

SCHOOLS' FUNDING FORUM (SFF)

SUBJECT:	Treatment of High Weald Academy in 2022/23 formula budget and growth policy
-----------------	---

AUTHORS:	Chris Scott – Manager, Schools High Needs and Early Years Budgets
DATE:	14 October 2021

SUMMARY OF REPORT:	
This report seeks agreement from the Schools' Funding Forum (SFF) on the proposed approach to High Weald Academy in the 2022/23 formula budget and growth policy	
FOR:	Decision and Information

1 Background

- 1.1 The DFE have announced the intention to close High Weald Academy in the summer of 2022 having closed the year 10 at Christmas 2021.
- 1.2 Discussions have taken place among KCC officers and representatives of the DFE and ESFA to clarify expectations on all sides and there has been general agreement that it would be appropriate but not strictly necessary to find an avenue of support for schools admitting the pupils who must vacate High Weald Academy.
- 1.3 High Weald Academy is already in receipt of its 2021/22 budget which will be unaffected by the closure decision and the academy would close ahead of the start of the 2022/23 academy financial year.
- 1.4 Forum members are asked to note that the closure of High Weald Academy is currently subject to a 'listening period' and that in the event of the academy not closing as currently planned then all proposals in this paper will be dropped.

2. School and academy budgets for 2021/22

- 2.1 Schools and academies are all now in receipt of their 2021/22 budgets. There is no funding available to take any action in the current financial year and the

DFE confirmed in discussions that they are not expecting us to take any action.

- 2.2 The expectation is that most of the year 10 pupils leaving at Christmas will transfer to the Mascalls Academy which belongs to the same trust as High Weald (Leigh Academies Trust). The view given by the DFE is that this means that funding is already being provided to the relevant trust and that this should be managed locally without recourse to the authority.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Forum endorses the position that the authority will take no action in regard of the 2021/22 budget allocations.

3. Disapplication Request

- 3.1 The authority must submit budget calculations for all schools and academies in January 2022 that will be open for any part of the 2022/23 financial year which will include High Weald Academy.
- 3.2 The relevant period for the budget calculation regarding High Weald Academy will be April to August 2022.
- 3.3 It is proposed that two adjustments are made to the calculation for High Weald Academy, first we would remove the year 10 pupil number as they will have already left and then adjust the remainder of the budget to reflect five months of opening rather than the usual twelve.
- 3.4 The DFE have confirmed that we must follow the standard process of a disapplication request to make these two adjustments. However, they did also indicate that the approval of this would be a matter of common sense and that it would not be sent for a ministerial decision.
- 3.5 It is recommended that the forum endorses this disapplication request.

4. Growth Policy 2022/23

- 4.1 The Kent DSG for 2022/23 will include full year funding for the pupils recorded on the October 2021 census by High Weald academy and as such if the proposal in section 3 is followed this would create a form of saving in the overall budget.
- 4.2 It is proposed that this amount is transferred into the growth fund for 2022/23 for disbursement to schools admitting pupils from High Weald Academy.
- 4.3 Such disbursements would be based on the number of pupils in years 7 to 11 recorded by the admitting school or academy on the October 2022 census that had been previously recorded by High Weald Academy on the October 2021 census. Payment would be at the relevant AWPU rate in accordance with other growth funding.

- 4.4 This proposal would be given effect by adding an additional section to the 2022/23 growth policy ahead of its annual review at the next forum meeting.
- 4.5 It is recommended that the Forum endorses this proposal for making allocations to schools admitting pupils from High Weald Academy.