

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM  
FRIDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2019**

**In Attendance:-**

Deborah Ball, Treeton Primary (Academy) (in the Chair)

Lianne Camaish – Aspire

John Coleman – Nexus Director (Special Academy)

Dom Curran – Aston Academy

Pepe DiLasio – Assistant Director, Education

Dean Fenton – Head of Service, Access to Education

Christina Hill – GMB Representative

Mary Jarrett – Head of Inclusion Service

Jenny Lingrell – Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion

David Naisbitt – Oakwood High School (Academy)

Vera Njegic – Principal Finance Officer, Children and Young People's Services

Kirsty Peart – Sitwell Infant (Maintained)

Lynn Pepper – Herringthorpe Infant School (Maintained)

Andy Reed – Winterhill Academy (Academy)

Nevine Towers – Diocese of Sheffield

**Apologies for absence:-**

Philip Davies – Wingfield Academy (Academy)

Neil Hardwick – Head of Finance – Children and Young People's Services

Andrew Krabbendam – Kiveton Park Infant and Harthill Primary (Academy)

Steve Rhodes – Winterhill Academy (Academy)

Alan Richards – Secondary Governors

Steve Scott – Happy Kids (PVI)

Paul Silvester – Newman Special School (Maintained)

Helen Simpson – Ferham Primary (Maintained)

Jon Taylor – Wath Academy (Academy)

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest from the agenda to report.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21ST JUNE, 2019**

Agreed:- That the minutes of the last meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2019, be approved as a true and accurate record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Further to Minute No. 4 (Constitution Update), it was noted that attempts had been made to recruit representatives to the Forum.

Information had been provided to the Governors Section for inclusion in the regular Governors Update. There had also been no contact from any

Head Teachers expressing an interest.

Agreed: That Vicky Helliwell be asked to progress the matter.

#### 4. DSG MID-YEAR UPDATE

Vera Njegic, Schools' Finance, introduced the report which provided an update on the current year position of the wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the impact it had had on the DSG reserve.

On closure of the 2018/19 accounts, the Local Authority had not been notified of the final Early Year's adjustment for 2018/19 as a result of the January Schools and Early Years' census. It had been estimated to be £26,000 clawback; on 16<sup>th</sup> July ESFA had provided the final allocations to local authorities and for Rotherham the adjustment had been an increase in funding of £64,000.

The overall impact of the ESFA final allocations was that the Local Authority received £90,000 of additional income than initially anticipated. This had been used to increase the Early Years Reserve carry forward budget for the 2019/20 financial year.

The report also set out the 2019/20 overall DSG position with the allocations updated accordingly.

At the end of July (period 5) the anticipated outturn position was:-

Early Years – currently forecasting a breakeven position at year end

High Needs DSG – forecast overspend of £1.388M based on the DSG recovery plan and included anticipated growth on EHDs numbers and the implementation of new developments linked to the SEND Sufficiency Strategy (details set out in the report submitted).

The key areas of focus to reduce the current High Needs Block pressures were:-

- A review of high cost external education provision to reduce cost and move children back into Rotherham educational provision
- Develop additional SEN provision in Rotherham linked to mainstream schools and academies
- Work with schools and academies to maintain pupils in mainstream setting wherever possible
- A review of Inclusion Services provided by the Council

It was noted that once an update was provided from the 2020 Spring Census the DSG would be recalculated.

Authorities had been requested to submit recovery plans with regard to the High Needs DSG. Rotherham's had been submitted but had not

received any feedback as yet other than acknowledgement of its submission. Rotherham's cumulative deficit as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2019 was significantly higher than its neighbouring authorities as a result of a historic low funding baseline, the acceleration in demand and the high cost of provision. Rotherham also had a high number of specialist schools compared with other areas. It was hoped that some of the changes that had been made would incrementally make a difference.

Agreed:- That the current position be noted.

#### **5. NEW FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT (HM TREASURY SPENDING ROUND 2019)**

Vera Njelic, Schools Finance, introduced a report detailing the recently announced School Funding update.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2019, the Secretary of State for Education had set out the Government's spending plans for 2020/21. To fulfil the Government commitment to increase the Schools budget by £7.1 billion by 2022/23, the spending round exceptionally set budgets for schools until 2022/23.

The announcement included:-

- The 5-16 core Schools and High Needs budget would, compared to 2019/20, rise by the following:-
  - £2.6 billion in 2020/21
  - £4.8 billion in 2021/22
  - £7.1 billion in 2022/23
- Government commitment to provide £1.5 billion of funding to compensate schools for the increased cost of employer pension contributions
- The minimum per pupil amounts were set to increase from £3,500 to £3,750 (Primary) and £4,800 to £5,000 (Secondary). A further uplift to Primary rates in 2021/22 would increase the minimum per pupil to £4,000
- In 2020/21 the minimum funding guarantee would be between +0.5% and +£1.84%
- Provisional national funding formulate allocations would be published at local authority level in early October 2019 for 2020/21
- Final Dedicated Schools Grants allocations would be released in December 2019 (following the October 2019 census)
- £700M had been included in 2020/21 to support children and young

people with Special Educational Needs

- Increase to Early Years spending of £66M to increase the hourly rate to childcare providers
- £400M investment in Further Education for 2020/21. This was in recognition of the vital role the sector played in delivering the skills required for the wider economy.

It was noted that Schools Finance would be circulating the consultation on the 2020/21 financial year's funding before the October half term. It was suggested that the sub-group meet before the next Forum meeting (22<sup>nd</sup> November) to discuss.

Agreed:- (1) That the latest announcements relating to funding be noted.

(2) That a sub-group be held on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2019, at 8.30 a.m. to discuss the 2020/21 consultation.

## **6. SEND SUFFICIENCY PHASE 2**

The Forum noted a report considered by the Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 (Minute No. 42 refers) which approved the increase in education provision by 111 places to be achieved by September 2020 and that £1.186 million available capital funding be utilised to create the additional infrastructure required to deliver the projects.

Consultation had taken place with schools and settings in accordance with Department for Education guidance and a number of projects had been identified across Rotherham to meet the needs identified within the 2019 SEND Sufficiency Strategy given that there was increased demand for specialist placements for children and young people in Rotherham with special education needs. Insufficient places within Rotherham increased pressure on the already challenged High Needs Budget and resulted in young people being placed outside Rotherham in high cost independent special schools.

The creation of additional in-Borough provision would, therefore, lead to a longer term saving on High Needs funding as in-Borough placements cost on average £30k per annum less than out of authority placements.

There was a clear particular need in Rotherham to respond to increased demand for places within mainstream schools for children and young people with a range of autism spectrum conditions, moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

Initially the parameters of the consultation were fixed to the proposals to increase places by 50 across Rotherham. However, the response from schools and post-16 providers was both creative and enthusiastic, resulting in realistic proposals to increase education provision for children

and young people with special education needs and disabilities by an additional 111 places within the funding parameters available.

This approach would, therefore, allow the Local Authority to advance forward planning in relation to the next stage (phase 3 SEND sufficiency) to meet further future need due to demographic growth and support activity to reduce the deficit of the High Needs Budget.

It was noted that allocation of places in the new provision would be made through a young person's annual review.

The SEND Sufficiency Strategy (education provision) was one piece of the jigsaw; there was also the SEND Strategy (health focus) and SEMH Strategy. It was intended to redevelop the SEND Strategy the process starting with a Voices Day in December. It would very much focus on children and young people with involvement of the Parents and Carer Forum. Information would be sent to Head Teachers and SENCOs.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the map showing the provision be circulated to Forum members.

## **7. EXCLUSIONS STRATEGY UPDATE**

Mary Jarrett, Head of Inclusion Services, and Jenny Lingrell, Assistant Director, gave a brief update on the Exclusion Strategy drawing attention to the following points:-

- Schools should retain responsibility for children who had been excluded and placed at Aspire - 2 primary schools had been identified as part of the Sufficiency Strategy
- The new Inclusions Team would have a fundamental point at which the process was paused before the young person was placed into long term provision elsewhere
- 2 secondment opportunities to help develop the provision
- Work was taking place on the revised Exclusions Strategy. By 1<sup>st</sup> November the draft Strategy and the Local Authority offer in terms of what would happen with exclusions would be available

Agreed:- (1) That the update be noted.

(2) That a briefing paper be submitted to the next meeting.

## **8. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS - FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS AND ACADEMY TRUSTS & MANDATORY MINIMUM PER PUPIL FUNDING LEVELS**

### **Financial Transparency of Local Authority Maintained Schools and Academy Trusts**

Vera Njegic, Schools Finance, introduced the report which detailed the Government consultation which had been launched on 17<sup>th</sup> July and would close on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.

The purpose of the consultation was to outline the current financial transparency arrangements for maintained schools and to consider possible changes as well as outlining the current arrangements for academy trusts. Whilst both academy trusts and maintained schools were now funded through DfE specific grants, current financial transparency arrangements were different and provided different levels of assurance. It was believed that the current transparency measures used in academies were generally stronger than those in the maintained school sector; the consultation would focus on using or adapting existing academy measures to help change and improve maintained schools' financial transparency and financial health.

A copy of Rotherham's completed consultation was attached. It was noted that the Local Authority had encouraged all maintained schools to complete and submit by the closing date.

### **Mandatory Minimum Per Pupil Fund Levels**

Vera Njegic, Schools Finance, introduced the report which detailed the Government consultation which had been launched on 10<sup>th</sup> September and would close on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2019.

The DfE was consulting on how to implement the minimum per pupil funding levels in the National Funding Formula (NFF) on a mandatory basis in 5-16 school funding. This would mean that every local authority would have to use the factor in their local funding formulae from 2020-21 which the DfE intended to reflect in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations following the consultation.

Agreed:- That the consultation documents be noted.

## **9. TRADE UNION FACILITIES**

The Forum noted the letter that had been sent to all local authorities requesting they consider funding for trade union facilities time.

Rotherham used to have an arrangement where funding from each school was de-delegated from school budgets and held centrally for trade union facilities. However, as more schools converted to academies, the remaining maintained schools took the decision not to continue with that practice to fund the TU offer. The same TU offer was included in the Service Level Agreement Portfolio of Services that went out to schools every year.

Currently 70 of the Rotherham schools had signed up to the buy back

offer. The offer was made to both academies and maintained schools.

Agreed:- (1) That the letter be noted.

(2) That the de-delegation methodology for maintained schools only be included within the funding consultation going out to schools.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business to report.

**11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed:- That the next meetings of the Rotherham Schools' Forum take place on Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2019 and 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2020, respectively at Rockingham Development Centre commencing at 8.30 a.m.