Report No.
CEF20022

London Borough of Bromley

PART ONE - PUBLIC

Decision Maker:	**SCHOOLS FORUM**
Date:	**17th September 2020**
Decision Type:	Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key
Title:	**FALLING ROLLS FUND**
Contact Officer:	Julie Crew, Schools Funding Manager Tel: 020 8603 3573 E-mail: Julie.Crew@liberata.com
Chief Officer:	Jared Nehra, Director of Education
Ward:	(All Wards);

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1. Reason for report

1.1 This report provides the information on the levels of use of the falling rolls fund.

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2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 **The Schools Forum are requested to:**

(i) Agree the Strategy for the Falling Rolls Fund moving forward, whether it should be continued or should cease and the funding rolled into the general funding formula for 2021/22.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable
2. BBB Priority: Health and Integration

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable:
2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
3. Budget head/performance centre: ECF Portfolio
4. Total current budget for this head: £173k
5. Source of funding: CEF approved budget

Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement
2. Call-in: Applicable

Customer Impact

1. N/A

Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

3.1 At the last Schools Forum meeting an issue was raised concerning the number primary schools in the borough that are receiving falling rolls funding, and the financial impact that this was having on the DSG. It was agreed that the LA would carry out a review of this, to include the possibility of reducing “falling rolls fund” by reducing the number of years that schools can be eligible to claim.

3.2 The October 2019 census data shows that there were 319 vacant reception places across the borough – this varies from one or two vacancies across a large number of schools to vacancies of over 20 places in some individual schools. This data has been used to calculate 2020/21 funding from April 20 for maintained schools and September 20 for academies.

3.3 The Council updates its projections on the need for school places annually through its School Place Strategy. Future forecasts are mainly based upon the GLA School Roll Projections, although the Council has developed its own model to complement the GLA for forecasting secondary need.

The Council currently is not planning to make any changes to its school places strategy outside of the annual review cycle.

3.4 The current terms of the fund are as follows:

- Support is available only for schools judged Good or Outstanding at their last Ofsted inspection (this is a mandatory requirement)
- Surplus capacity exceeds 20% of the published admission number (PAN)
- Local planning data shows a requirement for at least 80% of the surplus places in the next 3 years
- Formula funding available to the school will not support provision of an appropriate curriculum for the existing cohort – school to provide copy of 3-year budget data to support this
- The school will need to make redundancies in order to contain spending within its formula budget – school to provide evidence of formal discussions at governing body level to support this
- To be funded at the AWPU value per vacant place, up to a specified maximum number of places equivalent to 80% of PAN
- No funding to be paid where schools are already being supported through the existing growth fund or to free schools which are funded on estimated pupil numbers.

3.5 Based on the information provided, LA Officers have looked at all schools’ reception class intakes from 2017/18 through to 2020/21. Taking into account the schools PAN a comparison has been made on the number of schools who meet the criteria of the current Falling Rolls Fund over the time period aforementioned.

3.6 Currently there are 13 schools that meet all of the criteria for funding. Of these 13; 3 schools have not reached their PAN from 2017/18 to date. All 3 of these schools have had over 30% spare capacity over that time span. The remaining 10 have all had falling rolls since 2018/19. The cost to DSG since the funding for falling rolls began (2018/19), £373,000.

LA Officers propose a slight amendment to the terms as follows

- Funding should be awarded to schools for no more than 2 years.

- The LA should consider encouraging any school that has not reached PAN in 3 years or more to reduce PAN

3.7 The final decision regarding the implementation of a falling rolls fund rests with the Schools Forum, however the Secretary of State may be asked to adjudicate in cases where the Schools Forum does not agree the LA proposal.

3.8 The Schools Forum is asked to decide on the ongoing strategy of funding schools with regards to falling rolls. Schools Forum will need to look at what the timeline should be for schools to be able to be awarded the funding without making positive steps to either improve the roll numbers or reduce PAN. This report provides the falling rolls data and cost to DSG which is broken down in detail in Appendix 1.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The financial implications are in the body of the report.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Legal Implications Policy Implications Personnel Implications Customer Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Documents held with Liberata Finance