

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 24th NOVEMBER 2020

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

2020-21 GROWTH FUND AND FALLING ROLLS FUND

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose the criteria for accessing the Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund in 2020-21, which have been created for the first time as part of Wirral's funding formula.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 At the June 2020 meeting, Schools Forum was presented with a report that outlined the proposed criteria for accessing both the Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund in 2020-21. Currently the proposed criteria were as follows:

a. The proposed criteria for Wirral's 2020-21 £233k Growth Fund...

- Mainstream schools and academies can access the fund.
- pupil numbers grow because of basic need to above 6.5% of the budgeted numbers between the budget setting period and October census.
- growth funding will be equivalent to the Basic Entitlement factor (AWPU) only for the additional pupils (i.e. over the 6.5%).
- funding is for the remainder of their relevant funding period (pro rata).

b. The proposed criteria for Wirral's 2020-21 £233k Falling Rolls Fund...

- the fund is accessible to 'Good' or 'Outstanding' mainstream schools and academies.
- the Number On Roll (NOR) is less than 80% of its Published Admission Number (PAN);
- planning data shows surplus places will be required within 3 years.
- falling rolls funding will be equivalent to the basic entitlement factor (AWPU) only over the 6.5% threshold
- e.g. if drop by 8%, would receive basic entitlement for 1.5% of its previous intake for the relevant funding period.

2.2 Following careful consideration of the proposal the Schools Forum felt that they needed further information as to what underpinned the basis for the proposed criteria. The following specific questions were raised at the June 2020 meeting and the responses were provided at the September 2020 meeting:

1. *Question* - Do the criteria meet DFE regulations?

Response - The criteria are based on the recommended criteria as per the Schools revenue funding Operational guide.

2. *Question* - Need for separate funds?

Response - EFSA recommend the use of separate funds to support the development of clear objective trigger points for qualification and a clear formula for calculating allocation of the funds. Individually funds can under or overspend thus where there is pressure on one fund e.g. Growth Fund, this can be off set by any under-utilisation of the Falling Rolls Fund. The collective surplus/deficit balance of both funds will be carried forward into the following financial year.

3. *Question* - What is the basis for 6.5% threshold applied to both the Growth and Falling Rolls Funds?

Response - Analysis was undertaken of the year on year changes in pupil numbers (2018-19 compared to 2019-20 October Census) by school and this identified that a 6.5% threshold should be affordable within the financial limits of the funding made available for 2020-21.

Relatively small changes in the threshold can have a significant impact on the number of schools that qualify, the value of additional funding for each qualifying school and the total cost. This is demonstrated in the table below which compares the impact of applying the proposed 6.5% threshold with small changes to the threshold percentage.

Baseline percentage change	Growth fund £233k			Falling Rolls fund £233k		
	Number of schools benefitting	Range of additional funding per school £	Total cost £	Number of schools benefitting	Range of additional funding per school £	Total cost £
1. Proposed threshold	7	£2.4k to £91.9k	£235k	6	£0.6k to £184.1k	£266k
2. Proposed less 1%	8	£4.7k to £108.4k	£315k	8	£0.1k to £230.8k	£340k
3. Proposed less 1.5%	8	£5.7k to £121.3k	£360k	9	£2.2k to £254.1k	£389k
4. Proposed less 2%	8	£6.8k to £134.2k	£404k	12	£0.5k to £277.4k	£445k
5. Proposed less 3.5%	20	£0.1k to £172.8k	£651k	14	£1.4k to £347.5k	£562k

2.3 Given the significant differences in individual schools funding that is applicable for qualifying schools, Schools Forum were asked to consider applying a 'ceiling' on the maximum funding applicable to any one school. Thus, for example, if the 6.5% thresholds proposed also included a ceiling of £50k per school the total cost outlined in the table above will reduce by £74k for Growth and a further £134k for Falling Rolls.

2.4 Schools Forum welcomed the feedback but felt that the criteria should consider a trend in changes in pupil numbers and questioned the need for the fund to be split between growth and falling rolls. Schools Forum requested that trend data be made available to the relevant Headteacher clusters for discussion and subsequent recommendation on which the criteria should be based. Appendix A contains the information that was made available for discussion at WASH & PHCG.

3.0 CONCLUSION

3.1 Following review of the additional information, Secondary heads provided the following feedback:

- The fund does not need to be separated into growth and falling roll, simply address issues around change in pupil population.
 - Allocations should be based on the past 3-year pupil number data and figures should be pupil numbers, not percentages.
 - Rationale should be based on helping schools in difficulty because of pupil number change, not other factors.
 - The School Forum should see the detail and the proposed allocation before agreeing the spend and all the spend should be allocated within the year if possible.
- 3.2 Based on this feedback from Secondary heads and the trend data provided, 33 schools could, in principle, benefit from the fund subject to confirmation that the school is in difficulty because of pupil number change.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The feedback from Secondary heads forms the basis of the criteria for the allocation of the 2020-21 Falling rolls/Growth Fund. Given that this will require Schools Forum to agree the proposed allocation prior to distribution and there is an element of subjectivity in the criteria, the following process is recommended:
- School's apply to receive funding for the financial year 2020-21. To assist in this, an application form has been drafted and is attached in Appendix B.
 - A closing date of Friday 18th December is identified for closure of applications.
 - An initial award is identified by Council Officers based on the information submitted and the overall impact on the fund of applications.
 - The outcome of the initial application process is reported to the January meeting of the Schools Forum for approval.
 - Primary and Secondary schools will be informed of the application process by Monday 30 November.

Paul Boyce
Director of Children, Families and Education

Appendix A - Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund (additional information)

Background

At the Schools Forum meeting on 29 September, members discussed the proposed criteria for allocating the Growth and Falling Rolls funds that is available for 2020-21.

The proposed criteria will allocate the funds based on the percentage year on year change where it is above a 6.5% threshold. This threshold was based on the year on year change from 2018-19 to 2019-20. For information, the Wirral proposed criteria is attached in Appendix A whilst an extract from the ESFA guidance document is attached in Appendix B.

The total funding available of £466k has currently been distributed evenly across both Growth and Falling Rolls i.e. £233k for each.

Members felt that the proposed criteria did not take account of any on-going recurring change to pupil numbers but rather a 'snapshot' based on one year. In addition, members felt that it may not be appropriate to have an even distribution of funds for Growth and Falling Rolls on the basis that there is likely to be more growth experienced than falling rolls.

It was noted at the meeting that in applying the proposed criteria that the range of additional funding where schools passed the 6.5% threshold was extremely wide (see table below) thus consideration may need to be given to 'capping' the value that can be awarded to any one school.

Baseline percentage change	Growth fund £233k			Falling Rolls fund £233k		
	Number of schools benefitting	Range of additional funding per school £	Total cost £	Number of schools benefitting	Range of additional funding per school £	Total cost £
1. Proposed threshold	7	£2.4k to £91.9k	£235k	6	£0.6k to £184.1k	£266k

It was agreed that further analysis would be undertaken to identify where/if a trend occurs over a longer time period and if an even distribution across growth/falling rolls is evident. The information will be made available to Schools Forum members for discussion at the relevant stakeholder groups with a view to making alternative proposals for the criteria that will underpin the allocation of the Growth and Falling Roll funds.

Results of the analysis

Further analysis has been undertaken across five years (2016/17 to 2020/21) thus allowing for four sets of year on year comparisons and the results of this are summarised below.

In reviewing the results, the following should be noted:

- In all data was gathered for 111 schools of which 1 had not been operational across all five years. On that basis the analysis has been prepared based on the information relating to the 110 schools that have been operational across all five years.
- Some year on year changes show up large changes for individual schools and it is felt that these are due to circumstances other than general changes to pupil numbers. Where these occur, they have been highlighted in the tables included in this document.
- School names/numbers have been omitted from the analysis included in this document.

Fig 1 – summary of year on year changes to pupil numbers

	No of schools
Schools with growth in all 4 year on year comparisons (see Fig 1a for break-down)	17
Schools with growth in the latter 3 year on year comparisons (see Fig 1b for break-down)	6
Schools with growth in the latter 2 year on year comparisons (see Fig 1c for break-down)	8
Schools with falling rolls in all 4 year on year comparisons (see Fig 1d for break-down)	6
Schools with falling rolls in the latter 3 year on year comparisons (see Fig 1e for break-down)	4
Schools with falling rolls in the latter 2 year on year comparisons (see Fig 1f for break-down)	11
Schools with fluctuating growth/falling rolls (see Fig 1g for break-down)	58
Total	110

The tables below show the individual schools results for each of the categories in the table above, In addition to the year on year change, a total change across the period has also been included to identify the scale of the change.

Fig 1a – analysis of schools with growth in all 4 year on year comparisons

School	2016-17 to 2017-18		2017-18 to 2018-19		2018-19 to 2019-20		2019-20 to 2020-21		Overall change	
	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%
005	15	2.9%	29	5.4%	41	7.2%	9	1.5%	94	18.0%
009	3	1.8%	7	4.2%	12	6.9%	25	13.4%	47	28.7%
011	0	0.0%	6	1.5%	8	2.0%	18	4.4%	32	8.2%
013	8	4.7%	6	3.3%	22	11.8%	5	2.4%	41	23.8%
048	1	0.6%	11	6.6%	8	4.5%	2	1.1%	22	13.3%
051	10	6.7%	5	3.1%	48	29.3%	26	12.3%	89	59.7%
075	33	8.7%	2	0.5%	5	1.2%	5	1.2%	45	11.9%
083	30	4.4%	15	2.1%	200	27.7%	20	2.2%	265	39.1%
085	17	6.4%	36	12.7%	13	4.1%	1	0.3%	67	25.1%
086	3	1.2%	22	8.7%	64	23.2%	13	3.8%	102	40.6%
089	32	3.7%	2	0.2%	66	7.3%	23	2.4%	123	14.2%
093	20	3.1%	33	4.9%	31	4.4%	21	2.9%	105	16.1%
097	14	1.6%	10	1.2%	5	0.6%	28	3.2%	57	6.7%
100	11	1.5%	12	1.7%	40	5.4%	9	1.2%	72	10.1%
102	16	1.2%	17	1.2%	17	1.2%	10	0.7%	60	4.4%
104	1	0.1%	47	5.2%	101	10.6%	43	4.1%	192	21.3%
110	60	7.9%	52	6.3%	63	7.2%	29	3.1%	204	26.7%

Fig 1b analysis of schools with growth in the latter 3 year on year comparisons

School	2017-18 to 2018-19		2018-19 to 2019-20		2019-20 to 2020-21		Overall change	
	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%
023	2	1.1%	3	1.7%	2	1.1%	7	4.0%
063	7	1.8%	2	0.5%	3	0.8%	12	3.1%
077	6	3.2%	7	3.6%	6	3.0%	19	10.1%
081	15	2.4%	92	14.2%	28	3.8%	135	21.4%
092	26	5.2%	82	15.6%	59	9.7%	167	33.4%
094	13	2.7%	237	48.7%	45	6.2%	295	62.2%

Thus, if the criteria were based on a 3-year trend, the total number of schools to consider is 23 i.e. 17 with a 4-year trend (Fig 1a) plus 6 with a 3-year trend (Fig 1b).

Fig 1c – analysis of schools with growth in the latter 2 year on year comparisons

School	2018-19 to 2019-20		2019-20 to 2020-21		Overall change	
	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%
002	35	10.3%	5	1.3%	40	11.8%
007	3	0.5%	2	0.3%	5	0.8%
034	20	6.9%	3	1.0%	23	8.0%
035	13	3.3%	5	1.2%	18	4.5%
037	7	1.6%	2	0.5%	9	2.1%
072	1	0.6%	1	0.6%	2	1.1%
084	25	3.3%	24	3.1%	49	6.6%
109	1	0.4%	2	0.9%	3	1.3%

Thus, if the criteria were based on a 2 year trend, the total number of schools to consider is 31 i.e. 17 with a 4 year trend (Fig 1a) plus 6 with a 3 year trends (Fig 1b) plus 8 with a 2 year trend (Fig 1c).

Fig 1d – analysis of schools with falling rolls in all 4 year on year comparisons

School	2016-17 to 2017-18		2017-18 to 2018-19		2018-19 to 2019-20		2019-20 to 2020-21		Overall change	
	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%						
015	-21	-13.7%	-1	-0.8%	-28	-21.4%	-20	-19.4%	-70	-45.8%
057	-2	-0.8%	-1	-0.4%	-2	-0.8%	-7	-2.8%	-12	-4.8%
059	-5	-1.6%	-9	-3.0%	-11	-3.7%	-13	-4.6%	-38	-12.3%
060	-13	-8.2%	-17	-11.7%	-13	-10.2%	-10	-8.7%	-53	-33.5%
064	-5	-2.1%	-9	-3.8%	-11	-4.9%	-23	-10.7%	-48	-20.1%
107	-42	-3.2%	-40	-3.2%	-112	-9.2%	-137	-12.4%	-331	-25.6%

Fig 1e – analysis of schools with falling rolls in the latter 3 year on year comparisons

School	2017-18 to 2018-19		2018-19 to 2019-20		2019-20 to 2020-21		Overall change	
	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%
016	-8	-2.4%	-2	-0.6%	-12	-3.8%	-22	-6.7%
069	-3	-0.9%	-14	-4.4%	-10	-3.3%	-27	-8.4%
073	-4	-1.3%	-11	-3.7%	-6	-2.1%	-21	-7.0%
079	-4	-2.1%	-3	-1.6%	-1	-0.5%	-8	-4.1%

Thus, if the criteria were based on a 3-year trend, the total number of schools to consider is 10 i.e. 6 with a 4-year trend (Fig 1d) plus 4 with a 3-year trend (Fig 1e).

Fig 1f – analysis of schools with falling rolls in the latter 2 year on year comparisons

School	2018-19 to 2019-20		2019-20 to 2020-21		Overall change	
	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%	No of pupils	%
014	-28	-20.1%	-4	-3.6%	-32	-23.0%
017	-1	-0.3%	-1	-0.3%	-2	-0.6%
032	-5	-3.0%	-9	-5.6%	-14	-8.4%
039	-14	-4.0%	-33	-9.9%	-47	-13.6%
046	-44	-9.8%	-28	-6.9%	-72	-16.1%
052	-11	-2.9%	-1	-0.3%	-12	-3.2%
056	-33	-14.5%	-24	-12.3%	-57	-25.0%
068	-9	-4.2%	-2	-1.0%	-11	-5.1%
071	-10	-2.4%	-14	-3.4%	-24	-5.7%
090	-12	-7.6%	-11	-7.5%	-23	-14.6%
108	-2	-1.3%	-2	-1.3%	-4	-2.6%

Thus, if the criteria were based on a 2 year trend, the total number of schools to consider is 21 i.e. 6 with a 4 year trend (Fig 1d) plus 4 with a 3 year trend (Fig 1e) plus 11 with a 2 year trend (Fig 1f).

Appendix B

Request for one-off funding in financial year 2020-21 due to the impact of changes in pupil numbers as a result of growth or falling rolls.

APPLICATION							
School name:							
Basis of application:	Growth or Falling rolls?						
	2020-21		2019-20		2018-19		2017-18
3-year trend in pupil number change	Year 3		Year 2		Year 1		
Impact on school							
Financial							
Other							
Headteacher:							
Date:							
INITIAL REVIEW BY WIRRAL COUNCIL OFFICERS							
Financial award:							
Rationale:							
REVIEW BY SCHOOL'S FORUM							
Outcome:							
Date:							