
**(Directorate of Wellbeing)**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Schools' Forum of the 2016-17 Growth Fund requirement and to seek their approval to fund this from the School's block budget.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Slough Borough Council requires a topslice of £1,100,000 for the Growth Fund in 2016-17. Recent increases in new arrivals to Slough believed to be a consequence of increased housing completions has resulted in higher pupil forecasts for next year.
- 2.2 The Growth Fund will fund agreed bulge classes as well as new places in excess of Planned Admission Numbers (PAN) at both primary and secondary schools.
- 2.3 See Appendix A.

**3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Slough continues to have an increasing pupil population alongside a significant growth in numbers already working through the primary sector therefore the growth fund should be reviewed in light of future pressures.

**4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 All options for creating new places are being explored including:
- Bulge classes – generally require a one off payment from the Growth Fund
  - Permanent expansions – require ongoing commitment from the growth fund
  - Increased class sizes or numbers above PAN – termly commitment from the Growth Fund where pupils are not recorded on the October School Census
  - Free Schools – ongoing financial commitment after first year.

**5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 5.1 The Growth Fund is one of the centrally held budget areas that Schools' Forum has decision making powers over. DfE guidelines states that:

*“the growth fund can be used only for the purposes of supporting growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need, to support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulation and to meet the costs of new schools.”*

- 5.3 The methodology for distributing funding is based on AWPU per pupil, reflecting the proportion of the year which is not funded within the school's budget share.
- 5.4 Slough maintained schools will be provided Growth Funding from September until March and academies will be funded from September through until August. This is due to the difference in financial years, as maintained schools receive their funding from April to March, while academies are funded from September to August.
- 5.4 Slough has seen a significant increase in pupil numbers over the last 8 years, with 16 primary expanding permanently to meet the demand for places. In that period 4 new primary schools have opened. This growth is now affecting secondary schools and 3 new secondary Free Schools have opened since 2015.
- 5.5 The School Organisation Group (SOG) will be consulted before any bulge classes are agreed. This is a change from the previous policy where SOG had to agree before Growth Funding could be approved.
- 5.6 The Growth Fund provides financial support for all the years a school incurs a shortfall in funding whilst going through a permanent expansion, and the first year only for a bulge class.
- 5.7 The Growth Fund will provide financial support for schools that admit pupils in excess of their PAN for each whole term that they make each additional place available at the request of Slough. Funding will remain at the 2015-16 AWPU level.

## **6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 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.

### Section 151 Officer – Strategic Director of Resources

- 6.2 The financial implications of the report are outlined in the supporting information.

Access Implications

- 6.3 There are no access implications.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 School Organisation Group and all primary schools.
- 7.2 A second consultation was conducted with School Organisation Group and Slough Schools Education Forum regarding the mechanism for funding places in excess of the PAN of a school. The details can be found in a separate report presented to this Schools' Forum.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 School Organisation Group were consulted at the last 2 meetings 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015.  
Consultation was issued to all primary schools 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015.

Representations Received

- No school objected to the principle of larger classes but some stated they were unable to offer this due to the physical size of classrooms or other issues.
- schools responded that they would consider larger classes but only if revenue funding was provided. Some also requested capital funding.
- St Anthony's offered to admit children up to 32 in year 3.
- Marish Primary School agreed to open 2 bulge classes in the 2 year groups facing the most pressure on places.
- Cippenham Primary opened a class that was agreed in-principle earlier this year.
- No other bulge classes were suggested.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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