



NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting:	18 th September 2025
Title of report:	Review of Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Contingency Funds
Type of report: Delete as required	For decision
Executive summary: Including reason for submission	The report provides an overview of the usage of the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Contingency Funds in the 2024-25 financial year and the likely funding requirements for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years. The report details the forecast level of reserves on the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Contingency Fund forecast for 31 March 2026.
Budget / Risk implications:	<p>Financial implications for schools experiencing a significantly rising pupil roll or a temporary reduction in pupil numbers.</p> <p>Affordability within the current funding limits of the two Contingency Funds. Future funding requirements on the Contingency Funds will impact on the level of funding needed to be retained from the Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls funding commitments.</p>
Recommendations:	<p>The School's Forum is asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To note the usage and forecast usage of the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Contingency Funds in the financial years 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27, as detailed in this report. To note the reserves position on the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Fund as at 31 March 2025 and the forecast reserves position for 31 March 2026 as detailed in section 5 of this report. To provide approval for the proposed release of the £500k that is annually requested for the Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Contingency Fund to be allocated, if required, to support school budgets for the 2026-27 financial year; any funding requirement for basic need Pupil Growth in 2026-27 to be met from the Core Pupil Growth & Falling Roll Reserve. To approve for the use of the DfE Growth Funding, if required, to support school budgets in the 2026/27 financial year (also covered in Item 2.2 – School Funding 2026-27)



NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Voting requirements:	LA Maintained School & Academy Members
Appendices:	None
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Presenting officer: If not the originator	

Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Contingency Funds**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The report provides an overview of the usage of the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Contingency Funds in the 2024-25 financial year. The report also sets out the likely funding requirements for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years. The report details the level of reserves on the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Contingency Fund forecast for 31 March 2026.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Falling Rolls and Pupil Growth Contingency Funds were first introduced in the 2014-15 financial year, where criteria and methodology were endorsed by the Schools Forum. Over recent years, there has been periodic review of the operation and eligibility criteria of the Falling Rolls and Pupil Growth Funds. In May 2022, the Schools Forum approved the expansion of the Pupil Growth Contingency Fund criteria to include provision for the allocation of additional funding to schools and academies that admit pupils as a direct result of the closure of a LA maintained school or academy. In November 2022, the Schools Forum approved changes to the funding levels and methodology provided through the Pupil Growth Funding for new schools within North Yorkshire. In November 2023, the Schools Forum approved changes to the funding methodology and eligibility criteria for the Pupil Growth Fund from 1st April 2024 in order to comply with new DfE requirements for 2024-25.
- 2.3 At the School Forum meeting in November 2023, the Local Authority recommended that the Schools Forum approved that the Falling Rolls Fund was discontinued for the 2024-25 financial year. The Local Authority considered both the relatively low levels of funding that have been awarded from the Falling Rolls Fund over recent years and the problematic use of historic SCAP data where large geographical areas are covered with differing pupil number trends across the schools in the area. However, the Schools Forum decision was to continue to operate a Falling Rolls Fund for the 2024-25 financial year. In March 2024, September 2024 and May 2025, the Schools Forum approved changes to the Falling Rolls eligibility criteria in order to comply with the DfE changes to the statutory guidance and to ensure schools with falling rolls over a medium-term period are treated equitably across the local authority area. The approved changes also sought to ensure that the Falling Rolls Fund can operate within the funds available and delivers the DfE stated purpose.

3.0 FALLING ROLLS FUND

- 3.1 The purpose of this fund is to provide financial support to schools where there is a temporary fall in pupil numbers but numbers are forecast to recover back to previous levels within 2 years. The funding is designed to support schools to avoid the need to take costly actions to reduce their capacity, when demographic data shows capacity will be needed for expansion in the near future.
- 3.2 The current eligibility criteria and operating methodology for the North Yorkshire Council's (NYC) Falling Rolls Fund is as follows:
- The current year pupil roll is compared to the previous year census.

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- The eligibility threshold is a decrease of the greater of 5% or 5 pupils for Primary Schools and 5% for Secondary Schools between the current year census and the previous year census.
- The most recent SCAP data shows that the school places will be required in the current financial year and/or the subsequent 2 years (this is a mandatory requirement)
- Pupil numbers at the school are forecast (as per NYC Strategic Planning pupil forecast data) to return to the level of the previous census within 2 years of the current year
- At least 60% of the pupils attending the school are from the catchment area of the school.
- Funding allocations from the Falling Rolls Fund are based on the Primary AWPU funding level for Primary Schools and the average of the key stage 3 and 4 AWPU funding levels for Secondary Schools. Funding is applied to the number of pupils above the relevant threshold. Schools are limited to 2 consecutive years for the receipt of funding. The overall funding allocation which any school could receive from the Fund over 2 consecutive years is capped at £100k in order to ensure overall affordability
- Exceptional requests from any school who does not meet the eligibility criteria for the Fund but feels that they have a strong case for the receipt of a funding allocation from the Falling Rolls Fund will be considered. This consideration will take the form of the submission of an application for funding which would be presented to a Panel of LA officers and Schools Forum representatives. However, in order to be considered for an exceptional funding request, the eligibility requirement in respect of the SCAP data required school places must be met as this a DfE mandatory requirement for the allocation of a funding award from Falling Rolls Funds. The consideration of exceptional requests will take the form of the submission of an application for funding which would be presented to a Panel of LA officers and Schools Forum representatives.

3.3 Use of the Fund during 2024-25 financial year

The table below provides a summary of funding allocated to primary schools for the 2024-25 financial year:

	No. schools in receipt of funding in 2024/25	2024-25 Funding Payments	2024-25 Funding (net of recoupment from DfE*)
School type			
Primary School (LA)	8	£135.2k	£135.2k
Primary School (Academy)	1	£38.8k	£22.6k
Total Funding Allocation	9	£174.0k	£157.8k

*Local Authorities are able to re-coup the element of the Academy payment relating to financial year 2025/26 from the DfE.

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The payments to individual primary schools ranged from £3.6k to £54.1k.

The table below provides a summary of funding allocated to secondary schools for the 2024-25 financial year:

	No. schools in receipt of funding in 2024/25	2024-25 Funding Payments	2024-25 Funding (net of recoupment from DfE*)
School type			
Secondary School (LA)	0	N/A	N/A
Secondary School (Academy)	3	£264.1k	£154.1k
Total Funding Allocation	3	£264.1k	£154.1k

*Local Authorities are able to recoup the element of the payment relating to financial year 2025/26 from the DfE.

The payments to individual secondary schools ranged from £64.1k to £100.0k.

The total amount of funding paid from the Falling Rolls Fund for the 2024-25 financial year was £438.1k (net allocation of £311.9k after accounting for the recoupment from the DfE). This payment was significantly higher than anticipated due to the anomalies presented in using the SCAP data which led to the introduction of an additional eligibility criteria measure approved by the Schools Forum in September 2024 for the 2025-26 financial year. The approved measure will ensure schools with falling rolls over a medium-term period are treated equitably across the local authority area and ensure that the Falling Rolls Fund can operate within the funds available and delivers the DfE stated purpose. The additional eligibility criteria was as follows:

- Pupil numbers at the school are forecast (as per NYC Strategic Planning pupil forecast data) to return to the level of the previous census within 3 years of the current year.

3.4 Forecast funding requirements from the Fund for 2025-26 and 2026-27 based on NYC's current criteria

Based on forecast pupil numbers for September 2025, received from NYC's Strategic Planning team in August 2025, no primary schools and no secondary schools have been identified as potentially eligible for Falling Rolls funding for the 2025-26 financial year. The forecast is derived from the current SCAP data and will need to be updated once the relevant SCAP data is released. As such, the forecast is subject to change.

Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Contingency Funds**4.0 PUPIL GROWTH FUND**

4.1 The purpose of this fund is to provide financial support to schools experiencing significant pupil growth where such growth results in funding pressures from the system of lagged funding. Pupil growth funding is only available for schools to support the revenue costs associated with exceptional pre-16 pupil growth to meet basic need in three clearly defined circumstances, being:

1. Primary schools - class expansion to meet basic need or in-year pupil number increases
2. Growth in secondary schools
3. New schools

4.2 The current operation and eligibility criteria for 1 and 2 detailed in 4.1 are outlined below:

Primary Schools:

- An assessment of the school's current class structure and future requirement needs to ensure an additional class is required. Class structures are assumed to be based on an average of around 30 pupils. This assessment is informed by input from NYC CYPS Strategic Services.
- Consideration is also given in extenuating factors that may prevent a school from reaching an average class size of around 30 pupils.
- A minimum funding allocation of a lump-sum funding contribution of £50k (full year allocation) or the DfE growth factor value (£1,570 for 2025-26) x the increase in pupil numbers compared to the previous October census pupil numbers (main school only). An adjustment of 7/12 will be made to the funding allocation for LA maintained schools

Secondary Schools

1. Year 7 growth of at least 15% between the current census and the previous census, and total pupil number growth of at least 5% between the current census and previous census
2. Once a school has met the Year 7 growth criteria detailed in 1. above, as well as being considered against the eligibility criteria for Year 7 growth in future years, there is also to be consideration of overall pupil growth in the school for the next 4 years after the year in which the Year 7 growth criteria was met. Schools with overall growth of at least 5% between the current year census and the previous year census will be eligible for funding based on the increase in total pupil roll (Y7 – Y11) growth above the 5% threshold in each of the following 4 years.

In subsequent years after meeting the initial Year 7 growth eligibility criteria, a school could qualify for a funding allocation under either 1 or 2 above. If a school qualifies under both 1 and 2, the school would receive the higher of the funding allocation calculated under each growth threshold criteria.

Funding methodology for secondary schools KS3 AWP value x Y7 growth in excess of 15%; where the calculated funding amount is in excess of £100k, the

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school will receive a funding allocation of the higher of £100k or the primary growth factor value \times the increase in Y7 pupil numbers in excess of 15% growth compared to the previous October census pupil numbers (main school only). In subsequent 4 years, where the school meets the eligibility criteria and the calculated funding is in excess £100k, the school will receive a funding allocation of the higher of £100k or the primary growth factor value (£1570 for the 2025-26 financial year) \times the higher of either the increase in Y7 pupil numbers in excess of 15% growth or overall main school growth of in excess of 5% of roll when comparing the current year October census pupil numbers to the previous October census pupil numbers (main school only) An adjustment of 7/12 will be made to the funding allocation for LA maintained schools.

Exceptional requests from any school who does not meet the eligibility criteria for the Fund but feels that they have a strong case for the receipt of a funding allocation from the Pupil Growth Fund will be considered. This approach will take the form of the submission of an application for funding which would be considered by a Panel of LA officers and Schools Forum representatives.

4.3 Use of the Fund during 2024-25 financial year

One primary school (academy) received a payment of £50.0k, one primary school (LA maintained) received a payment of £29.2k and another primary school (LA maintained) received a payment of £58.3k.

One secondary school (academy) received a capped maximum funding value of £100k, and one secondary school (LA maintained) received £48.5k.

The total amount of funding paid from the Pupil Growth Fund for 2024/25 financial year was £286k (net allocation of £223.5k after accounting for recoupment from the DfE).

4.4 Forecast funding requirements from the Fund for 2025-26 and 2026-27**Primary Schools: 2025-26**

During 2025-26, one LA maintained primary school has been identified as eligible for receipt of Pupil Growth funding for 2025-26 - the funding requirement for this school is £29.2k. One primary academy has also been identified as potentially eligible for receipt of pupil growth, with a funding requirement of £50k. The estimated total funding is £79.2k (net allocation of £58.3k after accounting for recoupment from the DfE).

Secondary Schools: 2025-26

Based on forecast pupil numbers for September 2025, received from NYC's Strategic Planning team in August 2025 and through applying the LA criteria, three secondary schools have been identified as potentially eligible for Pupil Growth funding for the 2025-26 financial year. The table below provides a summary of estimated funding requirements based on current analysis for the 2025-26 financial year:

Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Contingency Funds

	Y7 – Oct. 24	Y7 – Oct. 25	Y7 % Growth	Total Roll Oct.24	Total Roll Oct. 25	Total Roll % Growth	Estimated Funding Payments	Estimated Funding (post recoupment from DfE)
School 1 (Academy)	152	176	16%	662	747	13%	£100.0k	£58.3k
School 2 (Academy)	199	239	20%	977	1,035	6%	£58.5k	£34.1k
School 3 (Academy)	203	228	12%	908	999	10%	£100.0k	£58.3k
Estimated Funding Requirement							£258.5k	£150.8k

2026-27 Eligibility

Based on an assessment of school's current class structure and future requirement, two primary school (1 academy and 1 LA maintained) have been identified as potentially eligible for Pupil Growth funding for the 2026-27 financial year. Two secondary schools (both academies) have been identified as potentially eligible for Pupil Growth funding for the 2026-27 financial year. The estimated total funding requirement is £164.9k (net allocation of £108.3k after accounting for recoupment from the DfE).

4.5 Pupil Growth Funding Related To A School Closure

In May 2022 the Schools Forum approved amended eligibility criteria and operating methodology of the Growth Fund in respect of any funding allocated to the Fund that is attributable to a school closure, and the associated funding for pupils transferring from the closed school. This element of the Fund has not been utilised to date.

The Holy Family Catholic High School in Carlton Academy closed as at 31st August 2025. £1,352k, which represents the funding for the school for the period 1st September 2025 to 31st March 2026 was added to the Pupil Growth Fund to support schools admitting pupils from the closed school. Work is currently being undertaken to identify the schools that are eligible to receive funding.

4.6 Pupil Growth Funding Related To A New School

Pupil Growth Funding is the funding source available to local authorities to support the opening of new mainstream free schools built under the DfE free school presumption route. Schools built under this process require an additional funding commitment from the LA in respect of pre-opening funding, post-opening diseconomies funding and delegated budget in relation to estimated pupil numbers. The operating methodology of the Growth Fund in respect of any funding allocated for new schools, as agreed by the Schools Forum in November 2022, is as follows:

i. Pre-Opening costs

A lump sum funding allocation of £75k.

ii. Diseconomies of scale

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- a. A per pupil amount for pupil resources paid annually for the number of places added to the school's capacity in each year (i.e. each new year group that is opened but not funded until the following year) at £250 per primary mainstream pupil;
- b. A lump sum for leadership diseconomies paid annually based on the number of empty cohorts based on £8,500 per empty cohort i.e. the number of year groups not yet open as per the following table:

Empty Cohorts	Lump Sum Funding £
6	£51,000
5	£42,500
4	£34,000
3	£25,500
2	£17,000
1	8,500

iii. Incremental Growth in Pupil Numbers

A new school is funded based on estimated pupil numbers for each financial year that new year groups are being added to the school.

iv. Pupil Number Funding Protection

Funding protection is provided where actual pupil numbers fall below 75% of the full cohort pupil numbers (30 pupils for a one form entry for a Primary school). The funding protection would be implemented for the difference between the actual total number of mainstream pupils in the school, as at the start of the academic year, and the protection level of 75% of the expected total mainstream pupil numbers (30 pupils in year 1, 60 pupils in year 2, 90 pupils in year 3). The funding is based on Primary AWPU funding rates. The annual funding protection provided will be capped at a maximum of 10 pupils. In the event of the actual mainstream pupil numbers of the new school falling below 40% of the total expected mainstream pupil number, the funding protection would not be guaranteed and would be subject to negotiation with the Local Authority.

Use of the Fund during 2024-25 financial year

£142k of funding from the New School element of the Pupil Growth Fund was provided due to Keeble Primary Academy and Cambrai Primary Academy being new schools not yet operating with a full number of year groups.

Oakbridge Primary Academy in Northallerton opened in September 2024. The Trust operating the new school received £50k in respect of pre-opening costs, £4.5k for

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resources, £51k for leadership diseconomies of scale and a delegated budget provision of £122.5k.

Forecast funding requirements from the Fund for 2025-26 and 2026-27

£149k of funding from the New School element of the Pupil Growth Fund was provided to Keeble Primary Academy and Cambrai Primary Academy being new schools not yet operating with a full number of year groups. The two schools will not require funding for this purpose again in the 2026-27 financial year as the full cohort of year groups will be in operation.

Oakbridge Primary Academy in Northallerton opened in September 2024. The 2024-25 pupil number protection funding of £16k was paid in Summer 2025. Additionally in 2025-26 there will be estimated payments for resources (£6k), leadership diseconomies of scale (£42.5k), additional pupil number protection (£11.6k) and delegated budget provision of £57.3k. This school will also require funding for this purpose again in the 2026-27 financial year.

In respect of the New School Pupil Growth Funding elements, it is estimated that the total funding allocation to be made over the 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years will be:

2025-26: Funding Element	Estimated Amount (£'000)
Keeble & Cambrai – 2025/26 Additional Pupil Led Funding	148.6
Oakbridge – 2024/25 Additional pupil number protection	16.0
Oakbridge – 2025/26 Resources	6.0
Oakbridge – 2025/26 Leadership Diseconomies of Scale	42.5
Oakbridge – 2025/26 Additional pupil number protection	11.6
Oakbridge – 2025/26 Additional Pupil Led Funding	57.3
Total	282.0

2026-27 Funding Element	Estimated Amount (£'000)
Oakbridge – 2026/27 Estimated Funding – Pupil Led Funding (NYC average £4,573 per pupil x 7/12)	56.0
Oakbridge – 2026/27 Resources	5.3
Oakbridge – 2026/27 Leadership Diseconomies of Scale	34.0
Oakbridge – 2026/27 Additional pupil number funding protection - estimated provision	16.0
Total	111.3

5.0 PUPIL GROWTH & FALLING ROLLS FUND OVERALL POSITION & RESERVE

- 5.1 The current forecast reserves position for the combined Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Fund for 31st March 2026 is as follows:

	Core Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Fund	Pupil Growth Fund Associated with Closing Schools	New Schools Provision (pre-opening funding, post-opening diseconomies funding & estimated pupil number funding)
Balance as at 31/03/2025	£800.2k	£0.0k	£5,778.1k
2025/26 Funding Allocation	£0.0k	£1,352.0k	£500.0k
2025/26 Estimated Funding Requirement	-£209.1k	-£1,352.0k	-£282.0k
Forecast Reserve as at 31/03/2026	£590.9k	£0.0	£5,996.1k

- 5.2 In consideration of the level of reserve on the Core Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Fund and the current forecast Pupil Growth Funding requirement for 2026-27 of £108k in respect of basic need, it is proposed to, again, to release the £500k that is annually requested for Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls to be allocated to school budgets for the 2026-27 financial year. Schools Forum members are asked to note the risk that any demands for basic need Pupil Growth funding and Falling Rolls funding in excess of the available reserve will result in a request for an increased funding level being requested in the 2027-28 financial year.
- 5.3 The current estimated funding requirement on the Pupil Growth Fund for a new mainstream free school built under the DfE free school presumption route is between £900k and £1m over the initial 7 years of operation. It is expected that a further 4-5 new schools may be required within North Yorkshire over the next five to seven-year period. In this respect, it is anticipated that there is currently a sufficient balance in the New Schools Provision and it is proposed for the 2026-27 DfE Growth Funding to be made available, if required, to support school budgets. A further assessment will be undertaken at the end of 2026-27 financial year as to the level of reserve, the associated new school funding requirement and whether further funding contributions are required to the reserve.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Schools Forum is asked:
- To note the usage and forecast usage of the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Contingency Funds in the financial years 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 as detailed in this report.

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- b. To note the reserves position on the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Fund as at 31 March 2025 and the forecast reserves position for 31 March 2026 as detailed in section 5 of this report.
- c. To provide approval for the proposed release of the £500k that is annually requested for the Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Contingency Fund to be allocated, if required, to support school budgets for the 2026-27 financial year and any funding requirement for basic need Pupil Growth in 2026-27 to be met from the Core Pupil Growth & Falling Roll Reserve.
- d. To provide approval for the use of the DfE Growth Funding to be made available, if required, to support school budgets (also covered in Item 2.2 – School Funding 2026-27)

SIR STUART CARLTON

Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service