

Rotherham Schools' Forum

Venue: Rockingham Professional Development Centre

Date: Friday, 17 June 2016

Time: 8.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd April, 2016. (Pages 1 - 3)
5. Eastwood Village Primary School - lessons learned report. (Pages 4 - 11)
6. Information sharing and discussion on the proposed National Funding Formula.
7. Funding for sponsored academisations - initial discussion.
8. SEND update.
9. Date and time of the 2016/2017 meetings: -

TBC based on comments/preferences on day/timing from members of the RSF.

First meeting of the academic year to include Chair, Vice-Chair, Learning Community and Stakeholder Representatives confirmation and nomination/election.

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY, 22ND APRIL, 2016**

Present:- D. Naisbitt (Oakwood) (in the Chair).

Learning Community representatives: - T. Mahon (Saint Bernard's), D. Ball (Aston), P. Di'Iasio (Wales), L. Pepper (Clifton), C. Eccles (Dinnington and Brinsworth), J. Barnett (Rawmarsh).

Other stakeholders: - P. Bloor (PRUs), J. Mott (Special Schools), P. Gerard (Nursery), A. Hardy (Colleges), S. Scott (Early Years PVI), G. Gillard (Sheffield Diocese), M. Badger (Support Staff Trades Unions).

Also in attendance: - P. Williams (CYPS), K. Borthwick (CYPS), Councillor L. Pitchley (Rotherham MBC), H. Etheridge (Democratic Services), P Williams (CYPS).

Apologies for absence had been received from: - S. Brook (Teaching Trade Unions), A. Richards (Secondary Governors), D. Ashmore (Teaching School), V. Njelic (Financial Services).

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No Declarations of Interest were made.

32. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 4TH MARCH, 2016.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 22nd April, 2016, were considered.

Under agenda item 25 (Communications) it was requested that the wording be updated to read: - 'The Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services had agreed that Rotherham's hourly rate would rise BY (replace 'to') 27p per hour with effect from 1st April, 2016'.

Further work would be undertaken in relation to sufficiency requirements and emerging demands in relation to the Early Years Sector.

Agreed: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

33. SCHOOLS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA - STAGE ONE.

David Naisbitt, Chair of the RSF, thanked Vera Njelic for her clear document relating to the proposals within the Central Government Consultation.

The document outlined the main areas of the consultation document: -

- Formula Schools National Funding;
- Chapter 1: Reforming the funding system;
- Chapter 2: The schools national funding formula;
- The transition to a new formula;
- Funding that will remain with local authorities;
- The future of the Education Services Grant (ESG).

Paula Williams explained that she would be attending a meeting on 27th May relating to the High Needs' National Funding Formula.

The two National Government funding reform consultations had been responded to by a number of individuals within Rotherham representing a range of groups, including the Rotherham Schools' Forum, the Local Authority, Learners' First and High Needs stakeholders.

Discussion followed and the following points were raised: -

- Consideration was being given to the ability to vire funds between the Blocks into the High Needs Block;
- Historical under-funding of the High Needs Block and the need to review this in the context of Rotherham's needs and sufficiency;
- Creation of Rotherham's SEND data set was continuing and developing all of the time;
- Advent of Area Inspections from May, 2016.

Paula was thanked for providing her ongoing updates.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

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Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

34. SEND UPDATE.

Paula Williams, Inclusion Team Leader, was welcomed to the meeting to provide an update in relation to issues relating to SEND work continuing in Rotherham.

- The SEND Partnerships were continuing to develop well into distinct groups;
- Discussion was taking place on whether they wanted to change their names;
- Primary SEND Group was looking at how the process would be managed in relation to the primary sector to create nurture provision;
- Development of Accountability Frameworks;
- Working protocol with Special Schools;
- Meeting needs relating to autism.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

35. APPROVAL TO INCREASE THE BUDGET CENTRALLY RETAINED FROM THE EARLY YEARS BLOCK IN 2016/17.

Karen Borthwick, Assistant Director for Skills and Lifelong Learning, introduced a report that outlined a proposal to meet the need to increase centrally retained budgets relating to the Early Needs Block in the 2016/2017 financial year.

Discussion ensued on the service provided in relation to the software licence used by the Early Years' Service, the efficiency savings resulting from purchasing the software. It was confirmed that the increase to £150k was in relation to the 2016/2017 year only. Future financial year contributions would revert back to £60k.

The Rotherham Schools' Forum voted on the proposal.

Agreed: - That, on a unanimous basis, an increased centrally retained budget of £150k be approved as set out in the submitted report.

36. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Agreed: - That the next meeting take place on Friday 17th June, 2016, to start at 8.30 am in the Rockingham Professional Development Centre.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM

1.	Meeting:	SCHOOLS FORUM
2.	Date:	17th June 2016
3.	Title:	Eastwood Village Primary School – Lessons Learned
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People’s Services

5. Summary

This report outlines the lessons learned in relation to the procedures for opening a new school following the opening of Eastwood Village Primary School.

6. Recommendation:

- **It is recommended that the report be accepted by Schools Forum and the lessons learned used to inform future new school planning and opening.**

7. Proposals and Details

The process followed, key milestones and lessons learned are outlined below:

Targeted Basic Need funding bid to the Department for Education (DfE):

A targeted basic need funding bid was submitted by the Local Authority (LA) to DfE in 2012 as part of the national Targeted Basic Need funding bid round. Bids were submitted and assessed by DfE in relation to expanding an existing primary school or creating a new school to add additional primary education places required in the Central area of the Borough.

Context:

At the time of submission, all Central area primary schools were full or over-subscribed and Headteachers had agreed exceptionally to accept additional pupils over Published Admission Number (PAN) via Fair Access Protocol to ensure that although the Schools were full / oversubscribed, pupils meeting Fair Access placement criteria would be allocated places at the nearest appropriate school as 'excepted pupils' under the School Admissions code.

This meant that Central schools were exceeding their admission number and in several cases were in breach of Infant Class size legislation exceptionally as a result of the 'excepted pupils'.

A demographic survey was commissioned by the then Children and Young People's Services Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) to support the funding bid and the outcome of the survey was that the Central area pupil population would continue to increase in line with the verified pupil population increase of the Borough of 10% to 14%. (The annual School Capacity and Planning 'SCAP' return to DfE in 2012 confirmed a 10% borough wide pupil number increase and the 2015 return has confirmed this increase is now 13%)

Two funding bids were submitted in relation to the Central area of the Borough, one to expand an existing primary school (Broom Valley J & I) to accommodate additional pupils and the other to build a new Central area school. The latter of the two submissions was approved by DfE.

Lessons Learned:

Given the short timescales imposed by the DfE there was a sense of urgency in relation to the funding submission, information collation and forward plan for opening in relation to year groups, numbers etc in the first year of operation.

Retrospectively, several plans were amended, revised or further clarification sought by DfE after the approval of the bid.

Future projects will not be undertaken within such a tight timeline framework so this should not present the same challenges in relation to future new school projects.

Sufficient time will be allocated to ensure all stakeholders are fully engaged and informed in relation to future new school funding projects.

Land Procurement, Design and Planning:

The availability of land in the required location was very limited. Four options were originally submitted to Cabinet for consideration. The preferred option was to locate the school on the Eastwood Trading Estate on the land and building footprint of Peck House.

A feasibility study was undertaken to assess the viability and cost of preparing the land and potential purchase cost. Negotiations with the land owner were unsuccessful. The next option of providing the school on the underused allotments on Eldon Road was pursued and became the preferred option.

There were many obstacles to overcome before construction of the school could begin. Approval from the Department for Communities and Local Government was needed to change the designation of the allotments and the Environment Agency had to approve the proposal as the land is on a flood plain.

The design began in September 2013 by which time the Academy sponsor had been selected. The design was undertaken by RMBC Architects in full consultation with the Academy sponsor. A timeline of the significant milestones is below;

- Design Development – September 2013 to June 2014
- Planning Permission granted – June 2014
- Construction contract awarded – September 2014
- Construction start – October 2014
- Construction Completed – September 2014

The shorter than normal construction programme of 11 months did not allow for any unforeseen events to occur. Unfortunately there were problems with the utility companies and the power was not commissioned when it should have. This did cause delays and pupils were admitted later than expected. There was also no time for the building to be fully handed over with all the various systems tested.

The timeline was a result of the targets which were set by the DfE for this funding programme.

Lessons Learned:

The design development stage for a new school should be 12 months minimum. This is from inception to submitting plans to Planning Board.

The construction programme should be a minimum of 12 months. A longer construction programme would provide more float should any unforeseen events occur. The building could also be handed over before pupils are due to be admitted

allowing time for snagging to be completed, systems tested and for classrooms to be set up.

The project team needs to include a representative from the academy sponsor who is available to respond and answer questions in relation to requirements from inception through to the opening of the school.

Operational Issues

A school requires many services and contracts to be set up before it can become operational. This includes all the utilities, phone lines, ICT connection, photocopiers, waste disposal, cleaning, caretaking, catering, etc.

A project team was set up which included representatives from the Academy Sponsor and the LA. Facilities Services were able to provide assistance in much of this and provide almost a one stop shop for cleaning, caretaking and catering. Without this many more separate contracts would have been needed which would have required additional resource from the Academy Sponsor.

Lessons Learned:

Early set up of project team to coordinate what services and contracts would be required.

Selection of a Sponsor:

In line with DfE guidance (any new school built - there would be an Academy / Free School sponsorship presumption), the LA followed DfE protocol and advertised for potential sponsors for the new school and expressions of interest were received from potential sponsors. Sponsor applicants were initially verified by DfE as suitable and shortlisted for consideration by the Local Authority. A selection panel was convened to select the highest calibre of sponsor available to control the new school once opened.

The panel included:

Elected Ward Member
Learning Community School Governor
Learning Community School pupil and parent
Senior Local Authority Officers and a Consultant Headteacher
Observer

A prospectus was developed prior to the selection programme outlining the need for the new School and local community overview. Potential sponsors were asked to deliver a presentation to the panel and were asked a series of pre- determined questions focusing on key elements such as:

Ethos and Partnership
 Improving Pupil Outcomes
 Inclusion
 Working with the Local Community

Panel members graded the applicants individually then following discussions agreed a preferred sponsor – the Central Learning Partnership (CLP). This recommendation was then ratified by the Council’s Cabinet.

Lessons Learned:

Given the short timescales imposed by the DfE there was a sense of urgency in relation to the appointment of a sponsor, gaining Cabinet approval and formally notifying DfE of the appointment by the imposed deadline.

Future Selection processes to appoint a sponsor will need a longer lead in time to allow potential sponsors and the LA the time to prepare more thoroughly. This extended timeline will also allow for events such as information days as part of the process.

Pre- opening funding allocation to Eastwood Village Primary School:

The School opened in September 2015 with a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30 to pupils in statutory year groups Foundation Stage 2 / Reception to Y4. Using previously agreed funding formulas and salary levels for school expansions, Schools Forum agreed a proposal to allocate the funding indicated below as a pre start up allocation.

Based on the school expansions funding formula with a presumption that staff recruitment will occur in the term proceeding opening - April to August (5/12) of start - up year staffing:

Financial Year – 2014/15	Expenditure
Leadership funding based on L10 leadership salary as previously agreed by Schools Forum (Sept 14 to Mar 15)	£34,289
Financial Year – 2015/16	Expenditure
Leadership funding based on L10 leadership salary as previously agreed by Schools Forum (Apr 15 to Aug 15 – 5/12)	£24,492

FS2 to Y4 = 5 classrooms using suggested formula above (Apr 15 – Aug 15 – 5/12)	£65,731 Teachers £22,985 T/As £15,000 Classroom £103,716
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Funding allocation from September 2015 (Financial year 2015/16):

The new school will receive a formula budget for the September 2015 to August 2016 period. The Local Authority will estimate the pupil numbers expected to join the school in September and fund accordingly, explaining the rationale underpinning the estimates.

Diseconomies of scale funding:

Funding allocation from September 2015 to cover diseconomies during the schools first year of operation

The definition of what diseconomies of scale costs relate to has been extracted from the DfE funding document:

Diseconomies costs relate to the need to incur some fixed management and premises costs as new schools build up their numbers. This funding must be made available to new academies on the same basis as maintained schools, including those funded on estimates – this can be paid to new schools that have opened and have not reached their full number of year groups.

Diseconomies costs should not be funded by artificially inflating pupil numbers in the formula since this has the effect of obscuring the pupil based funding. Instead estimated pupil numbers should reflect the number of pupils expected to join the school in the Autumn term to calculate the schools formula funding and any additional diseconomies funding for the school should be paid from the growth fund.

NB: The formula for new schools now fully agreed will be used for the proposed new Waverley and Bassingthorpe Farm primary Schools in due course.

Diseconomies funding – based on October Census / projections:

Variation between funding and full	Projection / Actual – pupil number if full in all year groups school opens to in first year.
Variation allocation per empty seat AWPU rate = £3,135 per pupil	£ 3,135 x variation

Resources / premises / Infrastructure	£1,223 x variation
Deprivation (ever 6) allocation	Amount (if applicable) x variation
50% + £548 per pupil	
29% - 49% £300 per pupil	
15% - 28% £150 per pupil	
0 – 14% £ NIL per pupil	
EAL (20% +) £367 per pupil	Amount (if applicable) x variation
pupil mobility (10% +) £500 per pupil	Amount (if applicable) x variation
Low attainment factor £537 per pupil	Amount (if applicable) x variation

Lessons Learned:

As DfE guidance simply states that the formula's must be agreed by Schools Forum and the Academy Sponsor and should be arranged locally, this has led to several work-streams to devise formula's and gain the agreement of both parties. Given the Targeted Basic Need programme there was a lack of precedent as all Local Authorities were in a similar position so there has been a lack of comparator formula's until after allocation.

The formula's agreed will be used to inform future new school opening allocations, following precedent.

Admissions:

Given the transience of families in the Central area of the Borough, several applications for places at Eastwood Village Primary School were received, processed and approved in preparation for the school opening in September 2015. Several families subsequently moved on to other areas of the Borough / Country meaning that accurate projections of numbers proved problematic and accurate staffing and resourcing was impacted upon to support pupils as cohort numbers fluctuated during pre opening and initial opening.

Lessons Learned:

The Admissions Team and Central Learning Partnership maintained a daily communication and revised admission numbers for each year group were submitted weekly to assist the CLP with forward planning in the lead up to the school opening. The LA and CLP developed an effective dialogue from the outset of the project and this is critical to ensure effective partnership working, communication and relationships are maintained.

8. Finance

The Education Funding Agency has produced guidance on funding arrangements - Revenue funding arrangements (additional information for Local Authorities guidance) included within the guidance is a table indicating the responsibilities for 'start up' new school funding. Any new school / Academy that is open for basic need purposes is the responsibility of the Local Authority to fund. This includes both post revenue opening costs and pre start development costs.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are always risks and uncertainties when school place provision is considered since future pupil numbers are based on estimations. Over provision at one school could influence pupil numbers at other schools. Local Authorities are obliged, however, to provide sufficient places, promote diversity and increase parental preference. The Central Leaning Community was previously oversubscribed with schools struggling to meet the demand for places, with several families having siblings in two or even three different primary schools.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Local Authority has a duty to ensure a sufficiency of school places in areas of current and future need, provided in successful and popular schools.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Reports to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Family Services and Cabinet in relation to Eastwood Village Primary School

Reports to Schools Forum in relation to funding requests for Eastwood Village Primary School

12. Contact Names

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Andrew Parry (CYPS Capital Projects)