# AGENDA ITEM

**Title of report: Falling Rolls fund**

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**Officer to present the paper to Schools Forum:** Kay Goodacre

**Details on who has been consulted with on this paper to date:**

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**Executive Summary.**

Schools Forum to agree the criteria for operating a Falling Rolls Fund in 2023-24

**Recommendations.**

Forum is asked to consider the criteria and funding as proposed and agree whether to pursue with a Falling Rolls allocation

## Background

* 1. Local authorities are permitted to set aside schools block funding to create a small fund to support good schools with falling rolls, where local planning data shows that the surplus places will be needed within the next 3 financial years.
  2. The schools forum should agree both the value of the fund and the criteria for allocation. As with the growth fund, the falling rolls fund is also within the NFF schools block. Any in-year reduction to the falling rolls fund needs to be agreed with the Schools Forum or Secretary of State if appropriate.
  3. Criteria for allocating falling rolls funding should contain clear objective trigger points for qualification, and a clear formula for calculating allocations. Differences in allocation methodology are permitted between phases.

## Proposed eligibility criteria for Falling Rolls Fund

Falling rolls funding should only be used to support schools where the places are forecast to be needed over the short term. The fund should enable a school to avoid detriment in the educational offer to pupils whist undergoing a significant drop in roll due to external circumstances, beyond the schools control.

To qualify for falling rolls fund support schools must meet the following criteria:

* 1. The school must have been judged as good or outstanding at their last Ofsted inspection (mandatory)
  2. The total number on roll (excluding early years/post 16) is less than 80% of total planned admission number (PAN) and the total NOR (excluding early years/post 16) has dropped by at least 5% between last October census and the previous year’s October census
  3. The school is not undergoing a planned reduction in PAN, that would have allowed a measured reduction in expenditure
  4. The school is in a planning area where the vacant places are required, and local planning data shows the places will be required within the next 3 - 5 years

## Funding support allocated

* 1. The Number on roll (NOR) as at last October census will be deducted from the NOR of the previous October’s census. The result will be multiplied by the current base rate appropriate to phase, pro rata April - August (5 months).
  2. Funding will extend for a maximum of 3 years, reviewed at the beginning of each financial year.
  3. The local authority should report any falling rolls funds remaining at the end of the financial year to the schools forum. Funding may be carried forward to the following funding period, as with any other centrally retained budget as the local authority deems appropriate, which could include using it specifically for falling rolls.

## Conclusions

The proposed criteria have been set to ensure that funding supports good and outstanding schools with falling rolls in planning areas where places are needed. The local authority cannot support reductions in PAN and does not support schools that have vacant places if they have increased their PAN for reasons other than addressing basic need.