

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 29th JUNE 2021

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

2021-22 FALLING ROLLS AND GROWTH FUND

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to review the basis on which the falling rolls and growth fund is currently distributed along with possible alternatives to revise the distribution criteria for 2021-22.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Following consideration by Schools Forum at the June, September and November 2021 meetings, the criteria for distributing the falling rolls and growth fund was agreed as...

- the growth and falling rolls fund would be one fund, and
- allocation of the fund will be based on 3-year pupil number changes (not percentage growth or fall),

2.1 Application of this criteria for 2020-21 resulted in 23 schools benefiting from the distribution of the fund totaling £466k. A detailed analysis of the distribution was reported at the January 2021 Schools Forum meeting.

2.2 At the May 2021 meeting of the Schools Forum, it was reported that the value of the falling rolls and growth fund for 2021-22 is £152,936 which is significantly less than the value of the 2020-21 fund. The value of the fund is currently determined by the 'headroom' in the Schools Block allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) after the funding formula has been applied. Following consultation with schools in October 2021, it was agreed that the 2021-22 funding formula would include a +1.25% minimum funding guarantee to secure the widest possible distribution of the allocation directly to schools thus limiting the 'headroom' for 2021-22. Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) regulations do allow for distribution to exceed the value of the fund but overspends will form part of the overall DSG surplus or deficit balance.

3.0 DISTRIBUTION OF THE 2021-22 FUND

3.1 Given the significant reduction in the value of the falling rolls and growth fund for 2021-22, Schools Forum requested at the May 2021 meeting that a review of the outcome of applying the existing criteria be undertaken before any funding was distributed. In addition, Forum requested that Wirral officers prepare alternative bases for distribution of the fund for consideration at the June 2021 meeting.

3.2 Several potential criteria for allocation of the 2021-22 fund have been identified and these are listed below. Appendix A summarises the outcome of applying the different criteria listed below along with any assumptions/factors that have been applied in determining the source data.

- Option A - application of the existing criteria
- Option B - option A but where the cumulative % change is 10% or more.
- Option C - falling rolls as per option A. Growth based on one year change in number of pupils i.e., 2020-21 v 2021-22.
- Option D – option C but where financial award is not less than £3,500.
- Option E – option C but where the growth reflects a change of 5% or more for Primary Schools and 2.5% for Secondary Schools.

3.3 The features, advantages and disadvantages of each option are summarised below:

	Features	Advantages	Disadvantages
A	Takes account of consistent 3-year change.	Consistent application across years.	Financial awards relatively small due to size of fund and growth in number of recipients thus impact may not be effective in each school.
B	Takes account of consistent 3-year significant change.	Financial award more meaningful value to support effective use.	Limit to number of schools that benefit.
C	Takes account of consistent 3-year change for falling rolls and one year change growth.	Focus on continuing falling rolls and new growth. Maximises distribution across schools	Financial awards relatively small in some cases due to size of fund and growth in number of recipients thus impact may not be effective in each school. Does not take account of on-going growth impact.
D	As per option C but with minimum funding level.	Focus on continuing falling rolls and new growth. Maximises distribution across schools whilst providing a meaningful financial award.	Application exceeds fund thus overspend will form part of the overall DSG surplus or deficit balance. Does not take account of on-going growth impact.
E	As per option C where growth change is significant.	Focus on continuing falling rolls and new significant growth. Financial awards meaningful to ensure effective use of overall funding.	Limit to the number of schools that will benefit. Does not take account of on-going growth impact.

- 3.4 Option B is felt to be the most appropriate basis for allocation of the fund as it provides consistency with previously agreed criteria whilst providing useful individual allocations that support their effective use within the confines of a limited fund.

4.0 FUTURE FOCUS

- 4.1 The basis for allocating the 2020-21 falling rolls and growth fund and the proposals for distribution of the 2021-22 focus on overall cumulative/year-on-year changes with little consideration of the factors that drive the changes.
- 4.2 Further development of the distribution basis is planned to capture external factors such as demographic changes and to target support where disadvantage is beyond the control of schools. Proposals for the future criteria and basis for determining the size of the fund will be presented to the September meeting of the Forum.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Schools Forum adopt Option B as the basis for distributing the 2021-22 Falling Rolls and Growth Fund as this option aims to target the significant impact of falling rolls and growth whilst allocating funding on a basis to support its effective use.
- 5.2 That the Forum notes the development plans set out in section 4.0.

Simone White
Director of Children, Families and Education

Appendix A

Ref	2021-22					Falling Rolls = 3 year consistent change. Growth = 2021-22 increase where the increase reflects a change of 5% or more for Primary and 2.5% or more for Secondary
	Falling Rolls/ Growth Fund	Distribution based on existing criteria	3 Yr. consistent growth or fall where cumulative change is based on an impact of 10% or more	Falling Rolls = 3 year consistent change. Growth = 2021-22 increase	Falling Rolls = 3 year consistent change. Growth = 2021-22 increase (minimum award of £3,500)	
	Option A £	Option B £	Option C £	Option D £	Option E £	
A001	G	1,748		1,146	3,500	
A002	G			1,718	3,500	
A005	F	3,788	11,612	7,446	7,446	12,050
A006	G	7,091		3,628	3,628	
A007	G	13,429	14,934	5,346	5,346	8,651
A009	G			955	3,500	
A010	G			1,527	3,500	
A011	G	777		764	3,500	
A012	F	874		1,718	3,500	2,781
A014	G	14,765	9,386	5,919	5,919	9,578
A015	F	3,108	14,470	6,110	6,110	9,887
A016	G			191	3,500	
A017	G			955	3,500	
A018	G			955	3,500	
A019	G	8,062		5,537	5,537	8,960
A022	G			1,337	3,500	
A023	G			2,291	3,500	3,708
A029	G	874		764	3,500	
A030	F	2,526		4,964	4,964	8,033
A031	G			1,527	3,500	
A032	G			764	3,500	
A033	G			1,527	3,500	
A034	G	3,206	6,281	2,864	3,500	
A035	G			4,010	4,010	6,488
A036	G	3,699		3,246	3,500	
A037	G			382	3,500	
A040	G			2,482	3,500	
A043	G			382	3,500	
A045	F	583		1,146	3,500	1,854
A050	F	2,331	9,253	4,582	4,582	7,415
A051	G			1,909	3,500	
A055	F	1,360		2,673	3,500	4,325
A058	F	1,263		2,482	3,500	4,017
A060	G	14,182	13,677	9,356	9,356	15,139
A062	G	1,943		2,291	3,500	
A063	G			2,482	3,500	
A066	G	12,029	10,683	10,501	10,501	16,993
A067	G	3,886	13,592	1,146	3,500	
A072	G	7,577	6,479	1,146	3,500	
A073	F	1,943		3,819	3,819	6,179
A077	G	5,925		1,527	3,500	
A079	G			5,728	5,728	
A081	F	680		1,337	3,500	2,163
A082	G			955	3,500	
A084	F	3,011	8,552	5,919	5,919	9,578
A086	G			1,527	3,500	
A088	F	1,457	7,777	2,864	3,500	4,634
A089	F	971		1,909	3,500	3,090
A092	G	13,923	10,569	3,246	3,500	
A093	G	15,923	15,671	4,582	4,582	7,415
A094	G			1,146	3,500	
A095	G			573	3,500	
A097	G			764	3,500	
A099	G			3,628	3,628	
A107	G			955	3,500	
A111	G			382	3,500	
		152,936	152,936	152,936	234,574	152,936

Assumptions/Factors applied:

- Growth relates to pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need.
- Falling rolls support is available only for schools with a good or outstanding Ofsted inspection.
- Pupil numbers used in calculations are those presented in each October census.