

Schools Forum 15 January 2025	
Report from Executive Director of People - Children Services	
Schools Growth Fund 2025/26	
Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
No. of Appendices:	2
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1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report confirms the out turn from 2024-25 and sets out the budget requirements from the Schools Block DSG that will fund projected commitments in 2025/26.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Schools Forum is asked to comment on the proposed allocation of **£0.650m** to the Growth Fund in 2025/26 which be funded by £0.112m brought forward from 2024-25 with the remaining **£0.538m** 'top sliced' from the 2025-26 Schools Block DSG.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 At a meeting 28 November 2024 Schools Forum agreed 'in principle' to a Growth Fund budget of £750K for 2025-26. Officers were asked to reconfirm requirements at this meeting once the 2024-25 out turn was firmed up. Having reviewed the requirements, a revised budget of £650K is now proposed, with the underspend in 2024/25 funding the first part of that estimated requirement.

4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2024-25 Outturn

- 4.1. **Appendix A** shows the final out turn position for 2024-25 Growth Fund, there is an underspend of £0.112m. This funding will be carried forward to reduce the top slice required from the 2025-26 Schools Block DSG.

- 4.2 Note that a contingency sum of £9,488 has been retained in case there is the need to fund places up to 31 March 2025. There is a current pressure on places in Year's 2, 5 and 8 that may require larger classes to ensure every pupil is offered a school place. Any portion of the funding not required will be added to the carry forward and utilised in 2025-26.

Budget requirements for 2025/26

- 4.3 **Appendix B** sets out how the budget requirement of 0.650m has been estimated. The reasons for the figure having reduced from the £0.750m estimate, reported in November 2024, are:

- Confirmation that Marish Primary isn't experiencing a lag in funding despite opening a bulge class (note that they would still be entitled to support in the second year)
- A reduction in the contingency sum from 6 primary classes to 5 primary classes.

6 Financial Implications

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

7 Alternative Options Considered

A lower budget was considered for 2025-26 and is proposed here. A contingency of 5 classes rather than 6 increases the risk that a budget increase could be required in the middle of the year and a higher top slice requested from Schools Forum.

8 Supporting Information

Not applicable.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 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.

10 Equality Implications

Not applicable.

11 Consultation

- 11.1 School Place Planning Board which includes a range of headteachers makes all place planning decisions and reports back to their respective heads groups.