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## Report to the Schools Forum

**Title:** Pupil Growth Fund 2020-21

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### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. This paper highlights the new guidance issued by DfE on Growth and Falling Rolls Funds for 2020-21 and recommends that further proposals are brought to Schools Forum Funding Group and then to Schools Forum in January 2020 on the growth fund for 2020-21.

### 2. Background

2.1. Schools Forum had previously requested that a paper should be brought to the December 2019 Schools Forum meeting outlining proposals for the growth fund in 2020-21. Initial work had been completed on this paper however new guidance has been published by the DfE on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and it is essential that any proposals brought to Schools Forum for the financial year 2020-21 take this guidance in to account.

2.2. The new DfE guidance can be accessed via the [DfE Website](#).

### 3. Key Principles within the Guidance

3.1. The DfE guidance outlines the purpose of the growth fund, what is should and should not be used for and how growth criteria should be set.

3.2. The growth fund can only be used to:

- Support growth in pre-16 numbers to meet basic need
  - Support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulation
  - Meet the revenue cost of new schools
- 3.3. The growth fund must not be used to support
- Schools in financial difficulty; any such support for maintained schools should be provided from a de-delegated contingency
  - General growth due to popularity; this is managed through lagged funding.
- 3.4. The guidance states that local authorities' growth fund criteria should contain clear objective trigger points for qualification, and a clear formula for calculating allocations with these criteria applying to all schools on the same basis. Compliance will be checked by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- 3.5. The document includes examples of criteria that may be included within a local authority's growth fund and of appropriate methodologies for allocating funding.

#### **4. Buckinghamshire Growth Fund**

- 4.1. Schools Forum had already requested a review of the growth fund for Buckinghamshire Schools including a review of other local authority approaches and a move towards a more formula generated approach.
- 4.2. The publication of the new DfE guidance is helpful in supporting the review of our current criteria and will ensure that any revised proposals are compliant with the required approach. It is therefore proposed that further work take place in order to bring revised growth fund criteria to the Schools Forum meeting in January 2020. This will also give an opportunity for consideration by the Schools Forum Funding Group.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1. To note the publication of new guidance on growth and falling rolls funding.
- 5.2. To agree that the review of the Buckinghamshire growth fund will be carried out using the revised guidance and proposals will be brought to Schools Forum in January 2020.