

SCHOOLS' FUNDING FORUM

SUBJECT:	Growth Funding Policy (GFP) 2021-22
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SUMMARY OF REPORT:

The purpose of this paper is to seek the annual ratification of Kent's Growth Policy by members of the SFF for the period 2021-22 and inform the SFF on the work completed to review the classroom setup cost allocations. In addition, it aims to begin a conversation about how this policy might better meet the growth needs in September 2022 onwards.

FOR:	Decision and discussion
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Schools Formula funding is allocated using a lagged pupil funding system. This means that the funding a school receives for its financial year is based on the pupil count from the previous year. Where a school has an increase in pupil numbers (generally from September) it will not receive in year funding for those pupils.
- 1.2 In order to recognise the cost of additional resources needed to support the growth in pupil numbers, Local Authorities (LAs) are allowed to have a Growth fund that is top sliced from the DSG.
- 1.3 The operation of the LA Growth Fund has to comply with both Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) criteria and the LA criteria. Annually the Schools' Funding Forum agree the local Growth Policy which is then submitted to the ESFA for compliance to national regulations.

2. Growth Policy Document 2021-22

- 2.1 The proposed Kent Growth Funding Policy (GFP) for 2021-22 is attached to this paper and includes an appendix. These documents are unchanged from the current year.
- 2.2 The value of Kent's Growth Fund for 2020-21 is £8.7m from the National Funding Formula (NFF) growth allocation.
- 2.3 Our estimate is that Kent will receive around £7.1m for 2021-22 (confirmation of final amount will be provided by the ESFA mid to late December).

3. Classroom Setup Cost Review

- 3.1 A template was circulated to schools who have received classroom setup funding recently asking them to provide details of how the funds were spent. This was in response to a specific request to review the £6,000 currently offered to special schools to support classroom set up costs.
- 3.2 Responses were received from the following schools

Bower Grove School

The Canterbury High School

The Craylands School

Meadowfield School

Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys

Westcourt School

Wyvern School

3.3 A summary of the responses is included in the table below

School Type	Funding	Spend	Balance	Notes
Secondary	£102,000	£106,305	-£4,305	Includes capital funding and spend
Special	£18,000	£18,101	-£101	
Special	£8,500	£14,675	-£6,175	Includes capital funding and spend
Special	£8,500	£10,656	-£2,156	Includes capital funding and spend
Special	£6,000	£6,381	-£381	
Primary	£6,000	£6,358	-£358	
Primary	£6,000	£6,168	-£168	
Special	£6,000	£6,025	-£25	
Special	£6,000	£5,630	£370	
Secondary	£6,000	£3,085	£2,915	

3.4 The data provided shows some outliers, however most classrooms were prepared with a small overspend. This data could be used to inform a discussion if the policy should be updated to meet future needs. Options could include:

1. No to existing policy
2. The value of the classroom set up for special schools is increased to £8,000 to reflect the average cost.

4. Future Growth Funding Policy

4.1 The majority of growth arrangements for September 2021 have already been agreed within the current policy and this policy reinforces these agreements. However, it is recognised that there are further significant but temporary growth pressures in the future years as the bulge passes through secondary.

4.2 The council is facing a capital pressure where the cost of the basic need programme is significantly more than the funding available. Various options are being considered as to how this can be avoided of which one is the possibility of amending this growth policy for future years to further incentivise existing schools to accommodate temporary increases in their PAN. This would help to avoid the creation of permanent capacity where only temporary capacity is required and therefore reducing the risk of creating longer-term surplus capacity which could impact existing schools. Ideas include.

Providing classroom setup funding for each key stage or year that a bulge class spends at the school.

Providing a protected number for multiple years or the whole duration of a temporary increase in PAN

- 4.3 Ideas for developing the Growth Funding Policy for future years could be considered by a working group of AEOs and interested members of the schools funding forum.

5. Recommendations

Members of the Forum are requested to:

- 1) Agree with the contents of the Growth Policy for 2021-22 as attached
- 2) Agree the value of the Growth Fund is the NFF growth allocation to be confirmed later in December.
- 3) Note the outcome of the classroom setup cost review.
- 4) Discuss possible approaches to developing the policy for future years and consider establishing a working subgroup to take this forward.