

Rotherham Schools' Forum

Venue: Rockingham Professional Development Centre **Date: Friday, 22 November 2019**

Time: 8.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Declarations of Interest
To record any Declarations of Interest in items on this agenda.
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 27th September, 2019 (Pages 1 - 7)
4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

Items for Discussion:-

5. High Needs Sufficiency Strategy Update
Mary Jarrett to report.
6. Mid-Year High Needs Block Update
Neil Hardwick to report.
7. School Funding Formula 2020/21 Consultation Outcome
Vera Njegic to report.
8. Mid-Year Early Years Block Update & 2020/21 Funding Announcement (Pages 8 - 9)
Aileen Chambers to report.
9. Pupil Growth Fund 2020/21 (Pages 10 - 11)
Dean Fenton to report.

10. Rotherham Scheme for Financing Schools (Pages 12 - 52)

Vera Njegic to report.

11. Rotherham Schools Connect Service (Pages 53 - 56)

Steve Langrick to report.

12. Any Other Business.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum will take place on Friday, 17th January, 2020 at **Rotherham Town Hall** (Rockingham is fully booked on this date).

**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 21st 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 16th 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 31st 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 4th 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 (22nd November) to discuss.

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

(2) That a sub-group be held on 18th 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 16th 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 1st 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 17th July and would close on 30th 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 10th September and would close on 22nd 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, 22nd November, 2019 and 17th January, 2020, respectively at Rockingham Development Centre commencing at 8.30 a.m.

Schools Forum Briefing

1.	Date of meeting:	22nd November 2019
2.	Title:	Mid-year Early Years Block Update & 2020/21 Funding announcement
3.	Directorate:	CYPS

1. Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a mid-year update on the Early Years Block spend and update on the recent funding announcement for 2020/21.
- 1.4 The Department for Education (DfE) budget allocation for the Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant (EY DSG) for 2019/20 is detailed below. This will provide the funding for early education places in schools and other early years providers. This budget will be adjusted retrospectively in 2020/21 based on January 2020 census returns.

2019/20 Early Years Block Allocation	
3&4 Year old Funding (15 hours funding)	9,697,998
30 Hours Entitlement Funding	3,501,281
Early Years Pupil Premium	214,409
2 Year Early Education	285,8126
Nursery Stability Funding for maintained Nursery Schools	980,814
Early Years Disability Access Fund	8,3640
Total Early Years Block	17,336,268

- 1.5 The budget spend is currently on target with £11.7m allocated to date for the Summer / Autumn terms.
- 1.6 Final budget adjustments for 2018/19, taking into account numbers of children accessing their entitlement in January 2020 led to a retrospective budget adjustment of £598k. £200k of this budget has been allocated to a contingency budget with the remaining balance allocated to the funding of the Inclusion Support Grant for 2019/20.
- 1.7 2020/21 Rates

The DfE have announced the early years national funding formula rates for 2020/21. See below details and comparison with 2019/20

	2019/20 DfE Rates	2020/21 DfE Rates
3 / 4 year old hourly rate	£4.30	£4.38
2 year old hourly rate	£5.20	£5.28
Early Years Pupil Premium	53p	53p
Disability Access Fund	£615	£615
Nursery Stability Funding	£980,814 split equally between 3 nursery schools	Rate to be maintained at 2019/20 rate

A report will be taken to the Directorate Leadership team before the end of the Autumn term and the Early Education Working Group with proposals for the local single funding formula for 2020/21. A further report will be provided to the Schools Forum in early 2020.

2. Name and contact details

Aileen Chambers, Head of Service - Early Years and Childcare, Tel ext: 54770, email aileen.chambers@rotherham.gov.uk

<h1>BRIEFING</h1>	TO:	Schools Forum
	DATE:	November 2019
	LEAD OFFICER:	Dean Fenton Head of Service – Access to Education Children and Young People’s Services Tel: 01709 254821 Email: dean.fenton@rotherham.gov.uk
	TITLE:	Contingency for pupil growth fund

1. Background

- 1.1** Pupil numbers are increasing within the Borough as verified by the latest DfE School Capacity and Planning (SCAP) scorecard for Rotherham with a current 14% increase in Primary aged pupils (15% in 2018) and a 7% increase in Secondary aged pupils (1% in 2018) since 2010.
- 1.2** The impact on education infrastructure has been planned for by the introduction of 575 new secondary places (and 300 currently in the development / planning stage) and 1,492 Primary places created between November 2011 and September 2020.
- 1.3** There is a statutory duty on Local Authorities under the requirements of the Education Act 1996 to ensure the sufficiency of school places in their area, within funding parameters.
- 1.4** The Local Authority receives an annual allocation of funding from the Department for Education known as the Basic Need Allocation to address infrastructure requirements as a result of in borough pupil growth.
- 1.5** Where schools are expanded, it is sometimes necessary to provide interim financial support to bridge the gap (*between 1st September and 31st March for maintained Schools and 1st September to 31st August for Academies due to funding arrangements*) to support the recruitment of additional staffing required as a result of expansion. This is because funding is allocated to schools each year based upon numbers on roll on Census day in October of the preceding year. Additional pupils commencing at the start of a new academic year will not be on roll at that time in order to generate sufficient funding to meet additional staffing requirements and other agreed expenditure.
- 1.6** Using the previously agreed formula for funding allocations for new and expanding schools it is recommended that an amount of £700k be approved by Schools Forum from the Pupil Growth element within the Schools Block for 2020/21 to cover the expansion implications and new school pre start up implications.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1** There are always risks and uncertainties when a school expansion takes place as, increasing pupil numbers in one school could impact on another schools numbers. However, pupil numbers are rising across the Borough and the trend is set to continue in to the future with the implementation of the local plan (plan to create new housing across

the borough).

3. Key Actions and Timelines

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 3.1 | Confirmation will be sought from expanding schools funded as part of basic need in relation to the creation of additional classes and the staffing implications after the 1 st late applications allocation round (mid May) following the National Offer days for primary and secondary place allocation (1 st March / 16 th April respectively). |
| 3.2 | A report will be brought to Schools Forum in June/July 2020 confirming the allocation amounts based on pupil numbers and staffing implications for establishing a new classroom. |
| 3.3 | The pre start up allocations for a new school are pre-determined as a set amount subject to the number of year groups a new school opens to. |

4. Recommendations

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 4.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that an amount of £700k be approved by Schools Forum from the Pupil Growth element within the Schools Block for 2020/21 to cover the expansion implications and new school pre start up implications. • That a further report be brought to Forum detailing the individual allocation amounts for expanding schools as outlined in 3.2 of this briefing. |
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The Rotherham Scheme for Financing Schools

**Made under Section 48 of the School Standards &
Framework Act 1998**

**Effective from 1st April 2019
(Revised April 2019)**

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.0 The Funding Framework	4
1.1 The Role of the scheme	5
1.2 Application of the scheme to the Authority and Maintained Schools.....	5
1.3 Publication of the scheme	5
1.4 Revision of the scheme	5
1.5 Delegation of Powers to the Head Teacher	6
1.6 Maintenance of Schools	6
SECTION 2. FINANCIAL CONTROLS.....	7
2.1 Application of Financial Controls to Schools	7
2.2 Provision of Financial Information and Reports.....	7
2.3 Payment of Salaries; Payment of Bills	7
2.4 Control of Assets	8
2.5 Accounting Policies (Including Year-End Procedures).....	8
2.6 Writing off Debts.....	8
2.7 Basis of Accounting.....	8
2.8 Submission of Budget Plans	8
2.9 Multi-year Budget Forecasts	8
2.10 School Resource Management Formerly Efficiency & Value for Money.....	9
2.11 Virement.....	9
2.12 Audit: General	9
2.13 Separate External Audits.....	9
2.14 Audit of Voluntary and Private Funds.....	9
2.15 Register of Business Interests.....	9
2.16 Purchasing, Tendering and Contracting Requirements	10
2.17 Application of Contract to Schools	10
2.18 Central Funds and Earmarking	10
2.19 Spending for the Purposes of the School.....	11
2.20 Capital Spending from Budget Shares	11
2.21 Schools Financial Value Standard	11
2.22. Notice of Concern.....	11
2.23 Fraud.....	12
SECTION 3: INSTALMENTS OF THE BUDGET SHARE, BANKING ARRANGEMENTS	13
3.1 Frequency of Instalments	13
3.2 Proportion of Budget Share Payable at Each Instalment.....	13
3.3 Budget Shares for Closing Schools	13
3.4 Bank & Building Society Accounts	13
3.5 Restrictions on Account.....	13
3.6 Borrowing By Schools	14
3.7 Procurement Cards	14
SECTION 4: THE TREATMENT OF SURPLUS AND DEFICIT BALANCES ARISING IN RELATION TO BUDGET SHARES.....	15
4.1 The Right to Carry Forward Surplus Balances	15
4.2 Controls on Surplus Balances	15
4.3 Reporting on the Intended Use Of Surplus Balances.....	16
4.4 Interest On Surplus Balances.....	16
4.5 Obligation to Carry Forward Deficit Balances	16
4.6 Planning for Deficit Budgets	16
4.7 Writing Off of Deficits.....	16
4.8 Balances of Closing and Replacement Schools.....	17
4.9 Licensed Deficits	17

SECTION 5: INCOME	18
5.1 Income from Lettings	18
5.2 Income from Fees and Charges	18
5.3 Income from Fund-Raising Activities	18
5.4 Income from the Sale of Assets	18
5.5 Administrative Procedures for the Collection of Income	19
5.6 Cash Handling	19
SECTION 6: THE CHARGING OF SCHOOL BUDGET SHARES	20
6.1 General Provision	20
6.2 Circumstances in Which Charges May Be Made	20
SECTION 7 : TAXATION	22
7.1 Value Added Tax	22
7.2 CIS (Construction Industry Taxation Scheme)	22
SECTION 8 : THE PROVISION OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES BY THE AUTHORITY	23
8.1 Provision of Services from Centrally Retained Budgets	23
8.2 Provision of Services Bought Back from the Council Using Delegated Budgets	23
8.3 Packaging	23
8.4 Services Level Agreements	23
8.5 Teachers' Pensions	24
SECTION 9 : PFI/PPP	25
9.1 Applying Agreements to Governing Bodies	25
SECTION 10 : INSURANCE	26
10.1 Insurance Cover	26
SECTION 11 : MISCELLANEOUS	27
11.1 Right of Access to Information	27
11.2 Liability of Governors	27
11.3 Governors Expenses	27
11.4 Responsibility for Legal Costs	27
11.5 Health and Safety	27
11.6 Right of Attendance for Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services	27
11.7 Special Educational Needs Spending	28
11.8 'Whistleblowing'	28
11.9 Child Protection	28
11.10 School Meals	28
11.11 & 13.12 Redundancy & Early Retirement Costs	28
11.12 Delegation To New Schools	28
SECTION 12 : RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	29
12.1 School and Council Responsibilities	29
12.2 Delegation to Schools	29
12.3 Voluntary Aided Schools	29
13. COMMUNITY FACILITIES EXTENSION.	30
13.1 General	30
13.2 Funding Agreements – LEA Powers	30
13.3 Other Prohibitions, Restrictions and Limitations	30
13.4 Supply of Financial Information	30
13.5 Audit	31
13.6 Treatment of Income and Surpluses	31
13.7 Health and Safety Matters	31
13.9 Insurance	31
13.10 Taxation	31
13.11 Banking	32
13.12 Premature Retirement/ Redundancy costs	

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 The Funding Framework

This funding framework which replaces Local Management of Schools is based on the legislative provisions in sections 45-53 of the Schools Standards and Framework (SSAF) Act 1998.

Under this legislation, the Authority determines for itself the size of the schools budget and their non-schools education budget – although at a minimum a local authority must appropriate its entire Dedicated Schools Grant to their Schools Budget. The categories of expenditure which fall within the two budgets are prescribed under regulations made by the Secretary of State, but between them is all expenditure, direct and indirect, on an Authority's maintained schools except for capital and certain miscellaneous items. The Authority may centrally retain funding for purposes defined in regulation made by the Secretary of State under s.46 of the Act. The amounts to be retained centrally are decided, subject to any limits or conditions prescribed by the Secretary of State. The balance of the schools budget left after deduction of centrally retained funds is termed the Individual Schools Budget (ISB). Expenditure items in the non-schools budget must be retained centrally (although earmarked allocations may be made to schools).

The LA will distribute amounts from the ISB amongst the maintained schools using a formula which accords with regulations made by the Secretary of State, and enables the calculation of a budget share for each maintained school. This budget share is then delegated to the governing body of the school concerned, unless the school is a new school which has not yet received a delegated budget or the right to a delegated budget has been suspended in accordance with s.51 of the Act. The financial controls within which delegation works are set out in a scheme made by the LA in accordance with s.48 of the Act and regulations made under that section. All proposals to revise the scheme must be approved by the Schools Forum, though the LA may apply to the Secretary of State for approval in the event of the Schools Forum rejecting a proposal or approving it subject to modifications that are not acceptable to the LA.

Subject to provisions of the scheme, governing bodies of schools may spend budget shares for the purposes of their school. They may also spend budget shares on any additional purposes prescribed by the Secretary of State in regulations made under s.50. (Section 50 has been amended to provide that amounts spent by a governing body on providing community facilities or services under s.27 are treated as if they were amounts spent for the purpose of the school)

The LA may suspend a school's right to a delegated budget if the provisions of the school financing scheme (or rules applied by the scheme) have been substantially or persistently breached, or if the budget share has not been managed satisfactorily. Paragraph 36 of the Code of Practice on LEA: School Relations provides further exemplification indicating that examples of a school not managing the delegated budget satisfactorily might include (but not be limited to) where there have been breaches of probity or a school is operating with a substantial deficit which the Governing body has no satisfactory plans to contain and eliminate. There is a right of appeal to the Secretary of State. A school's right to a delegated budget share may also be suspended for other reasons (s.17 of the SSAF Act 1998) but in that case there is no right of appeal.

Each authority is obliged to publish each year a statement setting out details of its planned schools budget and other expenditure on children's services, showing the amounts to be

centrally retained, the budget share for each school, the formula used to calculate those budget shares, and the detailed calculation for each school. After each financial year the Authority must publish a statement showing out-turn expenditure at both central level and for each school, and the balances held in respect of each school. Out-turn statements are subject to audit certification by the Audit Commission, and information in either type may be collated and published by the Secretary of State.

The detailed publication requirements for the financial statements and for schemes are set out in directions issued by the Secretary of State, but each school must receive a copy of the scheme and any amendment, and each year's budget and out-turn statements so far as they relate to that school or central expenditure.

1.1 The Role of the scheme

The scheme provides for the delegation of financial and managerial powers to governing bodies of schools and describes the regulations and conditions by which the governing bodies should abide, in order to remain accountable to the public and the Authority.

The scheme is based on the following principles:

- a) That the optimum level of delegation to governing bodies of financial responsibilities should be achieved.
- b) That Head teachers and governing bodies should be allowed the maximum amount of freedom in determining financial and managerial policies for their schools within the Council's framework of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.
- c) That the scheme will be clear and understandable.

1.2 Application of the scheme to the Authority and Maintained Schools

The scheme applies in respect of all community, community special, voluntary, foundation and foundation special schools maintained by the Authority. The scheme does not apply to academies. The schools covered by the scheme as at 1st April 2019 are attached at Annex A.

1.3 Publication of the scheme

A copy of the scheme will be supplied to the head teacher and to the governing body of each school covered by the scheme, and any approved revisions will be notified to each such school.

1.4 Revision of the scheme

Any proposed revisions to the scheme will be the subject of consultation with schools and will require approval by the Secretary of State.

It is also possible for the Secretary of State to make directed revisions to schemes after consultation. Such revisions become part of the scheme from the date of the directed revision.

1.5 Delegation of Powers to the Head teacher

The governing body should consider the extent to which it wishes to delegate its financial powers to a Committee of the Governing Body and to the Headteacher. The extent of such delegation should be recorded in the minutes of the Governing Body and incorporated into each school's Scheme of Delegation.

The scheme does not prescribe the level of delegation to a Committee of the Governing Body and the Headteacher. It does require each school to have a Scheme of Delegation and it does require that the budget plan for each financial year is approved by the Governing Body or by a Committee of the Governing Body. Any approval/decisions of the Committee or a Governing Body should always be reported back up to the Governing Body at the first available opportunity.

Each Governing Body should review its Scheme of Delegation and its Financial Procedures Manual annually and record any revisions to them in the minutes. It is for each school to determine the precise contents of these documents although the LA has provided drafts for guidance and will continue to give advice on their content and format.

1.6 Maintenance of Schools

The Authority is responsible for maintaining the schools covered by the scheme, and this includes the duty of defraying all the expenses of maintaining them (except in the case of a voluntary school where some of the expenses are, by statute, payable by the governing body). Part of the way the authority maintains schools is through the funding system put in place under sections 45 to 53 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

SECTION 2. FINANCIAL CONTROLS

2.1 Application of Financial Controls to Schools

All schools are required to abide in the management of their delegated budgets by the Authority's requirements on financial controls and monitoring, not only those in the scheme but also those requirements to be contained in the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and the specific sub-set of these "Financial Regulations for Schools with Delegated budgets".

In particular these conditions cover:

- a) arrangements for the management of delegated expenditure, specifically for authorising expenditure for transactions involving commitments to expenditure;
- b) the keeping and auditing of accounts and records;
- c) the provision to the Council of copies of accounts and records and any other relevant documents and information that the Council may from time to time require from the governing body.

The Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Service is responsible for the proper administration of all financial activities in this Authority under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972. These include budgets delegated to governing bodies of schools.

However should an instance arise where the Scheme and Financial Regulations are in conflict, the Scheme provisions will prevail.

2.2 Provision of Financial Information and Reports

The governing body is required to provide the Authority with details of anticipated and actual expenditure and income. This should be submitted in line with the dates specified in the Schools Finance Reporting Timetable. This statement must be submitted in a format specified by the Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services, and must provide a forecast outturn position, which has been based upon a review of actual spending plans and commitments within the school.

Irrespective of the monitoring arrangements described above, the Governing Body must report to the Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services as soon as it is aware that the school is likely to overspend in any financial year. In this case financial monitoring reports will be requested more frequently (specific timescales to be determined by the Authority).

2.3 Payment of Salaries; Payment of Bills

The Head teacher is responsible for providing an efficient procedure to administer the payment of salaries and invoices, as detailed in the Schools Financial Regulations.

Irrespective of which payroll provider is used by the school, the Strategic Director – Resources & Customer Services may still require certain payroll information to be provided by the school. It is advisable that these requirements are reviewed prior to a school entering any contract for the provision of payroll services.

2.4 Control of Assets

There is a requirement for each school to maintain an inventory of its moveable non-capital assets and setting out the basic authorisation procedures for disposal of such assets, as outlined in the Schools Financial Regulations. However schools are free to determine their own arrangements for keeping a register of assets worth less than £2,000, although a register in some form must be maintained. This is particularly important for moveable ICT equipment; therefore schools may wish to consider a separate register for ICT equipment. **It is recommended that schools register anything that is portable & attractive such as a camera**

2.5 Accounting Policies (Including Year-End Procedures)

School will abide by procedures issued by the Council regarding all accountancy procedures (including year-end accounts) as issued by the Head of Corporate Finance, or on his behalf by the Finance Team, Children and Young People's Service.

2.6 Writing off Debts

The Governing Body should keep under review the level and age of outstanding debts. When all reasonable steps to secure the recovery of debt have been taken, the Governing body is authorised to write off these debts. Such decisions should be minuted by the Governing body.

2.7 Basis of Accounting

The Council would request that schools adopt accruals accounting basis of reporting when providing reports and accounts to the Council. This means that such reports should reflect actual payments and receipts made by the schools and charged to the school budget, rather than committed or planned income or expenditure yet to be defrayed.

2.8 Submission of Budget Plans

The governing body is required to submit a plan to the Authority annually, by the deadline as specified in the document Schools Reporting Timetable (usually the Middle of May), showing its intentions for expenditure in the current financial year and the assumptions underpinning the budget plan. This plan must be approved by the full Governing body or Finance Sub Committee and should be minuted as such. Schools are permitted to take account of what the Council deems as the estimated balances (deficit/credit) when submitting their budget plans. Governing bodies will have to submit revised plans by the middle of October (specific date stipulated on the Schools Reporting Timetable).

The Authority will supply schools with all school income and expenditure data which it holds which is necessary for efficient planning by schools.

2.9 Multi-year Budget Forecasts

It is good practice for schools to prepare a multi-year financial forecast even where the Authority has not provided indicative budget shares, which would only occur where the government has not provided multi-year financial settlements for schools. Where schools are forecasting a

current year deficit, a 3 year plan must be completed. The estimated future years budget share must be based on reasonable assumptions, of which details should be provided.

2.10 *School Resource Management*

Schools must seek to **achieve effective management** of resources and value for money, to optimise the use of their resources and to invest in teaching and learning, taking into account the LA's purchasing, tendering and contracting requirements.

It is important that schools continually review current expenditure, and compare themselves to similar schools in order to think about how to make improvements.

2.11 *Virement*

Schools are allowed to vire freely between budget heads in the expenditure of their budget shares. This is in order to preserve the accuracy of the school's budget record on the Council's accounting system. Virement should be approved by the Governing Body and all approved virements should be approved in the termly monitoring returns.

2.12 *Audit: General*

Schools will operate within an audit regime determined by the Authority as regards internal audit, and the Council's external audit regime as determined by the Audit Commission.

Governing Bodies and members of staff shall provide all facilities and co-operation to both internal and external auditors, who shall be entitled to whatever information or explanations they require in order to be satisfied as to the correctness or otherwise of any matter under examination.

The Governing Body, or a delegated Sub-Committee, must consider any audit reports relating to the school, and should minute its consideration of those reports.

2.13 *Separate External Audits*

A governing body who wishes may spend funds from its budget share to obtain external audit certification of its accounts, separate from any Council internal or external audit process.

2.14 *Audit of Voluntary and Private Funds*

It is a requirement that schools provide audit certificates in respect of voluntary and private funds held by schools and of the accounts of any trading organisations controlled by the school to the Authority on an annual basis.

The Governing Body should appoint an auditor who is completely independent of the school to provide such audit certification, and should review the audited accounts

2.15 Register of Business Interests

The governing body of each school must have a register which lists for each member of the governing body and every member of staff employed at the school, any business interests they or any member of their immediate family have; to keep the register up to date with notification of changes and through annual review of entries, and to make the register available for inspection by governors, Ofsted, Council, staff and parents. This list should be reviewed at least annually by the Governing body

2.16 Purchasing, Tendering and Contracting Requirements

The governing body must abide by the Authority's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders in purchasing, tendering and contracting matters. There is a requirement for Schools to assess in advance, where relevant, the Health and Safety competence of the contractors with full regard to the Council's policies and procedures. However, schools are **not** bound by any provision of the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders which would require them;

- a) to do anything incompatible with any of the provisions of the scheme, or any statutory provision, or any EU Procurement Directive;
- b) to seek Council officer countersignature for any contracts for goods or services for a value above £60,000 in any one year;
- c) to select suppliers only from an approved list;

Schools must seek at least three written tenders or quotations in respect of any contract with a value exceeding £5,000. Schools may seek advice on a range of compliant deals via Buying for schools (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-for-schools>).

2.17 Application of Contract to Schools

Although Governing bodies are empowered under paragraph 3 of schedule 10 to the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 to enter into contracts; in most cases they do so on behalf of the Council as maintainer of the school and the owner of the funds in the budget share. However other contracts may be made solely on behalf of the governing body, when the governing body has clear statutory obligations e.g. contracts made by aided or foundations schools for the employment of staff.

Governing bodies have the right to opt out of Council arranged contracts. The only exceptions are where they have lost that right for particular contracts (whenever stated) in accordance with a specified written procedure: in which case they would be bound into the contract for its length (although the contract might contain clauses allowing variance of its terms and conditions).

2.18 Central Funds and Earmarking

The Authority may make sums available to schools from central funds, in the form of allocations, which are additional to and separate from the schools' budget shares. Interest Clawback will not be made from payments of devolved grants. Such allocations will be subject to conditions setting out the purpose or purposes for which the funds may be used: and while these

conditions need not preclude virement (except, of course, where the funding is supported by a specific grant which the Council itself is not permitted to vire), this should not be carried to the point of assimilating the allocations into the school's budget share. Earmarked funds must be returned to the Council if not spent within the financial year for which they were given, or within the period over which schools are allowed to use the funding if different.

It is a requirement that such earmarked funding from centrally retained funds is spent only on the purposes for which it is given, or on other budget heads for which earmarked funding is given, and is not vired into the budget share. Governing bodies will maintain an accounting system for schools to be able to demonstrate that this requirement has been complied with. The Council will not make any deduction representing interest costs to the Authority, from payments to schools of devolved, specific or special grants.

2.19 Spending for the Purposes of the School

Governing Bodies are allowed to spend budget shares for the purposes of the school, subject to the provisions of the scheme. 'Purposes of the school' is defined as being for the education of the schools pupils and the operation and management of the school.

Governing bodies may not spend and part of their budget share on activities or items which fall outside this definition.

2.20 Capital Spending from Budget Shares

Governing bodies may use their budget shares to meet the cost of capital expenditure on the school premises. This includes expenditure by the governing body of a voluntary aided school on work, which is their responsibility under paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 of the SSAF Act 1998.

If the premises are owned by the Council or the school has Voluntary Controlled basis then the Governing body should seek the consent of the Council to the proposed works, but such consent would be withheld on health and safety grounds only.

2.21 Schools Financial Value Standard

All local authority maintained schools (including nursery schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) that have a delegated budget) must demonstrate compliance with the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) and complete the assessment form on an annual basis. It is for the school to determine at what time in the year they wish to complete the form.

Governors must demonstrate compliance through the submission of the SFVS assessment form signed by the Chair of Governors. The form must include a summary of remedial actions with a clear timetable, ensuring that each action has a specified deadline and an agreed owner. Governors must monitor the progress of these actions to ensure that all actions are cleared within specified deadlines.

Maintained schools with a delegated budget must submit the form to the local authority **before the end of the financial year** and annually thereafter.

2.22. Notice of Concern

The Authority may issue a notice of concern to the governing body of any school it maintains where, in the opinion of the Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services and the Director

of Children's Services, the school has failed to comply with any provisions of the Scheme, or where actions need to be taken to safeguard the financial position of the Authority or the school.

Such a notice will set out the reasons and evidence for it being made and may place on the governing body restrictions, limitations or prohibitions in relation to the management of funds delegated to it. These may include but are not limited to:

- a) Insisting that relevant staff undertake appropriate training to address any identified weaknesses in the financial management of the school;
- b) Insisting that an appropriately trained/qualified person chairs the finance committee of the governing body, or (if no finance committee exists) leads the governing body on finance matters;
- c) Placing more stringent restrictions or conditions on the day to day financial management of a school than the scheme requires for all schools – such as the provision of monthly accounts to the authority or the setting of a lower approval level above which a transaction must be approved by the Authority;
- d) Insisting on regular financial monitoring meetings at the school attended by officers of the Authority;
- e) Requiring a governing body to buy into the Authority's financial management systems, or into other services provided by the Authority which are relevant to financial management difficulties at the school;
- f) Imposing restrictions or limitations on the manner in which a school manages extended school activity funded from within its delegated budget share – for example by requiring a school to submit income projections and/or financial monitoring reports on such activities.

The notice will clearly state what these requirements are and the way in which and the time by which such requirements must be complied with in order for the notice to be withdrawn. It will also state the actions that the Authority may take where the governing body does not comply with the notice.

2.23. Fraud

All schools must have a robust system of controls to safeguard themselves against fraudulent or improper use of public money and assets.

The governing body and head teacher must inform all staff of school policies and procedures related to fraud and theft, the controls in place to prevent them; and the consequences of breaching these controls. This information must also be included in induction for new school staff and governors.

SECTION 3: INSTALMENTS OF THE BUDGET SHARE, BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

Although this section refers primarily to schools who wish to operate their own bank accounts, it is not exclusively so. It is open for non-bank account schools to draw on their entire budget share from the start of the year, if they so wish.

3.1 Frequency of Instalments

In respect of the Authority's schools with bank accounts the budget share will be made available to governing bodies, on a monthly basis. For non-bank account schools the Authority will place no restrictions on the school drawing on its entire delegated budget share from the outset of the financial year.

3.2 Proportion of Budget Share Payable at Each Instalment

Schools may opt for instalments of the total budget share to be made available to them by payment into a school bank account.

Schools will receive a proportion of their budget share by the 1st of each month. At the start of each financial year, a schedule of payments is sent out to schools which show the agreed proportion of the budget share to be paid each month. Payments are weighted at the beginning of the year, when higher expenditure is expected. Any amendments to the allocated budget will be reflected in an updated schedule and subsequently sent out to the school.

In the first year a school becomes a bank account school; the balance brought forward is either added to the first monthly advance made after the preceding financial years balance has been determined with certainty.

3.3 Budget Shares for Closing Schools

In the case of schools closing in the financial year in question, budget shares will be paid on a monthly basis net of estimated pay costs.

3.4 Bank and Building Society Accounts

All maintained schools may have external bank accounts into which their budget share instalments are paid. Schools, which have such accounts, shall be allowed to retain all interest payable on the account.

New bank account arrangements may only be made with effect from the beginning of each financial year provided written notification is received and acknowledged prior to the 31st January prior to the financial year commencing. The Authority will not agree to the opening of a school bank account until any deficit balance is cleared on the school delegated budget; and any school requesting a bank account at a later date shall not be able to have one until any such deficit is cleared.

3.5 Restrictions on Accounts

Schools may have accounts for budget share purposes, which are in the name of the school. If a school has such an account, the account mandate should provide that the Council is the owner of the funds in the account; that it is entitled to receive statements; and that it can take control of the account if the school's right to delegated budget is suspended by the Council.

3.6 Borrowing by Schools

Governing bodies may not borrow money from external lenders (including the use of finance leases, credit cards and overdrafts) unless they have the express written permission of the Secretary of State to do so. A detailed set of requirements must be demonstrated in any application. Any application to the Secretary of State must be made through the Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services, but consent is likely to be given only where the Authority is able to reduce its own credit requirement to maintain public expenditure neutrality. The Secretary of State's general position is that schools will only be granted permission for borrowing in exceptional circumstances. However, where borrowing schemes are made available by the Secretary of State schools will be able to access without requiring specific approval.

3.7 Procurement Cards

All schools with a delegated budget share are encouraged to make use of procurement cards to minimise transaction costs.

Schools must not obtain or use credit cards as these constitute borrowing, which is not permitted.

SECTION 4: THE TREATMENT OF SURPLUS AND DEFICIT BALANCES ARISING IN RELATION TO BUDGET SHARES

4.1 The Right to Carry Forward Surplus Balances

At the end of the financial year any surplus that a school incurs on its delegated budget will be carried forward and added to the budget for the subsequent financial year. However, no interest will be paid by the Council on unspent balances carried forward to the next financial year. The amount of any surplus balance will be shown in the relevant outturn statement published in accordance with directions given by the Secretary of State under s.251 of the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

4.2 Controls on Surplus Balances

Surplus balances held by schools as permitted under this scheme are subject to the following Restrictions

- a) the Council shall calculate by 31 May each year the surplus balance, if any, held by each school as at the preceding 31 March. For this purpose the balance will be the recurrent balance as defined in the Consistent Financial Reporting Framework;
- b) the Council shall deduct from the calculated balance any amounts for which the school has a prior year commitment to pay from the surplus balance.
- c) the Council shall then deduct from the resulting sum any amounts which the governing body of the school has declared to be assigned for specific purposes permitted by the Council, and which the Council is satisfied are properly assigned. To count as properly assigned, amounts must not be retained beyond the period stipulated for the purpose in question, without the consent of the Council. In considering whether any sums are properly assigned the Council may also take into account any previously declared assignment of such sums but may not take any change in planned assignments to be the sole reason for considering that a sum is not properly assigned.
- d. If the result of steps a-c is a sum greater than 5% of the current year's budget share for secondary schools, 8% for primary and special schools, then the Council may deduct from the current year's budget share an amount equal to the excess.

Funds deriving from sources other than the authority will be taken into account in this calculation if paid into the budget share account of the school, whether under the provisions of the scheme or otherwise.

Funds held in relation to a school's exercise of powers under s.27 of the Education Act 2002 (community facilities) will not be taken into account unless added to the budget share surplus by the school as permitted by the Council.

The total of any amounts deducted from schools' budget shares by the Council under this provision are to be applied to the Schools Budget of the Council.

4.3 Reporting on the Intended Use of Surplus Balances

The expectation is that balances will only exceed 8% in Primary and Special schools and 5% for Secondary schools in specific exceptional circumstances.

Governing Bodies are required to report to the LA on the use, which the school intends to make of surplus balances, in cases where the total balance exceeds either 5% or 8% of the annual budget share. These figures (and accompanying explanation) will need to be reported in a format and to a timescale specified by the Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services.

The Authority will produce an annual report detailing the overall level of balances in schools and reporting on those schools where balances have exceeded 5/8%.

The LA will consider a deduction equal to the excess. In determining whether to make a deduction, schools will not be penalised for making early efficiency savings in a tighter financial climate. The focus will be where schools have built up excessive balances over a significant period.

4.4 Interest on Surplus Balances

Surplus balances generated from delegated budget shares held by the Authority on behalf of schools will not attract interest. However, where the school sets aside monies in “declared savings” accounts held by the Authority on behalf of schools, these will attract interest.

4.5 Obligation to Carry Forward Deficit Balances

Any overspending will be carried forward and deducted from the school’s budget for the next financial year.

The amount of deficit balance will be shown in the relevant outturn statement, published in accordance with directions given by the secretary of state under s.251 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

4.6 Planning for Deficit Budgets

Schools will normally be required to plan and submit a balanced budget. However, consideration will be given to approving a deficit budget where the school can demonstrate, in writing, that there are sound educational and financial reasons to do so, e.g. that the school has a rising roll and the proposed deficit can be repaid from additional funding anticipated in future years. The expectation is that schools which identify a financial deficit can clear those deficit balances and that the budget plan will demonstrate how this can be achieved.

If this cannot be achieved, then a school must seek approval for a licenced deficit in accordance with section 4.9 of this scheme.

4.7 Writing Off of Deficits.

The Authority cannot write off the deficit balance of any school.

4.8 Balances of Closing and Replacement Schools

When a school closes or is replaced, any balance (whether surplus or deficit), reverts to the Council; it cannot be transferred as a balance to any other school. In the case of amalgamating schools, balances (whether surplus or deficit) will be amalgamated.

4.9 Licensed Deficits

The scheduling of repayments of deficits, which exist at schools, maintained by the Council will be the subject of a three-year spending plan, which incorporates a maximum repayment term of three years. The deficit will represent no more than 5% of the schools delegated budget – although in exceptional circumstances the Authority may relax this requirement and the three year maximum period.

Any Such an arrangement can only be entered into with the authorisation of the Strategic Director – Children & Young People's Services, and a representative of the Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services.

In order to secure this authorisation the school must submit a recovery plan which provides the Authority with robust evidence of the size of the financial problem and how it will be addressed. The recovery plan needs to be submitted in a format stipulated by the Authority and unless otherwise agreed, needs to be submitted within three months of the shortfall being agreed.

Once authorised, it is important that progress against the recovery plan is monitored. Monitoring information will need to be provided to a frequency stipulated by the Authority, which may be either monthly or quarterly. The plan will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis by the Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services. Both the non-provision of monitoring information and/or poor performance against the recovery plan could constitute grounds for the removal of financial delegation.

SECTION 5: INCOME

5.1 Income from Lettings

Governing bodies are empowered to approve the occasional use of school buildings and facilities for other purposes and may retain any income charged for this use. Governors must ensure that such uses are not subsidised by the school budget share and that adequate insurance arrangements are in place for the activities involved.

Where the school buildings are owned by the Authority then any regular use for other purposes (eg lettings) can only be agreed by the Authority as Landlord. Schools are allowed to retain income from such agreed lettings of school premises, which would otherwise accrue to the Authority, subject to alternative provisions from any joint use or Private Finance Initiative (PFI) agreements. Schools may cross subsidise lettings for community and voluntary use with income from other lettings, provided the governing body is satisfied that this will not interfere to a significant extent with the performance of any duties imposed on them by the Education Acts, including the requirement to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of education and achievement.

Income from lettings of school premises owned by the Authority must not be paid into voluntary or private funds held by the school. However where land is held by a charitable trust it will be for the school trustees to determine the use of any income generated by the land. Schools are required to have regard to the directions issued by the Authority as to the use of school premises, as permitted under of the Act for various categories of schools. Schools will be liable for any additional costs and responsible for any arrangements associated with external use of their premises, e.g. gaining an entertainment licence if appropriate.

School premises which are not owned by the Authority do not require permission from the Authority before alternative uses are agreed by the governing body; however the owner of the buildings may impose their own requirements. In all cases the budget share must not subsidise non-school use of the premises and facilities.

5.2 Income from Fees and Charges

Schools may retain income from fees and charges except where a service is provided by the Council from centrally retained funds. However, schools should be required to have regard to any policy statements on charging produced by the Council.

5.3 Income from Fund-Raising Activities

Schools are allowed to retain income from fund-raising activities.

5.4 Income from the Sale of Assets

Schools can retain the proceeds of sale of assets except in cases where the asset was purchased with non-delegated funds (in which case it should be for the Authority to decide whether the school should retain the proceeds), or the asset concerned is land or buildings forming part of the school premises and is owned by the Authority.

Income from the sale of assets purchased from delegated funds, or school budget share, can only be spent for the purposes of the school.

5.5 Administrative Procedures for the Collection of Income

The Financial Regulations for Rotherham School's set out the procedures relating to the recording, collecting and banking of income in respect of charges that may be applied by schools.

5.6 Cash Handling

In line with Rotherham's Financial Regulations, the guidance around cash handling can be seen in appendix 1.



Cash Handling

SECTION 6: THE CHARGING OF SCHOOL BUDGET SHARES

6.1 General Provision

The budget share of a school can be charged by the Council without the consent of the Governing body only in circumstances expressly permitted in 6.2. The Council must consult schools as to the intention to so charge, and notify schools when it has been done.

The Authority will charge salaries of school based staff to schools budget shares at actual cost including National Insurance, pension contributions and any other directly attributable costs.

6.2 Circumstances in Which Charges May Be Made

- a) Where premature retirement costs have been incurred without the prior written agreement of the Council to bear such costs (the amount chargeable being only the excess over any amount agreed by the Council);
- b) Other expenditure incurred to secure resignations where the school where there is good reason to charge this to the school;
- c) Awards by courts and industrial tribunals against the Council, or out of court settlements, arising from action or inaction by the governing body contrary to the Council's advice;
- d) Expenditure by the Council in carrying out health and safety work or capital expenditure for which the Council is liable where funds have been delegated to the governing body for such work, but the governing body has failed to carry out the required work;
- e) Expenditure by the Council incurred in making good defects in building work funded by capital spending from budget shares, where the premises are owned by the Council or the school has voluntary controlled status;
- f) Expenditure incurred by the Council in insuring its own interests in a school where funding has been delegated but the school has failed to demonstrate that it has arranged cover at least as good as that which would be arranged by the Council;
- g) Recovery of monies due from a school for services provided to the school, where a dispute over the monies due has been referred to a disputes procedure set out in a service level agreement, and the result is that monies are owed by the school to the Council;
- h) Recovery of penalties imposed on the Council by the Board of Inland Revenue, the Contributions Agency or HM Customs and Excise, Teachers Pensions or Regulatory Authorities as a result of school negligence;
- i) Correction of Council errors in calculating charges to a budget share (e.g. Pension deductions);
- j) Additional transport costs incurred by the Council arising from decisions by the governing body on the length of the school day, and failure to notify the Council of non-pupil days resulting in unnecessary transport costs;

- k) Legal costs which are incurred by the Council because the Governing body did not accept the advice of the Council (see also Section 11);
- l) Costs of necessary health and safety training for safety staff employed by the Council, where funding for training had been delegated but the necessary training not carried out;
- m) Compensations paid to a lender where a school enters into a contract for Borrowing beyond its legal powers, and the contract is of no effect;
- n) Cost of work done in respect of teacher pension remittance and records for schools using non-Council payroll contractors, the charge to be the minimum needed to meet the cost of the Authority's compliance with its statutory obligations;
- o) Costs incurred by the Council in securing provision specified in a statement of SEN where the Governing body of a school fails to secure such provision despite the delegation of funds in respect of that statement;
- p) Costs incurred by the Council due to submission by the school of incorrect data;
- q) Recovery of amounts spent from specific grants on ineligible purposes;
- r) Costs incurred by the Council as a result of the governing body being in breach of the terms of a contract;
- s) Costs incurred by the LA as a consequence of a school entering into a service contract which involves LA or school staff transferring to the new service contractor. These costs would generally relate to the transfer of staff pension entitlements and include actuarial valuations of pensions and costs associated with contractors applying to be admitted into the local government pension scheme.
- t) Costs incurred by the LA or another school as a result of a school withdrawing from a cluster arrangement, for example where this has funded staff providing services across the cluster.
- u) Recovery of monies and costs from a school where the Governing Body has failed to pay the LA for payment to the administering authority for credit to the South Yorkshire Pension Fund all pension contributions, payments and any other sums required to be paid by the Governing Body of the school under paragraphs (2.3.2, 2.3.3,2.3.4) following the making of a designation by the LA under regulation 8(1)(b) of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008 for eligible support staff employed by the Governing Body to be members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- v) Recovery of monies and costs from a school where the Governing Body of a school has failed to pay to the LA for payment to the Secretary of State for credit for the Teachers Pension Scheme all pension contributions, payments and any other sums as are required to be paid under the Teacher's Pension Scheme Regulations 2010 and the Teacher's (Compensation for Redundancy and Premature Retirement) Regulations 1997 for teachers employed by the LA or Governing Body of the school

SECTION 7: TAXATION

7.1 Value Added Tax

Schools are required to follow procedures laid out in the Authority's Taxation guidance available on the RMBC intranet page. Following these procedures will enable schools to utilise the Authority's ability to reclaim VAT on expenditure relating to non-business activity. Amounts reclaimed will be passed back to the school.

7.2 CIS (Construction Industry Taxation Scheme)

Schools are required to abide by procedures issued by the Authority in connection with CIS. (again this does not apply only to schools with bank accounts). Contact the taxation section for further guidance.

SECTION 8: THE PROVISION OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES BY THE AUTHORITY

8.1 Provision of Services from Centrally Retained Budgets

It is for the Council to determine on what basis services from centrally retained funds will be provided to schools.

The Authority is barred from discrimination in its provision of services on the basis of categories of schools, except in cases where this would be allowable under the school and early years finance regulations or the dedicated schools grant (DSG) conditions of grant.

8.2 Provision of Services Bought Back from the Council Using Delegated Budgets

The maximum period for any agreement with a school buying services or facilities from the Authority is three years from the inception of the scheme or the date of the agreement which ever is the later. Subsequent agreements relating to the same services may have a maximum period of five years. These timescales may be extended to five or seven years respectively for contracts for the supply of catering services.

Premises and liability insurances are specifically excluded from this requirement, because these limitations may be impracticable for insurance purposes.

When a service is provided for which expenditure is not retainable centrally by the Council under the Regulations made under section 46 of the Act. It must be offered at prices, which are intended to generate income, which is no less than the cost of providing those services. The total cost of the service will be met by the total income, even if schools are charged differentially.

8.3 Packaging

The Authority will provide any services for which funding has been delegated, and the Council is offering the service on a buyback basis, in a way which does not unreasonably restrict schools' freedom of choice among the services available.

This provision would not prevent the Authority offering packages of services, which offer a discount for schools taking up a wider range of services.

8.4 Service Level Agreements

Service Level Agreements will be in place by the 31st January prior to the following financial year and schools will be given at least a month to consider the terms of the agreements.

Where services or facilities are provided under a service level agreement - whether free or on a buy back basis - the terms of any such agreement starting on or after the inception of the scheme will be reviewed at least every three years if the agreement lasts longer than that.

Where services are provided on an ad hoc basis they may be charged for at a different rate than if provided on the basis of an extended agreement.

Premises and liability insurances are specifically excluded from this requirement, because these limitations may be impracticable for insurance purposes.

8.5 Teachers' Pensions

In order to ensure that the performance of the duty on the Council to supply Teachers Pensions with information under the Teachers' Pensions Regulations 1997, the following conditions are imposed on the Council and the governing bodies of all maintained schools covered by this Scheme in relation to their budget shares.

The payroll service provided by the Authority ensures that arrangements are made for the deduction and remittance of teachers pension contributions and where applicable Additional Voluntary Contributions in respect of any teacher(s) who have not made an election against membership of the teachers pension scheme.

If governing bodies choose to enter into a contract for payroll services with any other provider they must ensure that any such arrangement or agreement requires that service provider to supply the salary, service and pensions data to the Authority which the Authority requires to submit its annual return of salary and service to Teachers' Pensions and to produce its audited contributions certificate. The Authority will advise schools each year of the timing, format and specification of the information required. Schools must meet any consequential costs from the budget share.

A governing body of any maintained school which directly administers its payroll must similarly supply salary, service and pensions data to the Authority in accordance with the Authority's requirements, and must meet any consequential costs from the budget share.

Irrespective of which payroll provider is used by the school, the Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services, may still require certain payroll information to be provided by the school. It is advisable that these requirements are reviewed prior to a school entering any contract for the provision of payroll services.

SECTION 9: PFI/PPP

9.1 Applying Agreements to Governing Bodies

Where all or part of a school's facilities have been provided under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) agreement, the governing body will be required to act in accordance with the terms of that agreement (the Project Agreement). In order that a governing body can comply with this requirement, the terms of a PFI agreement will be agreed with the governing body before the contract is entered into.

The Council has the power to charge a school's budget share amounts agreed under the PFI Agreement, subjected to the provisions of the Governors' Agreement. This includes the amount known as the PFI Service Charge. With effect from the 1st April 2013, the amount known as the PFI Factor has been delegated to PFI schools for repayment back to the Authority.

SECTION 10: INSURANCE

10.1 Insurance Cover

As funds for insurance are delegated to schools, the Authority may require the school to demonstrate that cover relevant to the Authority's insurable interests, under any policy arranged by the governing body, (either paid for from central funds or from contributions from schools' delegated budgets), is at least as good as the relevant minimum cover arranged by the Authority, either paid from central funds or from contributions from schools delegated budgets. The Council will have regard to the actual risks, which might reasonably be expected to arise at the school in question in operating such a requirement rather than applying an arbitrary minimum level of cover for all schools.

Contract works: £5,000,000
Money: £100,000 Crossed Cheques £500,000
Fidelity guarantee: £15,000,000
Employers and public liability: £50,000,000
Public Liability £50,000,000
Governors' liability: £50,000,000
Libel and slander: £5,000,000

N.B These categories are not exhaustive

Schools must give at least 12 months notice of their intention to seek alternative insurance to that offered by the LA.

Schools will be notified of the charges for LA arranged premises and liability insurance by 31 January preceding the financial year to which they relate. Schools will have one month to consider them and will need to notify the LA Insurance Manager in writing if they wish to opt out. All centrally arranged insurance cover will be for a full year and cannot be cancelled after commencement at the 1 April each year.

The evidence required to demonstrate the parity of cover should be reasonable and not place an undue burden upon the school, nor act as a barrier to the school exercising their choice of supplier. A copy of insurance cover documents should be sent to the LA Insurance Manager (and evidence of payment) within 14 days of commencement. If indemnity limits are not matched (or if documents are not provided) then the LA reserves the right to arrange its own cover with immediate effect and to charge this to the school.

Further guidance may be obtained from the Director of Audit and Governance.

SECTION 11: MISCELLANEOUS

11.1 Right of Access to Information

As well as specific requirements listed above, the Authority may require a governing body to supply all financial and other information which might reasonably be required to enable the Authority to satisfy itself as to the school's management of its delegated budget share, or the use made of any central expenditure by the Authority (e.g. earmarked funds) on the school.

11.2 Liability of Governors

As the governing body is a corporate body, and because of the terms of s.50(7) of the SSAF Act, governors of maintained schools will not incur liability in the exercise of their power to spend the delegated budget share provided they act in good faith.

11.3 Governors Expenses

The Council may delegate to the governing body of a school yet to receive a delegated budget, funds to meet governors' expenses. Under schedule 11 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, only allowances in respect of purposes specified in regulations may be paid to governors from a school's delegated budget share. There should be no payment of any other allowances. Schools are also barred from payment of expenses duplicating those paid by the Secretary of State to additional governors appointed by him/her to schools under special measures.

11.4 Responsibility for Legal Costs

Legal costs incurred by the governing body, although the responsibility of the Council as part of the cost of maintaining the school unless they relate to the statutory responsibility of aided school governors for buildings, may be charged to the school's budget share unless the governing body acts in accordance with the advice of the Authority. In the rare incidents where the governing body wishes to pursue action, which is at a conflict with the Council, the governing body must fund their own advice from the schools delegated budget. This advice should be from a solicitor who is independent from the Council.

11.5 Health and Safety

The governing body must have due regard to duties placed on the Council in relation to health and safety, and the Authority's policy on health and safety matters in the management of the budget share.

11.6 Right of Attendance for Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services

The governing body must permit the Strategic Director – Finance & Customer Services, or any officer of the Authority nominated by him/her, to attend meetings of the governing body at which agenda items are relevant to the exercise of his/her responsibilities.

11.7 Special Educational Needs Spending

Schools are required to use their best endeavours on spending the budget share, to secure the special educational needs of their pupils. In a situation serious enough to warrant it (although this is unlikely to relate to an individual pupil), this could conceivably lead to suspension of delegation.

11.8 'Whistleblowing'

Schools are required to abide by the Authority's procedure to be followed by persons working at a school or school governors who wish to complain about financial management or financial propriety at the school and as to how such complaints are to be dealt with. (See following whistleblowing policy document)

11.9 Child Protection

Schools are reminded of the need to release staff to attend child protection case conferences and other related events. The cost of cover in such cases is covered from central funds where schools buy into the Authority's short-term cover scheme, otherwise this is met from schools delegated budget funding.

11.10 School Meals

The Council does not provide schools with a policy document on school meals

11.11 Redundancy / Early Retirements Costs

Premature retirement costs and redundancy costs will no longer be funded from a centrally retained school budget but will be charged directly to the delegated school budget.

11.12 Delegation To New Schools

The LA reserves the right to delegate funding selectively and optionally to the governing bodies of new schools or to schools which have not yet received delegated budgets. A new school must receive a delegated budget in the funding period prior to the funding period within which it opens (that is to say, the funding period during which it first admits pupils), unless the LA has obtained the Secretary of State's prior approval to a postponement beyond this date.

The LA may also agree to give a delegated budget to a new school in advance of its opening date or to delegate some spending powers to the temporary governing body of a new school before it receives a delegated budget.

SECTION 12: RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

12.1 School and Council Responsibilities

For Primary, including Nursery and Special Maintained Schools the local authority delegates all funding for repairs and maintenance to all schools. Delegation to individual schools puts the responsibility for these works on the school previously identified in this document along with items such as health and safety testing and servicing of electrical wiring and emergency lighting systems, fire alarm systems and heating systems and appliances, as well as kitchen maintenance and pest control (this list is not exhaustive).

For All Maintained Schools: All costs relating to the repair and maintenance of ICT equipment must be met from the school budget share (funded from Dedicated Schools Grant), while replacements may be met from school budget share, Devolved Capital or a combination of both. Capital expenditure, met through funding streams other than the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Devolved Formula Capital is retained by the local authority and is available to all maintained schools. Allocations will be made in accordance to the local authority's asset management priorities, these priorities may include categories of work normally met in full or in part from schools' revenue budget. Expenditure may be treated as capital only if it fits the definition of capital used by the local authority for financial accounting purposes which is in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

12.2 Delegation to Schools

The Authority will delegate all funding for repairs and maintenance to schools. Only capital expenditure is to be retained by the Authority. For these purposes, expenditure may be treated as capital only if it fits the definition of capital used by the Authority for financial accounting purposes in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on local authority accounting. The Council does not operate a de minimis limit on its definition of Capital expenditure.

12.3 Voluntary Aided Schools

The Authority undertakes to distribute funding to all it's schools in an equitable manner and not apply any discriminatory factors in arriving at the V.A. schools share.

Although the categories of work for which V.A. governors are liable, as shown in Annex A are intended to be comprehensive, they are not exhaustive. For details relating to any items not specifically covered in Annex E2, the DfES document 'Voluntary Aided and Special Agreement Schools – Determination of Financial Liability' should be consulted, although again this may be subject of future amendment pending the implementation of the current DfES proposals.

SECTION 13. COMMUNITY FACILITIES EXTENSION.

13.1 General

Schools which choose to exercise the power conferred by s.27 (1) of the Education Act 2002 to provide community facilities will be subject to a range of controls. These controls will include:

- (i) Regulations made under s.28 (2), if made, which specify activities which may not be undertaken at all;
- (ii) Guidance issued by the Secretary of State on a range of issues connected with the exercise of this power;

Changes made by the Children & Families Act 2014 meant that schools no longer need to consult their Local Authority when establishing community facilities under Section 27 of the Education Act 2002. Nor do they have to have regard to advice given to them by their authority. However, as public bodies, schools are expected to act reasonably and this includes consulting those affected by decisions that school make.

However under s.28 (1), the main limitations and restrictions on power will be those contained in the maintaining authority's scheme for financing schools made under section 48 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. Paragraph 2 of schedule 3 to the education Act 2002 extends the coverage of schemes to the powers of the governing bodies to provide community facilities. Schools are therefore subject to prohibitions, restrictions and limitations in the scheme for financing schools.

This section of the scheme does not extend to joint use agreements, transfer of control agreements or agreements between the authority and schools to secure the provision of adult and community learning.

The LA has the right to require a school to make a charge against its school budget or other funding that may be applied to support Community Facilities, to meet an accumulated deficit. This right will not be applied automatically where an activity shows an accumulated deficit but would be applied following consultation of individual circumstances. This right will not be exercised where the school can provide a working business plan showing that the deficit will be cleared within a two year period.

Schools are prohibited from using their delegated budgets to fund community facilities. This includes start-up costs, ongoing expenditure, or to meet deficits arising from such activities.

Mismanagement of community facilities funds can be grounds for the suspension of the right to a delegated budget.

13.2 Funding Agreements – LA Powers

Details of any funding agreements with third parties for the operation of community schemes must be submitted to the LA for its comments at least six weeks prior to the scheme's commencement date.

If the school establishes a funding arrangement which is against the wishes of the LA or which has been concluded without informing the LA, which in the interests of the Authority are seriously prejudicial to the interests of the school or the Authority, the suspension of a right to a delegated budget may be imposed.

13.3 Other Prohibitions, Restrictions and Limitations

Where the LA considers a community scheme to carry significant financial risk it may require the school to arrange indemnity insurance the cost of which must be borne by the community scheme.

The LA has to safeguard its financial position, be aware of the financial risk to a school from the provision of a community facilities agreement and be able to protect pupil welfare or education. As a consequence it may need to impose provisions within individual agreements or to include further provisions in this scheme at a later date.

13.4 Supply of Financial Information

Every six months the school is required to provide the LEA with a financial statement in respect of each community scheme it operates, detailing (to nominal level) income and expenditure for the previous six months and estimated income and expenditure for the following six months. In the event that the LA has cause for concern relating to the school's management of the financial consequences of the exercise of the community facilities power, these financial statements may be requested every three months and, if the Authority sees fit, require a recovery plan for the community activity in question.

Expenditure and income relating to community schemes will be processed in accordance with the Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) Framework.

13.5 Audit

The school must grant open access to the school's records connected with each community facility it operates in order to facilitate internal and external audit of relevant income and expenditure.

Where funding is provided by third parties, any agreement with the third party must contain adequate provision for access by the Authority to any and all records.

13.6 Treatment of Income and Surpluses

The school may retain all net income derived from each community facility except where otherwise stipulated in an agreement with a funding provider.

The school may carry forward from one financial year to the next, the balance on each community activity. The school will be responsible during the annual accounts close-down procedure for notifying the LA of the accrual(s) required to facilitate this.

13.7 Treatment of deficits

If the activity results in a deficit, this must be charged against any accumulated community facilities surplus previously generated by the school.

Where a deficit cannot be charged against any accumulated surplus the LA has the right to require a school to make a charge against other funding that may be applied to support Community Facilities, to meet the accumulated deficit.

13.8 Health and Safety Matters

The Health and Safety provisions of the Fair Funding Scheme (11.5) are extended to the community facilities power.

The governing body is responsible for securing **Disclosure Barring Service** clearance for all adults involved in community activities taking place during the school day. These costs may be passed on to a funding partner as part of an agreement with that partner.

13.9 Insurance

It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure adequate arrangements are in place for insurance against risks arising from the exercise of the community facilities power, taking professional advice as necessary. The school must also seek the Authority's advice before finalising any insurance arrangement for community facilities. Insurance for community activities must not be funded from the schools delegated budget.

The LA may undertake its own assessment of the insurance arrangements made by a school in respect of community facilities, and if it judges these arrangements to be inadequate, make arrangements itself and charge the resultant cost to the account maintained in respect of the community activity in question.

13.10 Taxation

The school must seek advice from the LA and the local VAT office on any issues relating to the possible imposition of VAT on expenditure in connection with community facilities, including the use of the local authority VAT reclaim facility.

Where a member of staff employed by the school or LA in connection with community facilities at the school is paid from funds held in school's own bank account, the school is likely to be held liable for payment of income tax and National Insurance, in line with Inland Revenue rules. The school is required to follow LA advice in relation to the Construction Industry Scheme where this is relevant to the exercise of the community facilities power.

13.11 Banking

Schools are required to maintain separate accounts (via distinct cost centres) for each community scheme.

Schools are prohibited from borrowing money to operate community facilities without the written consent of the Secretary of State.

13.12 Premature Retirement / Redundancy Costs

For staff employed under the community facilities power, the default position is that any costs must be met by the governing body, and will be funded from the school's delegated budget if the governing body is satisfied that this will not interfere to a significant extent with the performance of any duties imposed on them by the Education Acts, including the requirement to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. Section 37 now states:

Where a local education authority incur costs—

- (a) in respect of any premature retirement of any member of the staff of a maintained school who is employed for community purposes, or
- (b) in respect of the dismissal, or for the purpose of securing the resignation, of any member of the staff of a maintained school who is employed for those purposes, they shall recover those costs from the governing body.

Any amount payable by virtue of subsection (7) by the governing body of a maintained school in England to the local authority may be met by the governing body out of the school's budget share for any funding period if and to the extent that the governing body are satisfied that meeting the amount out of the school's budget share will not to a significant extent interfere with the performance of any duty imposed on them by section 21(2) or by any other provision of the Education Acts.

Where a person is employed partly for community purposes and partly for other purposes, any payment or costs in respect of that person is to be apportioned between the two purposes; and the preceding provisions of this section shall apply separately to each part of the payment or costs.

Cash Handling.

1. This guidance note is issued in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulations. It is intended to provide guidance to all members of staff involved in the cash handling process so that officers are fully aware of their responsibilities. Further specific guidance has been developed and is attached to this document as follows:-
 - Counterfeit Bank Notes
 - Collection of Cash by Security Companies for Banking
2. The significance of and adherence to proper cash handling procedures cannot be emphasised too highly. Not only does adherence to good practices reduce the risk to the Council of monies going missing, adherence to these procedures also provides protection for individual officers against possible allegations of financial irregularities or suspicions of theft, should monies go missing.
3. One of the key principles underpinning sound financial control, insofar as cash handling is concerned, is that proper accountability should be maintained at all times for officers involved in the cash handling process. Ideally it should be possible, at any particular stage of the process, to establish which officers are responsible for accounting for monies under their control. Conversely, in the event that monies are found to be missing it should be possible to hold particular officers responsible for failing to account for the monies under their control.
4. Cash handling may take various forms. Generally it will involve the collection, receipting, reconciliation and banking of income but may also involve other areas of financial activity eg. the use of floats, operation of imprest accounts, control of unofficial funds etc.
5. In view of the diversity of income systems operating in departments it is difficult to provide specific guidance covering all the various aspects of these systems. These guidance notes are therefore essentially concerned with general principles and standards of good practice that should underlie cash handling procedures - most of which are common sense measures which most people would follow if they were dealing with their own finances.
6. It is important that detailed written instructions relating to cash handling duties are developed so that staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. These instructions should pay due regard to the importance of the key principle of accountability. It needs to be made plain to officers that they are accountable for monies under their control and that they are responsible for ensuring that monies are held securely at all times. No other officers should have access to these monies - not even for brief periods. If officers need to leave their work station they must lock monies away securely. Cash should never be left unattended, for however short a period of time.

7. Should monies be physically transferred between officers, the cash handed over should be checked at the time of the transfer and a discharge signature obtained from the receiving officer. During the hand over period, the monies should be checked and agreed in the presence of both officers.

8. Officers should be required to account separately for income for which they are responsible. At the end of each shift, or the conclusion of the day, officers must reconcile cash to the income collected. Cheques, postal orders etc. should be listed and cash analysed over the respective denominations of bank notes and coins. These details must be recorded. Another Officer (where possible a supervising officer) should then verify that the total amount of monies collected agree with the income records. Any shortages or excesses of income should be investigated by supervising officers with explanations fully recorded.

9. The methods of accounting for income will vary depending on the system in operation eg. computerised cash receipting systems, cash registers, tickets or manual receipts. It has already been emphasised that officers should be personally responsible for accounting separately for the monies which they collect. It should also be possible to trace individual transactions to particular officers (ie. there should be an audit trail). Therefore, when computerised cash receipting systems are in operation officers must use their own personal "user identities" when receipting income so that they can be identified as the receipting officer. Under no circumstances should officers access computerised receipting systems using the "user identities" of other officers.

10. Arrangements will vary between establishments for the banking of income collected. Some establishments will bank more frequently than others and additionally some may use the services of security companies. Whatever practices are followed it is important that adequate procedures are in place to safeguard monies held on the premises pending either collection by security companies or banking by officers:

a. Should monies be transferred to another officer with responsibility for collecting and preparing income for banking the procedures relating to cash transfers outlined in paragraph 7 must be followed. b. Where a security company is used to undertaking bankings the procedures to be followed are outlined below. c. Should the officer responsible for collecting income also be responsible for undertaking bankings, he/she should complete a bank paying-in-slip and place both the monies and the paying-in-slip in a sealed bag.

11. At establishments where there are safes, other monies such as floats, imprests etc., should be kept in the safe when not in use. Additionally it may also be worthwhile considering keeping certain monies, such as imprests, in a separate cash boxes within safes. Keeping monies in separate cash boxes can enhance security as access to the contents can be restricted to the key holders of the cash boxes.

12. Security is greatly enhanced when monies are kept in a safe and the practice of keeping cash in drawers, desks, filing cabinets etc. should be actively discouraged. When consideration is given to the fact that any losses will have to be funded from revenue, the provision of a safe may be seen as a cost effective measure for providing increased security.

13. For security to be effective, proper control of keys to safes, cash boxes, etc. needs to be exercised at all times. Wherever possible specified officers should be made personally responsible for individual keys. Keys should be retained on the person of the officers and a register should be kept of all officers holding keys along with details of transfers of keys between officers.

14. Access to safes must always be restricted to officers responsible for safe keys and authorised key holders must not hand safe keys to other officers to allow temporary access to safes, for however a short a period of time.

15. Good practice dictates that the number of keys and officers having access to safes etc. and their contents should be kept to a minimum. The number of available safe keys, however, needs to reflect operational requirements. Ideally there should only be two safe keys, but depending upon circumstances, such as pre agreed absence, the need for emergency cover etc. it may prove necessary to have more than two safe keys. There should be sufficient keys available to ensure that all officers with valid reasons for requiring access to a safe etc. have their own keys so that it is not necessary to constantly keep transferring safe keys between officers.

16. Under no circumstances should safe keys be left in drawers, cabinets etc. Officers are reminded that Financial Regulations require that safe keys are kept on the person of the responsible officer. Furthermore leaving safe keys on premises over-night invalidates the Council's insurance arrangements and therefore any failure to comply with the requirements of Financial Regulations may lead to disciplinary action being taken against individual officers concerned.

17. Should any safe keys be lost, the matter must be reported to the senior officer at the establishment who must make arrangements for locks to be changed as soon as possible. No information relating to the premises or location of safes should be attached to safe keys. This precaution is necessary so as to act as a safeguard against lost keys falling in to the "wrong hands" and thus risking providing potential criminals with the opportunity for theft.

18. There are specific limits with respect to safes made by a recognised manufacturer, the insurance section can provide specific information with respect to limits but the following can be used as a guide:-

a The basic minimum limit applied to a free-standing safe of a recognised manufacturer is £1,000.

b A limit of £250 applies to a safe that is not from a recognised manufacturer.

c Safe limits above £1,000 are only applicable to premises which are of 'solid' structure and are not in isolated situations.

d A limit of £100 applies to locked receptacles, e.g. cash boxes.

19. In addition, it is important that supervising officers are aware of the limits for sums insured against loss, especially where the amount is specified in relation to particular safes or strong rooms, and that they arrange for bankings to be undertaken on a regular and frequent enough basis to ensure that those limits are not exceeded.

20. The following are suggested practices for the carrying of cash in public areas, these should be used in conjunction with other methods such as varying the routes taken and altering the times for delivery and collection. -

a. £1,000 Two people should be present. b. £1,000 - £2,500 Two people carrying plus mobile phone. c. £2,500 - £5,000 Two people carrying with a dye discharge case or three people carrying plus mobile phone. d. £5,000 - £7,500 Three people carrying with dye discharge cases plus mobile phone and alarm. e. £7,500 - £10,000 Three people carrying with dye discharge cases and a transalarm and mobile phone. f. £10,000 + Security Company or specialist vehicle to be used.

21. The Policy does not cover:-

g. any loss, destruction or damage arising from a safe or strong room being opened by the use of a key or combination code through the key or combination code having been left on the premises whilst closed for business purposes. h. any loss, destruction or damage resulting from any vehicle being left unattended whilst being used for carrying money.

22. Specific queries regarding insurance matters should be addressed to the Governance and Risk Section.

23. In the event of any loss being discovered, the circumstances must be reported to the Internal Audit Section.

24. Monies must not, under any circumstances, be taken from income sources by way of an unofficial / unauthorised loan by employees (or other persons) for personal (or any other) use. Undertaking such an unofficial loan shall be considered to be theft at the point of removal irrespective of the intent of the loaning person and will be deemed to be an action that will be investigated under the disciplinary process of RMBC.

Counterfeit Bank Notes

25. There may be a number of forged bank notes in general circulation at any one time and, in the same way as the commercial sector, the Council can incur losses through the acceptance of counterfeit bank notes. Counterfeit notes in circulation tend to be mainly £10 and £20 notes but staff should be aware that other denominations may also be found. This guidance note is intended to bring to the attention of staff with cash handling responsibilities some practical guidance in the detection of counterfeit bank notes, and the action to take if such notes are tendered or accepted as payment.

26. A number of simple checks can be carried out by officers when bank notes are tendered for payment and these are detailed in the leaflet issued by the Bank of England entitled "Know your Bank Notes." Officers should make themselves familiar with contents of this leaflet and should exercise vigilance in the acceptance of bank notes presented in the course of their duties. All notes should be examined on presentation and only accepted by receipting officers when they are satisfied that the tendered notes are genuine bank notes.

27. In the event of a counterfeit bank note being detected when it is being tendered for payment, the strict legal position is that the note should not be passed back to the person tendering it - the counterfeit note should be retained by the officer and the incident reported to the police. However, it is recognised that in certain circumstances the retention of counterfeit bank notes may cause some difficulties in dealing with customers and therefore officers may exercise discretion as to whether or not they insist on retaining any tendered counterfeit notes. In circumstances where counterfeit notes are passed back to customers it is not necessary to report these incidents to the police.

28. Receipts for payment should not be issued until bank notes have been examined and confirmed as being genuine, as identification of a counterfeit note after receipting will result in the Council having to bear the loss.

29. Should counterfeit bank notes be found to have been accepted then the following action must be taken:

- The officer concerned must report the incident to a senior line manager.
- The counterfeit bank notes must not be banked or passed to a third party as this is a criminal offence. They must be handed over to the police. The senior officer should report the matter to the police, hand over the counterfeit note to them and obtain a receipt.
- Income returns should clearly record the details with the value of the counterfeit notes being shown as an underbanking.
- The Internal Audit Section should be notified of the circumstances of the incident as soon as possible.

30. When incidents are reported to the police it is important that as much information as possible can be provided to help the police with their enquiries. A description of the person concerned, including any distinguishing features, should be noted as soon as possible, and any other relevant information such as the personal details of the payee's account, i.e. name and address (where this information is available). If counterfeit notes are not detected until some time after the transactions have taken place then it will be necessary for the officer concerned to check back through the records to see if it is possible to establish which account the payment was made in respect of.

31. There are a number of aids currently available to assist in the detection of counterfeit bank notes but the two most commonly used aids are ultra violet detector lights and detector pens.

32. The detector pen is used at till points throughout the commercial sector, and provides a cheap and effective means of safeguarding against counterfeit bank notes. All that is needed to verify the authenticity of a bank note is for the note to be marked on either face by the pen. If it is a forgery then a dark mark will appear. If it is genuine no visible change will occur.

33. Under an ultra violet detector light a counterfeit note will normally appear to glow with a fluorescent blue colour, whereas a genuine note will not change colour or texture. However, this method is not foolproof as some counterfeit notes are capable of passing this examination. The ultra violet detector lights, although more expensive than detector pens, do not wear out, and may therefore be more cost effective for use at major cashiering points.

Collection of Cash by Security Companies for Banking

34. Although procedures for recording and reconciling income to takings will vary between establishments, it is important that, once these procedures have been completed and bank paying-in-slips prepared, the following measures are undertaken.

35. There should be two officers present when income is prepared for banking.

36. The cheques and cash corresponding to the amounts entered on the paying-in-slip should be placed in one of the security company's appropriate cash collection bags and the bag sealed. If the make up of the cash to be banked requires that a separate sealed bag is used for the coin, then a separate paying in slip should be completed for the coin. The seal numbers of all bags used should be recorded against the amount of money banked on the Summary of Receipts to Bankings (or other similar record) straight away. The security company collection note should then be prepared and the seal numbers also recorded on this form. The sealed bag(s) must then be kept securely pending collection by the security company.

37. Head Teachers are reminded that they are responsible for the care, custody and recording of assets under their control and for ensuring that adequate measures are in operation to provide effective security over all assets. This responsibility includes all income received and awaiting collection by the security company for transmission to the school's or Council's bankers.

38. Monies awaiting collection should be kept securely locked away. It should be noted that Financial Regulations require Head teachers / School Leaders to ensure that adequate security is maintained over all keys to safes or other places where valuable assets are kept, and that wherever possible responsibility for individual keys should be given to specified officers who should retain such keys on their person.

39. If for any reason, should it prove necessary to reopen a sealed collection bag, this may only be done by the officer responsible for reconciling the income and placing the monies in the bag ready for collection. Under no circumstances is it permissible for any other officer to open a sealed collection bag. The removed banking must then be placed by the responsible officer in a new collection bag and the bag sealed. The new seal number and the signature of the officer must be entered on the Summary of Receipts to Bankings and the collection slip amended with details of the new seal number.

40. Under no circumstances should sealed security bags which remain uncollected be placed inside other collection bags.

41. On each occasion that the security company guard arrives to make a collection, the responsible officer must check the identity of the guard. It should be borne in mind, that whilst the guard may be recognised and may have been making collections on a regular basis, it is possible that he or she may no longer work for the security company.

42. If there is any doubt that the guard is not bona fide, the officer in charge of the premises should inspect the guard's identity pass and compare the details against the establishment's copy of the security company's authorised signature list. If the officer is still uncertain, the offices of the security company should be contacted to obtain verification that the guard is genuine. Under no circumstances should any money be handed to a security guard if there is any doubt about his/her authenticity. Only when officers are satisfied that the guard is genuine should any monies be handed over.

43. Before the bags are collected, the security guard should scan the bar codes on each of the bags to be collected and produce a receipt detailing the seal numbers of the bags, the number of bags collected, the collection location, and the ID number of the guard making the collection. Prior to the handing over any cash the officer responsible for the banking and the security guard must sign the receipt and the collection note.

44. In the event of any failure to make collections by the security company or the company turning up at wrong times, attempts should be made to resolve the problem by contacting the security company directly.

REPORT FOR SCHOOLS FORUM

1.	Date of meeting:	22nd November 2019
2.	Title:	Schools Connect
3.	Directorate:	Finance and Customer Services

1. Background

1.1. The Schools Connect Service offers ICT support services, through individual Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for schools to buy back. In broad terms these services include:

- Systems (Capita Schools Information Management System (SIMS)) and remote technical support
- Broadband/Internet and content filtering
- On-site technical support

1.2. The number of schools taking up support services has dropped steadily over the last few years and fallen sharply over the last year, as highlighted in the table below. This is as a result of the formation of larger Academy Trusts providing their own ICT Services, and/or the take up of third-party provision at reduced cost.

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021 (projected)
Number of maintained schools	54	42	38	35
Number of Academy schools	59	56	54	19
Total	109	98	92	54
Net reduction per year		11	6	38
Cumulative reduction			17	55

1.3. There are currently 38 maintained and 54 academy schools which buy back Schools Connect services. Of these, 38 schools have signalled their intention to no longer buy-back services from April 2020.

1.4. Given the reduction in schools buying back services, coupled with those that have indicated their intention to no longer buy-back, then a tipping-point has been reached where the costs of providing the service will exceed the income - the service will be delivering at a loss, which is unsustainable for RMBC.

2. Key Issues

2.1. It is apparent that with a further 38 schools no longer buying back Schools Connect services, expenditure will exceed income in the 2020/21 financial year and beyond.

- 2.2. A price increase of between 46% and 51% would need to be applied to the remaining schools in order to continue to provide the services, which would still be subject to future uncertainty given the downward trend in schools buying-back the service.
- 2.3. Given this situation it has become difficult to retain staff and consequently knowledge and experience has already left the service, making it difficult to deliver a quality and valued service.
- 2.4. As a result of the above, RMBC is intending to close the Schools Connect service at the end of the current financial year.
- 2.5. The schools currently buying back services would need to find an alternative provider(s) for the services they wish to continue to need. There are several alternative providers that include Barnsley MBC, Doncaster MBC, Impelling Solutions, Other Academy Trusts (E.g. Aston, Wales High School), ACS Group. who may provide some or all the needs. By highlighting the above, RMBC is not endorsing these, merely highlighting that other providers exist.
- 2.6. The following services would subsequently be withdrawn:
- RMBC provisioned network connection
 - RMBC content filtered internet service
 - Access to the internal RMBC Intranet service.
 - Access to the RMBC Managed Office 365 Tenancy and service, this includes email and associated Microsoft Applications. Specifically, “@rotherham.school” main school email accounts and “@rgfl.org” email accounts.
 - Access to RMBC online services E5 (Cedar, and E-returns) – alternative means of access are being investigated
 - Access via Schools Connected VPN solution
 - ICT Support for both admin and curriculum
 - Provision of on-site support for subscribing schools
 - Provision of SIMS support for subscribing schools
 - RBUSS backup solution for admin and curriculum
- 2.7. RMBC is prepared to consider providing internet and content filtering services, which would be subject to more specific discussion.
- 2.8. Schools Connect has historically and to date provided support to schools in maintaining data quality standards and key statutory performance returns to the Local Education Authority via the B2B SIMS Service. Whilst RMBC will continue to provide the B2B SIMS Service for schools, RMBC will not be able to apply any changes to a specific schools’ configuration. That would need to be undertaken by the school themselves or through their provider.
- 2.9. As a result of the intended closure of the service, Schools will need to enter into their own arrangements with Capita UK for the continued provision of the SIMS system.

3. Key actions and relevant timelines

- 3.1. A report was taken to the Children and Young Peoples Directorate Leadership Team on 22 August 2019, highlighting the current review of Schools Connect and seeking their view as to the likely impact as they see it.

The main concern is the potential impact on the flow of data between schools and the LEA which has been supported by Schools Connect. The Director therefore was concerned to the potential close of the service although recognises the financial difficulties that have been presented, which is a matter for the Director of Finance and Customer Services. The Director requested a report is presented to the Schools Forum outlining the Councils position/decision – hence this report.

- 3.2. Write to all current schools to give notice of RMBC's intention to terminate the service on 31st March 2020 – immediately following this meeting.
- 3.3. In conjunction with Schools, arrange to terminate or novate third-party related supply contracts to ensure expiry or novation with effect from 1st April 2020 – within the necessary contract termination period.

4. Risks and mitigation

- 4.1. Schools securing alternative provider(s) for the services they still require a service/support for (network connectivity, content filtering, VPN Solution).
- There are alternative providers in the market which is well established and offer competitive rates.
- 4.2. Schools will not be able to access RMBC intranet services.
- Alternative sources could be provided through SharePoint or managed links to the RMBC intranet.
- 4.3. Schools will have to migrate to their own Microsoft Office 365 Tenancy and will have to provide their own email and Microsoft Office 365 Applications.
- RMBC can assist with this transition.
- 4.4. Schools will not be able to access RMBC online services- E5.
- Alternative technical solutions are available which will require Information Governance sign off and design and configuration.
- 4.5. Timescales involved in procuring and moving to alternative provider(s).
- RMBC will support schools as part of the transition.
 - RMBC will undertake the necessary de-commissioning work.
- 4.6. Access to RMBC systems/services provided to schools who also buy-back HR/payroll services from RMBC.
- Access provision is already in place for schools who buy-back HR/payroll services but don't buy-back Schools Connect support.

5. Recommendations to Schools Forum

- 5.1. That Schools Forum note the content of this report and the intention of RMBC to close the Schools Connect service on 31st March 2020 for the reasons outlined.

5.2. That Schools Forum note the actions that will be taken by RMBC and those required of Schools, between now and the closure of the Schools Connect service, as highlighted in this report.

5.3. That Schools Forum acknowledges that RMBC is prepared to continue to provide network/internet and content filtering services, so long as this remains viable following discussion and confirmation from those schools that wish to keep this provision from RMBC.

6. Name and contact details

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