

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 23 rd November 2017
Report Subject	Class Sizes
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education and Youth
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To inform Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Welsh Government's (WG) Reducing Infants Class Sizes and Raising Standards Grant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the contents of the report.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND AND CONSIDERATIONS
1.01	The Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams AM, announced details of a new £36 million fund to address infant class sizes and raise standards.
1.02	The £36 million (a combination of £16 million revenue and £20 million capital) is being made available nationally over the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021.
1.03	Funding will be targeted at classes with 29 or more pupils. According to WG, International research and evidence shows us that a reduction in class sizes makes the most difference for the youngest pupils and particularly those from poorer and/or minority language backgrounds.

1.04	<p>The WG criteria for the grant funding relates to schools with infants class sizes of 29 or above, who demonstrate at least one, or a combination, of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant levels of free school meals; • below average outcomes and where a school is judged to be red or amber; • significant levels of special educational and additional learning needs; • significant levels of where Welsh/English is not the first language. 										
1.05	<p>The WG has determined that the mechanism for distribution of the revenue element of the grant will be a combination of the Nursery and Primary School Teaching and Other Services Indicator Based Assessment (IBA) element of the Standard Spending Assessment and the number of classes of 29 and over in each local authority (using a 4 year average of PLASC data between 2013 and 2016). The grant will be weighted 60% for the SSA element and 40% for the class sizes element.</p>										
1.06	<p>The table below sets out the total amount of the potential <u>revenue grant</u> that will be available to the Council from WG for this purpose. Funding is across four years 2017/18 to 2020/21. While the figures for 2017-18 are firm, the amount of funding available for this fund beyond the current financial year is indicative and subject to future spending decisions as part of the Welsh Government's budget process.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="304 1182 1367 1261"> <thead> <tr> <th>17-18</th> <th>18-19*</th> <th>19-20*</th> <th>20-21*</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>£99,572.01</td> <td>£149,358.02</td> <td>£248,930.03</td> <td>£298,716.04</td> <td>£796,576.25</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Indicative figures</p>	17-18	18-19*	19-20*	20-21*	Total	£99,572.01	£149,358.02	£248,930.03	£298,716.04	£796,576.25
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£99,572.01	£149,358.02	£248,930.03	£298,716.04	£796,576.25							
1.07	<p>WG required Councils to submit a business cases for consideration. The business case required LA's to focus on the revenue element of the grant whilst setting out proposals for the capital element of the grant. See Appendix 1 – Business case submission to WG.</p>										
1.08	<p>WG requested that Councils specify the details of how the funding would be used each year for the agreed four year period 2017-21. WG required information on how the funding would impact pupils with free school meals, additional needs, teacher/pupil ratios, performance, attendance and sustainability.</p>										
1.09	<p>The Council's submission to WG proposes to use revenue funding to raise standards in the targeted schools by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing Oracy in 2017/18; • developing reading and writing in the Foundation Phase in 2018/19; • improving performance in maths and numeracy in 2019/20; and • improving performance in digital competency in 2020/21. 										

1.10	The revenue grant will enable a review of current practice, demands and impact of class sizes on schools and to consult with Head teachers to look at new and innovative ways of reducing class sizes (whether more general additional class learning spaces are required or focused learning spaces for intervention teaching with groups of learners).
1.11	With £20m capital funding available nationally the Council has submitted a request for £1,820,000 to fund two proposed projects, in priority order as requested by WG. They are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ysgol Glan Aber, Bagillt 2. Westwood CP, Buckley
1.12	In terms of Ysgol Glan Aber, the school already has a commitment of £997,000 through the Council's Capital Programme. However, the detailed feasibility work recently undertaken has identified a number of suitability/circumstance issues which have resulted in the proposal to enlarge the scope of the original scheme. The proposal to WG, for an additional £1,320,000 in capital would allow the Council to address all the issues identified through detailed feasibility study. The proposed scheme at Westwood CP School (£500,000) would modernise and rationalise facilities at the school into one building.
1.15	Councils are expecting feedback on their submission's from WG during December 2017.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are sufficient staff resource in which to implement the grant.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	No statutory consultations are required. Should all or part of the submission be successful the identified schools will be consulted to ensure funding is utilised as intended.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	A Programme Board is set up to oversee the implementation business plans and manage risks in close detail. High level risks will be reported to Programme Board, operational risks will be managed by the project team in accordance with agreed tolerances.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Business Case to WG.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officers: Damian Hughes, Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision/Vicky Barlow, Interim Senior Manager, School Improvement.</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 704135/704019</p> <p>E-mail: Damian.hughes@flintshire.gov.uk vicky.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Capital funding - Capital funding is usually linked to acquiring or improving a long-term asset such as equipment or buildings.
7.02	Revenue funding - Is linked to items that will be used within a year. Examples include salaries, heating, lighting, services and small items of equipment. Routine repairs are revenue expenditures and can include significant repairs that do not extend the life of the asset or do not improve the asset (the repairs merely return the asset to its previous condition).