

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY, 17TH MARCH, 2017**

Present:- Mr. D. Naisbitt (Oakwood High School - in the Chair); Learning Community representatives:- Mrs. D. Ball (Aston Learning Community), Mrs. L. Pepper (Clifton Learning Community), Mr. P. Di'lasio (Wales High School) and Mr. T. Mahon (St. Bernard's RC High School).

Other stakeholders:- Mr. P. Bloor (Pupil Referral Units), Mr. P. Gerrard (Maintained Nursery Schools), Mr. G. Gillard (Sheffield Diocese), Mrs. L. Reid (RNN Group) and Mr. M. Badger and Mr. S. Mahmood (UNISON).

Also in attendance:- Mrs. K. Borthwick (RMBC Assistant Director of Education and Skills), Mr. M. Chambers (RMBC Finance) and Mrs. V. Njegic (RMBC Finance). Together with Mrs. P. Williams (RMBC Head of Inclusion – for Minute No. 38)

Apologies for absence were received from:- Mrs. P. Dobbin (Redscope Primary School), Mr. J. Taylor (Wath Comprehensive School), Mrs. J. Mott (Special Schools), Mr. D. Ashmore (Teaching Schools), Mr. J. Morrison (Swinton Academy), Mr. A. Richards (Secondary Governors), Mrs. S. Brook (NASUWT) and Mr. P. Harris (GMB).

34. MR. T. MAHON - RETIREMENT

The Chair informed everyone that this would be the last meeting to be attended by Mr. T. Mahon, Head Teacher of the Saint Bernard's Catholic High School, Rotherham, who was retiring at Easter 2017.

The Rotherham Schools' Forum thanked Mr. Mahon for his contribution to the work of the Forum and wished him a long and happy retirement.

35. LEARNING COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATIVES - CONFIRMATION AND NOMINATION/ELECTION

Details were submitted of the current membership of the Rotherham Schools' Forum for the 2016/2017 academic year. The document had recently been updated.

Agreed:- (1) That there shall be continual review of membership to ensure that the balance of academy and non-academy schools represented on the Rotherham Schools' Forum accurately reflects the balance of the sectors in the Rotherham Borough area.

(2) That the role of the Rotherham Schools' Forum to scrutinize and to influence thinking be emphasised.

36. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13TH JANUARY, 2017

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Rotherham

Schools Forum, held on 13th January, 2017, be approved as a correct record.

37. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Reference was made to Minute No. 25(e) of the meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 13th January, 2017, concerning de-delegated funding for the Trades Unions' Facilitator.

The Forum noted that the consultation process with maintained schools could not be completed by the due deadline in January 2017 to enable consideration of any funding for the 2017/2018 financial year. It was noted that the Trades Unions intended to consult with the maintained schools and inform them of the cost per pupil, to facilitate consideration of this matter at a future meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum.

(Post-meeting note : The trades unions are going to contact schools about the current buyback position, but will consult before the next decision to delegate / de-delegate has to be made and report to the Schools' Forum – probably January 2018).

38. STRATEGIC PLAN FOR HIGH NEEDS PROVISION AND SPEND (INCLUDING FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE)

Further to Minute No. 30 of the meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 13th January, 2017, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Principal Finance Officer, stating that as part of the Government Department for Education's move towards national funding formulas for the Dedicated Schools Grant (replacing the largely historically based allocations that apply currently), the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant was moving towards a national formula from 2018/19. The report stated that, unlike the Schools Block, this will be a national funding formula at local authority level, rather than at school level. The report stated that the Department for Education's consultation on this matter would end on 22nd March, 2017. A summary of the Local Authority's draft response to this consultation was included as an appendix to the submitted report.

The Schools' Forum also received a presentation from the Head of Inclusion concerning the High Needs block of funding. The presentation and subsequent discussion highlighted the following salient issues:-

: high needs sufficiency provision;

: the Council's special education needs service and the early years' service have both been the subject of peer review in recent months;

: a conference, lasting two days, is being arranged for school leaders and will examine the strategic vision for schools and special schools;

: Rotherham's school pupil population continues to increase and at the same time the proportion of children with special needs is increasing at a higher rate;

: the increase in the number of children requiring education, health and care (EHC) plans may, in part, be explained by the modernisation of the special educational needs (SEN) system, replacing the SEN statements with EHC plans;

: the increase in the number of Rotherham children requiring education, health and care (EHC) plans will soon bring Rotherham up to the national average;

: there has been a reduction in the number of children in Rotherham schools whose specific needs are being met in school;

: additional places for children with special educational needs have been made available at the Newman Special School in Rotherham; by contrast, other services have been reduced or terminated (eg: closure of special needs provision at Rawmarsh Thorogate Primary School and at Flanderwell Primary School);

: almost all of the special schools in Rotherham have the capacity for expansion (the single exception being the Hilltop Special School);

: the Schools' Forum requested clarification of the number of available pupil places in special schools;

: reference was made to the comparatively high cost of pupils with special needs who have out-of-authority placements;

: it is estimated that an additional 126 places for pupils with special needs must be available before the end of the 2020/2021 financial year;

: there was a possibility of a free school for pupils with special needs being opened within the Rotherham Borough area;

: the primary school being developed within the Waverley Community will include specific provision for pupils with autism;

: discussion took place on the need to reduce the High Needs Block budget overspend during the next few financial years.

Copies of the presentation slides would be distributed to all members of the Rotherham Schools' Forum.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the Local Authority's draft response to the Government Department for Education's consultation be made available for all Head

Teachers and they be invited to formulate their own responses and send them to the Principal Finance Officer prior to the responses being submitted to the Department for Education by the due deadline of Wednesday 22nd March, 2017.

(3) That the outcome of the Department for Education's consultation on the High Needs National Funding Formula be reported to a future meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum.

(4) That the following progress reports be submitted to the meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum to be held on Friday, 16th June, 2017:-

(a) a progress report about the High Needs Block of funding and the action being taken to control the overspending; and

(b) a progress report about the expansion programme for primary and secondary schools and academies and the provision of additional school places.

39. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA AND HIGH NEEDS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA: DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION CONSULTATION (STAGE 2)

Further to Minute No. 32 of the meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 13th January, 2017, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Principal Finance Officer, concerning the Government's consultation (stage 2) about the National Funding Formula for Schools, including the High Needs National Funding Formula. The report contained details of:-

- : the key features of the National Funding Formula proposals;
- : factor values and weighting for the National Funding Formula proposals;
- : basic entitlement amount per pupil (and for additional needs);
- : the deprivation factor;
- : increased funding distributed according to low prior attainment;
- : increased funding distributed in respect of English as an Additional Language;
- : the lump sum factor;
- : details of the specific impacts for the Rotherham Borough area, for the wider region and also the impact nationally;
- : illustrative National Funding Formula outcomes for Rotherham schools;

: the impact of the National Funding Formula on local authority league tables.

Included with the report was the Local Authority's draft response to the Government Department for Education's consultation, with response having to be submitted by the due deadline of Wednesday 22nd March, 2017.

The outcome of the consultation process would be made available by the Department for Education during June, 2017 and it was suggested that the Rotherham Schools' Forum might wish to establish a Working Group in order to consider the detailed implications of the National Funding Formula for Rotherham schools.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the Local Authority's draft response to the Government Department for Education's consultation be made available for all Head Teachers and they be invited to formulate their own responses and send them to the Principal Finance Officer prior to the response being submitted to the Department for Education by the due deadline of Wednesday 22nd March, 2017.

(3) That the outcome of the Department for Education's consultation on the National Funding Formula be reported to a future meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum.

40. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- (1) That the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum take place on Friday 28th April, 2017, at the Rockingham Professional Development Centre, commencing at 8.30 a.m.

(2) That the next following meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum shall take place on Friday, 16th June, 2017 at the Rockingham Professional Development Centre, commencing at 8.30 a.m.