

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM

Date:	16th January 2018	AGENDA ITEM: 6
Title:	Falling Rolls Fund 2018/19	
Responsible officer:	Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's Services	
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1 REPORT SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Schools Forum with:
- confirmation of which schools meet the agreed criteria for 2018/19
 - funding options to agree the level of the Falling Rolls Funding for 2018/19

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Forum is asked to:
- note the contents of this report
 - approve the continuation of a Falling Rolls Fund to support good and outstanding schools to deliver an appropriate curriculum while remaining significantly under capacity but with projected growth
 - approve a Falling Rolls Fund not exceeding £100,000

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The rationale for a Falling Rolls Fund has previously been presented to Forum, but following the discussion at the December meeting, it is reproduced here. The fund is not about falling rolls as such, but is more about the affordability of the curriculum in a temporary phase when unoccupied places will be needed in the near future.
- 3.2 On 8th March 2016 Schools Forum agreed the implementation of the Falling Rolls Funding. Qualifying criteria was as follows:
- NOR at last October count must be below 'viable school population'; (70% of total school population if full)
 - admissions data evidences that reduction in pupil numbers is temporary, lasting less than three years
 - school must be graded Good or Outstanding at last Ofsted
- 3.3 The funding parameters were set as follows:
- the maximum sum any school can receive is restricted as follows:
 - Primary £100,000
 - Middle £150,000
 - Secondary £200,000
 - the funding rate is capped at 50% of relevant AWPU rate
 - total funding available remains capped at the same rate as for 2016/17 of £300,000
 - if the total allocations for eligible schools exceed this amount, each school's allocation will be scaled back proportionately to fit the available funding
 - minimum amount any school can receive is set at £10,000

- allocations are for one year only

3.4 As stated in 3.1 the purpose of the fund is to offset temporary reductions in school budgets caused by short-term reductions in pupil numbers. In this way, the fund can help avoid the need to make staff redundant, only to have to employ new staff within two or three years. The fund is not intended to address budgetary issues arising from longer term declining demand.

3.5 Under school finance regulations, local authorities can top-slice the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to create a central fund to “support good schools with falling rolls, where local planning data show that the surplus places will be needed within the next three financial years. The schools forum should agree both the value of the top-slice and the criteria for allocation, and the local authority should regularly update the schools forum on the use of the funding.”

4 ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING 2018/19

4.1 Further to the previously reported assessment of eligibility only one school meets the Falling Rolls Funding criteria, Churchmead Church of England School, therefore, based on the parameters set in 3.3 they will receive the full fund allocation restricted to the capping limit of £200,000.

4.2 Churchmead Church of England School had a number on roll for October 2017 below the viable school population at 47%; with both the school and Local authority projecting increasing pupil numbers over the next three years and the school receiving a ‘good’ rating by Ofsted in December 2015.

4.3 Schools Forum need to agree whether they want to retain the current eligibility and parameter arrangements or whether in the light of wider budget pressures they want to take the opportunity to review.

4.4 Following the settlement being released in December 2017, the preferred local funding “model 2” as agreed 27th November 2017 has been recalculated, with the net effect being an additional ring fenced fund to allocate to schools of £100,000.

4.5 This funding could be added to the local formula and redistributed across all schools or could be used to create the Falling Rolls Fund. Redistributing the full sum of £100,000 would result in indicative additional funding of £1,670 per school.

4.6 In order to preserve the majority of schools budgets as set out in “model 2” and avoid further funding pressures it is recommended that the Falling Rolls Funding does not exceed the £100,000.

4.7 If the Falling Rolls Fund is approved at a greater level than £100,000 it will be met through top slicing all schools budgets. For every £10,000 of additional Falling Rolls Funding allocated the indicative top slicing is estimated at £167 per school, it should be noted that this sum would vary significantly on a school by school basis depending upon where a school sits in relation to the Minimum Funding Guarantee.

5 UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS FOR FALLING ROLLS FUNDING 2018/19

5.1 In respect of Altwood Church of England School after performing further data analysis it was determined by The Royal Borough that there wasn't sufficient evidence that the current reduction in pupil numbers is temporary, therefore, the school does not meet the criteria.

- 5.2 The school has raised their concerns that the previously reported number on roll was significantly lower than stated which would lead to additional funding in excess of £340,000 if a cap of £200,000 wasn't in place, not the previously reported £29,625.
- 5.3 Additionally, the school questioned the reliability of future admissions trend data reflecting on how difficult to predict it could be and that failure to support Altwood Church of England School through this fund would be extremely detrimental to the education on offer to those students currently on roll and those due to start in the near future.
- 5.4 The Local Authority area forecasts indicate that there is unlikely to be a significant change in the volume of pupils seeking a year 7 place in Maidenhead in the next three years and therefore the Altwood Church of England School application does not meet the criteria. This does not preclude Altwood Church of England School gaining pupils through parental choice, however, that is outside the scope of the Falling Rolls fund.
- 5.5 In respect of the concerns raised by Altwood Church of England School in 5.3 Agenda Item 4 School Funding and School Place Planning provides details of the current and future practice undertaken by The Royal Borough in respect of forward projections, modelling and trend analysis for pupils. The detailed work undertaken by Officers to predict future demand is seen as being robust and reliable whilst recognising the changing landscape of the Borough and its surrounding neighbours.
- 5.6 Finally, the school stated that the delayed Ofsted inspection, as a result of other priorities, impacted significantly on the applications for September 2018. Previously being classified as "requires improvement" had excluded Altwood Church of England School from applying for Falling Rolls Funding.