

West Northants Schools Forum: 14 December 2021

Agenda Item 5 Annex B Growth Policy and Places 2022-23

1 Background

- 1.1 This annex sets out the LA's recommendation that the Growth policy and rates be updated for WNC.
- 1.2 As reported to the October schools forum meeting, we recommend that the split site policy for 2022-23 school budgets be continued with the same policy and rates as that used previously before 1st April 2021 vesting day.

2 Growth Fund Policy and Rates

- 2.1 The growth fund is applied in two ways;
 - weighted pupil numbers added into the funding formula budget or;
 - from the Growth Fund during the year.
- 2.2 Both methods are applied to Maintained and Academy Primary, Secondary and All-through Schools, in the same way. LAs do require Schools Forum agreement to add these increases in pupil numbers into the schools formula budget and we will be asking for Forum members to vote on this in December's Forum.
- 2.3 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has applied weighted numbers in the funding formula to new schools, only where year groups are not already occupied for 2021-22 and propose to keep this policy the same going forward for 2022-23.

3 Proposed Pupil Number Adjustments

- 3.1 New Year Groups (for Forum Approval):
 - Radstone Fields, Brackley +30 - year 5
 - Monksmoor, Daventry +30 - year 3
 - Pineham Barns +30 - year 6
 - Wootton Hall +60 - year 5
 - Northampton International +60 - year 5
 - Marie Weller, Towcester +30 - year 1
 - Buckton Fields Primary +60 – year 1

4 School Growth Beyond 2022-23

4.1 New Free Schools:

- Daventry Secondary – 6FE/1100 places total – Sept 2023
- Moulton area Secondary – 8FE/1500 places total – Sept 2023
- Northampton area Secondary – 6FE/900 places total – Sept 24/25 - TBC

All dates noted above are TBC by the DfE and are subject to the Secretary of State entering into a funding agreement with the Academy Trust.

4.2 There are currently no non-free schools planned for WNC.

5 Proposed Policy

5.1 We propose to continue the current policy and criteria for the growth fund for West Northamptonshire Council with no change to funding rates. Funding rates were last updated for 2021-22 budgets. The policy is as follows:

5.2 Where schools are requested to increase their pupil admission number (PAN) by the local authority by 15 or more pupils, or where a new school is being established by the authority, the full pupil/class increase will be taken into account in determining the funding.

5.3 The allocations, which apply to all maintained schools and academies, will be based on the following criteria;

5.4 The Council Admissions and School Place Planning Manager will:

- confirm with the school if the lower (15 pupil increase) or higher (30 pupil increase) reimbursements rate will be utilised and
- confirm if classroom support of a learning support assistant (LSA) will be funded
- confirm if an allocation for consumables is required,
- Funding will be issued for the period from the intake of pupils to the subsequent issue of the budget where the pupils are then included in the base budget.
- This funding is calculated using Pupil Census data or schools admissions data. Where school admission data is used to calculate the increase in pupil numbers this will subsequently be verified by the following Pupil Census data and adjusted up or down as applicable.

5.5 The level of funding is detailed in Table 1 below:

Primary Growth Fund Element	Annual Rates	5/12ths Apr to Aug	7/12ths Sept to Mar
Classroom Support (15 pupil increase"	14,194	5,914	8,280
Teacher	41,650	17,354	24,296
LSA	12.115	5,048	7,067
Total	53,765	22,402	31,363

Consumables (Max per 30 pupils)	1,080	450	630

Secondary Growth Fund Element	Annual Rates	5/12ths Apr to Aug	7/12ths Sept to Mar
Teacher	52,587	21,911	30,676
LSA	26,752	11,147	15,605
Total	79,339	33,058	42,281
Consumables (Max per 30 pupils)	3,240	1,350	1,890

6 Growth Fund Policy and rates Responses from the consultation

6.1 The consultation question asked:

- 1) if Schools agree with rolling forward the Growth policy from NCC and
- 2) whether they agree with using the same rates as for 2021-22.

6.2 There were nine responses to the consultation – from a trust, and eight schools. Not every question was answered within each response. The small number of responses might indicate a low level of concern about the proposed option of the council.

6.3 Five responses agreed, and one responder picked “other” for the first question on agreeing the proposed Growth Fund Policy but left no further comment.

6.4 For the second question all 7 responders agreed to continuing the rates as for 2021-22 in 2022-23.

7 Recommendations for schools forum

7.1 Schools forum members are asked to agree the proposed Growth Fund Policy and rates, the proposed places for new and growing schools and the growth fund budget of £0.99m for the 2022-23 budget.

8 Next steps

8.1 If agreed the Growth Fund will be top sliced from the Schools Block to create the funding pot as in previous years, the new and growing schools will have the weighted numbers included in their pupil count for calculating their individual schools budget and schools fitting the policy will receive funding at the rates note above in 2022-23.

9 Legal implications

9.1 There are no legal implications from the Growth Fund policy and rates, weighted numbers and Growth Fund budget.

10 Risks

10.1 There is a risk that not funding growth appropriately leads to a greater financial burden on some schools than others. This creates the risk of financial instability, or inadequate provision for education in areas in WNC where it is needed.