

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>SCHOOLS FORUM</b>
<b>Date:</b>	22 June 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Caroline Barlow – Assistant Director of Finance Tim Bowman – Director of Education (Tameside and Stockport)
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>GROWTH AND CONTINGENCY SCHOOLS FUNDING REQUESTS</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	This report is put forward on behalf of two schools that ask Schools Forum to consider funding requests outside the approved growth criteria and one request for contingency fund. The decision does impact on one further school as outlined in the report.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools Forum approves an additional growth payment for St Pauls RC Hyde of £13,600.</li> <li>• Schools Forum approves an additional growth payment for Milton St Johns of £13,600</li> <li>• Schools Forum rejects the requests for funding from Buckton Vale Primary from both the growth and the contingency fund.</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	Education finances significantly support the Starting Well agenda to provide the very best start in life where children are ready to learn and encouraged to thrive and develop, and supporting aspiration and hope through learning and moving with confidence from childhood to adulthood.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	In line with financial policy and framework.
<b>Financial Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer &amp; Chief Finance Officer)</b>	<p>The Dedicated Schools Grant is a ring fenced grant solely for the purposes of schools and pupil related expenditure.</p> <p>There is currently £0.132m unallocated growth funding, which Schools Forum agreed in January 2021 should support the DSG deficit. Should approval be given for the additional growth payment for St Pauls RC Hyde, the unallocated amount would reduce to £0.118m. Approval of an additional growth payment for Milton St Johns would affect the growth allocation for 2023/24.</p>
<b>Legal Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that the Dedicated Schools Grant is effectively and responsibly managed. Therefore careful consideration needs to be given to these requests and also to the financial implications as set out above to ensure that a balanced and reasonable decision is reached balancing both the interests of the children at the particular schools and also the impact on the Tameside wide educational provision.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>The correct accounting treatment of the Dedicated Schools Grant is a condition of the grant and procedures exist in budget monitoring and the closure of accounts to ensure that this is achieved.</p> <p>The Council is responsible for the effective administration and management of the DSG. The deficit brought forward from 2019-20 and the increase in the size of the deficit at the end of 2020-21 is subject to a deficit recovery plan with the DfE. There is a risk that</p>

this may impact on the effective support and education of our most vulnerable children.

**Access to Information:** This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

**Background Information:** The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Christine Mullins – Finance Business Partner, Financial Management, Children’s and Safeguarding Services



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to consider funding requests by two primary schools outside the Schools Forum approved growth criteria and a further request from schools contingency funding.

1.2 Tameside growth policies provide funding for known, planned and agreed increases in PAN where funding is lagged, and for bulge classes. The growth policy in Tameside has been reviewed at a number of different points by Schools Forum, a summary of the change points and appropriate reports are as follows, the reports can be provided for background purposes upon request;

- 2013/14 – growth funding was introduced in Tameside to address a shortfall in places in Key Stage 1 from September 2013. Schools Forum agreed a policy of funding bulge class funding as one year only, date 16 January 2013. This policy provided 7/12ths funding on a one year only basis of £26,332.
- 2017/18 – Change to the growth policy for schools taking growth classes from September 2017. Changes are outlined below but can be found in section 3.11 and 3.12 of Agenda item 4 Dedicated Schools Grant Funding Formula 2017/18, 14 February 2017.

To continue to fund growth bulge classes in reception as per the 2013/14 policy with updated value of £32,640.

To provide continued funding for schools who took a reception bulge class expecting 30 pupil but then received 20 or less in the bulge class making it difficult to mix classes, throughout the time the bulge class was with the school. This was based on a per pupil basis.

- 2019/20 – Change to Growth funding agreed at Schools Forum date 25 June 2019. The growth policy is now that schools will be funded on AWPU rates for schools in line with primary and secondary rates for both one off bulge classes and planned continued growth classes. The allocation to schools will be based on the increase in capacity adjusted for actual September intake numbers multiplied by 7/12th of the Basic Amount per Pupil (to cover September to March). Actual numbers will be taken from the October Census.

1.3 Schools were asked as part of the consultation whether they believe the funding for the two historic arrangements should remain in place or if the funding should follow the new scheme from 1 April 2020. The outcome of the consultation voted that the two should continue until the bulge class is in Year 6 based on the historic basis.

## **2. ST PAUL'S RC HYDE**

2.1 St Paul's was one of the schools in the borough in receipt of bulge class funding under the growth policies agreed, and one of the two schools subject to specific consultation and decisions under the change approved on 25 June 2019.

2.2 St Paul's has made a request that Schools Forum consider providing some further growth funding to be awarded to them for taking a bulge class in September 2014. The School received funding of £37,975 for 7/12ths of the year. They request that Schools Forum fund a further 5/12ths allocation in 2021/22 as the bulge class passes through its final year of School, which equates to £13,600.

2.3 St Paul's has been provided with growth funding in line with the growth policies approved and in line with custom and practice of funding pupils over a seven year period in primary schools and five year period in high schools. The relevant seven financial years for the bulge

class at St Paul's are 2014/15 to 2020/21 as outlined in the table below. Growth funding has been allocated in line with the policies agreed at Schools Forum at the time.

**Table 1 – St Paul's Bulge Funding Allocations**

Year	Amount	Notes
2014/15	37,975	Bulge One Year only
2015/16	0	No Funding Bulge One Year only Funding Policy
2016/17	0	No Funding Bulge One Year only Funding Policy
2017/18	32,640	Change in Policy
2018/19	32,640	
2019/20	32,640	
2020/21	32,640	

- 2.4 St Paul's School balance at the 31 March 2021 was a surplus of £54,530.
- 2.5 Schools Funding Group (SFG) was asked to consider the request and make a recommendation to Schools Forum. If Schools Forum agree to this request, the allocation will need to be met from the Growth Funding set aside for 2021/22. To note Schools Forum has earmarked any un-utilised growth in 2021/22 to contribute to the High Needs Deficit Recovery. SFG supports this request for additional funding.
- 2.6 For clarity and consistency the other school in receipt of bulge class funding is Milton St Johns. They have been allocated funding over a seven year period as follows;

**Table 2 – Milton St Johns Bulge Funding Allocations**

Year	Amount
2016/17	37,975
2017/18	32,640
2018/19	32,640
2019/20	32,640
2020/21	32,640
2021/22	32,640
2022/23	32,640

- 2.7 SFG were asked to consider if a further 5/12th's funding should be allocated to Milton in the final financial year the bulge class are in Year 6 in 2023/24 following the same logic as St Paul's, again SFG support the recommendation. Milton's balance at the 31 March 2021 was a surplus of £159,478.

### **3. BUCKTON VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

- 3.1 The second formal request for funding from Schools Forum is from Buckton Vale.
- 3.2 Buckton Vale School has asked for a funding request to be considered by Schools Forum in relation to school being a 45 PAN school and pupil numbers being consistently below PAN causing financial staffing resource allocation difficulties for the school. The Access Team has submitted a recent request to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator on behalf of the school to reduce the PAN to 30 as demand in the area has reduced in line with the birth rate.
- 3.3 Buckton Vale historically operated a resource base, the school ceased to take pupils into its resource base in September 2014, school had its PAN increased at the time from 40 to 45,

and the increased PAN supported the school in organising classes with a 1.5 intake of classes.

- 3.4 The school has requested that as a Local Authority we consider establishing a Falling Rolls Policy. A paper will be presented in the autumn term asking for School Funding Group views and a decision from Schools Forum in relation to this matter.
- 3.5 Buckton Vale's view is that at the time the decision to increase the PAN was taken this should have triggered a growth funding payment and Schools Forum should have met allocated funding from the growth funding. However as outlined in 1.2 growth funding was only allocated for schools with bulge classes. The change at Buckton Vale was a permanent change to PAN, which was agreed by the School so does not fall under the bulge fund criteria. The amount requested is £125,476.18 as outlined in the paper included at Appendix A. Should this be approved this again this would need to be funded from the 2021-22 growth fund.
- 3.6 If Schools Forum does not approve the request outlined at 3.5, Buckton Vale alternatively request that Schools Forum provides a one-off payment from the centrally held Dedicated School Grant (DSG) to address the shortfall in school funding as outlined at Appendix A for £122,376, which has occurred as a result of the school being under PAN numbers and a reducing PAN going forward.
- 3.7 The School makes this request on the same basis as the allocation of £337k in 2014 for a shortfall in de-delegated services. Schools Forum, at the time, took this decision in line with the Operational Guidance and rules surrounding de-delegation due to loss of trade with schools converting to Academy. The school states that this situation has parallels with their situation in their pupil demand reducing. Whilst Schools Forum can consider this request the only funding pot that can be considered to fund this would be the primary school contingency fund, as there are no funding regulations that would allow an allocation from DSG. Buckton Vale has a surplus balance of £74,836 as at 31 March 2021.
- 3.8 SFG was asked to consider both requests from Buckton Vale and to make a recommendation to Schools Forum. SFG does not support either of these requests.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 As set out at the front of the report.