

SCHOOLS' FUNDING FORUM (SFF)

SUBJECT:	Treatment of High Weald Academy in 2022/23 formula budget and growth policy
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SUMMARY OF REPORT:	
This report seeks agreement from the Schools' Funding Forum (SFF) on the revised proposed approach to High Weald Academy in the 2022/23 formula budget and growth policy and the overall growth budget	
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.
- 1.5 The proposals have been adjusted to reflect further discussions with the ESFA since the forum last met.

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. The ESFA have further suggested that they will discuss funding in the current financial year with affected academies.

3. Disapplication Request

- 3.1 The authority has already submitted the disapplication request discussed at the last forum meeting.
- 3.2 Following further discussions with the ESFA it has been suggested that we submit a further disapplication that seeks to remove all pupils from the calculation who have left the academy by Christmas. This is instead of removing only the year 10 pupils and would mean more funds are available for disbursement to admitting schools and academies. It is also still proposed to adjust the budget calculation for a part year.
- 3.3 The relevant period for the budget calculation regarding High Weald Academy will be April to August 2022.
- 3.4 It is recommended that the forum endorses this second 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 This proposal would be given effect by adding an additional section to the 2022/23 growth policy ahead of its annual review at the January forum meeting. The growth policy would define payments to admitting schools and academies using the same principles as the worked example below that was shared with the ESFA.
- 4.4 It is recommended that the forum endorses this proposal for making allocations to schools admitting pupils from High Weald Academy.
- 4.5 It is also recommended that the forum agrees that the growth budget for 2022/23 should be the growth allocation in the dedicated schools grant plus any adjustment relating to High Weald Academy.

5. Worked Example

For the purposes of illustration let's say adjusting the pupil number removes 100 pupils and 'saves' £600k to be transferred into the growth fund.

Let's also say that 200 pupils remain and the 5/12 adjustment 'saves' a further £700k to be transferred into the growth fund.

We would then pay £500 per pupil per month to admitting schools for the 100 early leavers from growth for the period April 2022 to August 2023 = 17 months * 100 pupils * £500 = £850,000

We would also then pay £500 per pupil per month to admitting schools for the other 200 pupils for the period September 2022 to August 2023 = 12 months * 200 pupils * £500 = £1,200,000

The January 2023 APT would include April to August growth of 300 pupils * 5 months * £500 = £750k which would be deducted from our 2023/24 recoupment and also transferred to growth.

$$-600k - 700k + 850k + 1.2m - 750k = 0$$

This may work out slightly differently if any pupils are admitted to a school rather than an academy.