

CITY OF WESTMINSTER

SCHOOLS' FORUM – 20th MARCH 2023

REPORT BY LEAD STRATEGIC FINANCE MANAGER – CHILDREN'S SERVICES

FALLING ROLLS PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS SUMMARY 2023/24

This report informs Schools' Forum of the 2023/24 falling rolls business cases considered by officers and the proposed allocations.

FOR DECISION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Schools' Forum at the meeting on 18th January 2023 (Paper A4) agreed falling rolls funding of £133,000 from the 2023/24 schools block of the DSG. The Forum also agreed to retain the current criteria for funding falling rolls protection, subject to individual schools submitting a falling rolls business case for approval by the March 2023 Schools Forum.
- 1.2 In accordance with previously agree criteria, falling rolls funding would be provided where schools NOR has fallen by more than 5% since 2022/23, have not been previously supported via falling rolls and are rated good or outstanding. Any remaining reductions above 5% would be supported and the funding provided will be on the basis of 80% of AWPU.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary of business cases supporting proposed 2023/24 allocations.
- 1.4 The criteria for falling rolls funding agreed at the Schools' Forum in January 2023 are:
 - Schools must meet the OFSTED criteria of good or outstanding to qualify.
 - Schools with less than 5% roll reduction compared to the previous year do not qualify, schools with reductions of greater than 5% may qualify. The first 5% of the roll reduction will not be funded.
 - Schools in receipt of falling rolls funding in previous years do not qualify.
 - Funding will be paid at 80% of the primary AWPU rate.
 - Funding is subject to the agreement of supporting business cases which also quantify structural changes to be made.

2 SUMMARY OF BUSINESS CASES

- 2.1 Appendix A shows Essendine Primary School, Queen's Park Primary School and St Peter's Eaton Square CofE Primary School met the criteria for falling rolls funding and they have submitted their business case to support use of the additional funds in 2023/24. The review of the business case included examination of balances, whether the school needs the additional funding and what actions they are taking to restructure and deal with the reducing numbers of pupils.
- 2.2 The actions in the business case includes reducing the number of teaching groups, increasing class sizes, holding vacancies whilst reviewing staffing structures, discontinuing nursery place offers and school promotions.
- 2.3 It is confirmed that the business cases provided an updated financial position, an explanation of how the additional funding would be used and the action to be taken to deal with the falling rolls.

3 THEMATIC AUDIT

- 3.1 At the November 2021 RBKC Forum, Members questioned how rigorously schools were following their falling rolls business cases. A thematic audit was suggested which has since been arranged and completed.
- 3.2 Initial findings have been useful in identifying different approaches between schools in monitoring and implementing the actions stated within the business cases and which schools have put actions in to place.
- 3.3 It is proposed to initiate a thematic audit for WCC schools that will receive this funding from 2023/24 onwards to ensure better oversight and monitoring of these funds.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Schools' Forum are recommended to:
- 4.1.1 Allocate falling rolls funds to schools meeting the criteria as shown in Appendix A at £133,441.
 - 4.1.2 Agree for a thematic audit to be initiated for schools receiving this funding from 2023/24.

Anita Stokes
Lead Strategic Finance Manager – Bi-Borough Children's Services

Sarah Newman
Bi-Borough Executive Director of Children's Services

Contact officers:

Rahul Ganatra, Finance Manager – Bi Borough Schools and Education

Tel: 07890 397063

E-mail: rganatra@westminster.gov.uk

Poonam Gagda, Senior Finance Manager – Bi Borough Schools and Education

Tel: 07811 240 465

E-mail: Poonam.Gagda@rbkc.gov.uk

Background papers:

- **Appendix A** - Growth and Falling Rolls for 2023/24
- ESFA Operational Guidance 2023-24
- **Business cases** provided by the eligible individual schools