

ITEM 6

Additional Growth Funding for Archbishop Tenison's School in recognition of unfunded growth in years 2011 to 2021

Paper written by Archbishop Tenison Governors and approved for discussion by Schools' Forum Steering group

Proposal: To allocate £100,000 of unspent Growth Funding from the current budget to Archbishop Tenison's school in recognition of unfunded school growth of 12 students each year between 2011 and 2021 which was agreed and supported by the local authority which should have been supported by growth funding at that time.

1. Background

- 1.1 In a period of declining school rolls Archbishop Tenison's school is unique as the only maintained secondary school in Croydon which has seen growth over the last 12 years.
- 1.2 Over the period 2011 to 2021 Archbishop Tenison's school systematically expanded its PAN from 96 to 120 pupils per year, starting with the first group of 12 in September 2021 and ending with the last group of 12 in September 2020. This was done in agreement, and with the support, of the Local Authority.
- 1.3 The school was not informed of the availability of growth funding for the above and no growth funding was given to the school in the period 2011 to 2021.
- 1.4 The school went on to further increase its PAN from 120 to 150 in the years from 2021 to 2025 with the final increased intake starting in September 2025.
- 1.5 In discussion with Croydon Finance in 2021 about the new growth, the Head of Department confirmed to the school that growth funding should have been made available for the previous growth between 2011 and 2021.
- 1.6 They were able to make growth funding of £51,000 available to cover the final year of growth (2020/21) from unspent growth funding in 2021/22 and informed the school that there would be a discussion with the DfE how the remaining missed funding could be given. A further payment of £33k from a DfE grant for schools in deficit was made to the school.
- 1.7 Detailed figures for the missed funding (totalling £247,000) were supplied by the school and have been accepted by the Local Authority and DfE in all discussions (see Appendix A).
- 1.8 The school has successfully reduced a significant deficit of £872,000 in 2020 to around £290,000 in 2025 with a balanced budget forecast for 2027. This has been achieved, with the help of DfE advisors, through a combination of school growth, careful management of staffing levels and contract renegotiations amongst other steps.
- 1.9 Hence most of the remaining deficit for the school (which the Local Authority is understandably keen for the school to eliminate) is due to the growth funding that should have been paid in the period 2011 to 2021. Although understandable, it seems fundamentally unjust that a double standard is being applied where the school is rightly being held accountable for a historic deficit but those responsible for the historic underfunding which would have cleared that deficit are not taking any action to put that right. This proposal seeks a way to resolve this injustice.
- 1.10 In 2022 the local authority told the school to pursue this directly with the DfE who informed the school that it was the Local Authority's responsibility to resolve. The school returned to the Local

Authority (by this time with a different Finance Lead) who again referred the matter to the DfE. Most recently in 2024 the DfE once again referred the school back to the Local Authority (again with a change in their finance team) stating that they should resolve the matter. After 4 years of back and forth the school is looking for resolution.

- 1.11 The above discussions have been assisted by local MPs Sarah Jones and Chris Philp who have supported the school in their discussions with the Local Authority and the DfE. More recently discussions have taken place with Councillor Maria Gatland and, on her advice, with Chair of Schools Forum. The school is profoundly grateful to them all for their understanding and support.

2. Continuing efforts to resolve the situation

- 2.1 In an effort to understand the position the school governors submitted Freedom of Information requests to the DfE and the Local Authority.

Table 1: The DfE reported that growth funding allocated to Croydon (for the years that they had data available) was:

Year	Funding (£ million)
2019-2020	3.98
2020-2021	2.74
2021-2022	2.38
2022-2023	1.96
2023-2024	2.06
2024-2025	1.72

- 2.2 Any unspent growth funding for the year reverts back to the DfE and cannot be reclaimed in subsequent years.
- 2.3 The Local Authority have been unable to provide the information about how much of the above growth funding budget in previous years remained unspent and was returned to the DfE. The school's governors have carefully reviewed the minutes of Schools Forum for the above period and have found no information reported to Schools Forum concerning the level of unspent growth funding for this period.
- 2.4 Former senior employees of the Local Authority during this time have, informally, informed the school governors that substantial amounts of growth funding remained unspent and were returned to the DfE in this period.
- 2.5 As Archbishop Tenison's school is one of the only maintained schools in Croydon to be growing then a substantial part of the budgeted growth funding for the current year will remain unspent and will therefore return to the DfE.
- 2.6 Allocating part of the unspent budget in the manner proposed will benefit both the school and the Local Authority in their respective deficit reductions and will be at no cost to the Local Authority since the unspent growth fund would otherwise return to the DfE.
- 2.7 Allocating part of the unspent budget in the manner proposed would not be to the detriment of any other school in Croydon since it would otherwise return to the DfE.

3. Request

- 3.1 It is requested that Schools' Forum allocate £100,000 of growth funding to Archbishop Tenison's school in recognition of the unfunded growth in the period of 2011 to 2021 and to draw a line under this discussion that has occupied the time of the Local Authority, MPs, school governors and Headteacher over the last four years.

APPENDIX A

Archbishop Tenison's Church of England High School, Croydon											
These figures show the extent of underfunding for the school over the period 2011-2020 when the school systematically increased its roll from 96 to 120, 12 pupils per year, starting with the first group of 12 in September 2011, and ending with the last group of 12 in September 2020. This table details the additional funds which the school should have received each year for an extra 12 pupils for an additional 7 months.											
YEAR	11-16 pupils	KS3 pupils	11-16 AWPU	11-16 overall	% through AWPU	KS3 AWPU	KS3 overall	AWPU KS3 per pupil	Overall KS3 per pupil	7 months per pupil	12 pupils
2011-12	483	287	1,816,983	2,566,858	70.79	1,053,577	1,361,366	3,671	4,743	2,767	33,204
2012-13	500	301	1,919,023	2,396,774	80.07	1,139,285	1,366,380	3,785	4,539	2,648	31,776
2013-14	516	320	2,060,175	2,618,417	78.68	1,246,422	1,512,157	3,895	4,725	2,757	33,078
2014-15	525	327	2,125,709	2,586,550	82.18	1,298,855	1,530,270	3,972	4,680	2,730	32,758
2015-16	519	319	2,184,986	2,625,985	83.21	1,286,469	1,502,514	4,033	4,710	2,748	32,971
2016-17	534	327	2,145,656	2,649,543	80.98	1,252,431	1,490,617	3,830	4,558	2,659	31,909
2017-18	549	333	2,212,779	2,668,803	82.91	1,305,577	1,528,664	3,921	4,591	2,678	32,134
2018-19	573	355	2,407,599	2,929,714	81.68	1,453,319	1,719,567	4,094	4,844	2,826	33,907
2019-20	589	365	2,498,274	3,079,967	81.12	1,508,802	1,793,664	4,134	4,914	2,867	34,399
2020-21	589	358	2,654,774	3,286,793	80.77	1,571,410	1,873,592	4,389	5,233	3,053	36,634
										TOTAL	332,771