

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY, 17TH JANUARY, 2020**

In Attendance:-

Deborah Ball (Treeton Primary (Academy) (in the Chair);
Lianne Camaish – Aspire
John Coleman – Nexus MAT
Dom Curran – Aston Academy
Christina Hill – GMB Representative
Andy Krabbendam – Kiveton Park Infant and Harthill Primary (Academy)
Jenny Lingrell – Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion
Vera Njelic - Principal Finance Officer, RMBC
Kirsty Peart - Sitwell Infant (Maintained)
Lynn Pepper – Herringthorpe Infant School (Maintained)
Debbie Pons – Clerk, RMBC
Alan Richards – Secondary Governors
Paul Silvester – Newman Special School (Maintained)
Helen Simpson – Ferham Primary (Maintained)

Apologies were received from:-

Dean Fenton - Head of Access to Education
David Naisbitt – Oakwood High (Academy)
Pepe Di'lasio – Interim Assistant Director of Education
Nevine Towers – Diocese of Sheffield

24. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and formal introductions were made.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

26. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22ND NOVEMBER, 2019

Agreed:- (1) That the minutes of the last meeting held on 27th September, 2019, be approved as a true and accurate record.

(2) That Vera Njelic, Schools Finance, provide a breakdown of the School Funding Formula 2020/21 consultation outcome showing the number of schools that had responded and their stated preference to the options proposed.

The following was received after the meeting:- “A total of 48 (110) schools responded, 7 maintained and 41 academies. All respondents

agreed with the principle that Rotherham had adopted with the minimum funding guarantee. Twenty six agreed to the 1.5% transfer from the schools block to the high needs, 22 disagreed. Thirty two agreed to the provision of a growth fund and 14 disagreed. Thirty eight schools agreed that the central school services block continue to be centrally held with 10 disagreeing. Only maintained schools needed to respond to 2 further questions on de-delegation. Of the 6 maintained primaries, 5 disagreed and 1 agreed to de-delegate funds for a school in financial difficulty fund. Of the 7 maintained (6 primary and 1 secondary) schools 6 disagreed and 1 agreed to de-delegate funds for trade union services.”

(3) That Dean Fenton, Access to Education, submit a report to the next meeting of the Forum on the formula used for funding allocations for new and expanding schools.

27. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Arising from Minute No. 18 (Mid-Year Early Years Block Update and 2020/21 Funding Announcement), Aileen Chambers provided further information with regard to DfE retrospective adjustments to budget.

The DfE set an indicative budget at the start of the year which was based on January 2019 census figures and then adjusted based on the January 2020 census. That budget adjustment would be received around July 2020. This was then adjusted a year later after the year had ended based on the following January's census.

Often there was quite a difference. Last year the Authority was not allowed to see the Academy data census until it had been submitted to and approved by the DfE even though all the information from Maintained Schools and Key Providers had been provided.

Crosschecking between the data from head count and what was actually contained within the census took place. Figures provided by the Authority were based on projections and the adjustment made on the final position at the end of the census.

28. CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCHOOLS' FORUM

The School Forum Clerk presented the current constitution as at April 2019, of the Rotherham Schools' Forum.

Notification had been received that Sharon Stones, Head of School at Arnold Nursery School and Children's Centre, was now the Nursery School Head Teacher representative.

Angela McComb, had been appointed as a Local Authority Governor at Anston Park Junior School, in the Maintained School Members Primary Governors Section. This still left one vacancy in this Sector.

Discussion ensued with the following amendments given to the constitution submitted:-

- Primary School Head Teachers - Paula Dobbin, Head Teacher, Redscope Primary, had now retired
- Alan Richards, Secondary Governor – should be moved to Academy Members
- Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector Nursery – there was no vacancy
- The need for a mechanism for voting in the constitution should the need arise

Agreed:- (1) That Sharon Stones and Angela McComb be approved as representatives on the Rotherham School's Forum.

(2) That the membership of the Rotherham Schools' Forum be updated as above.

(3) That Kirsty Peat, Head Teacher of Sitwell Infant school, raise the issue of Primary School Governors and Primary School Head Teacher representation at the Head Teachers meeting.

(4) That Paul Carney, Governors Section, be requested to raise the issue of representation at the next meeting of the Governors Forum.

(5) That the issue of representation be raised at RESP.

29. HIGH NEEDS SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY UPDATE

Mary Jarrett, Head of Inclusion, gave a verbal update on the High Needs Sufficiency Strategy.

The building work had started on the sufficiency programme with a lot of work behind the scenes to set pathways. A report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum.

There had been a delay to the works at Hilltop School due to staff sickness but this was now progressing.

The building works at Thomas Rotherham College were bigger and more extensive than originally anticipated and were likely to cause some delay to the opening of the new provision. However, this would not affect the sufficiency in terms of the young people being able to access the provision. There was assurance that it was on track for September 2020.

Agreed:- That the update be noted and a further report be submitted to the next meeting.

30. 2020/2021 EARLY YEARS FUNDING

Aileen Chambers, Education and Skills, presented a report summarising the statutory guidance in place for the allocation of Early Education Funding and Inclusion Support Grant and proposals for the 2020/21 allocation.

It was confirmed the Early Years Block funding was delivered through the national funding formula. Every Local Authority was required to allocate the funding to Early Education providers based on a local funding formula made up of a single base rate and a mandatory deprivation supplement (for 3/4 year olds Early Education). Local authorities could retain 5% of the 3/4 year olds budgets allocation to fund central services.

Local authorities were required to consult providers on annual changes to their local formula as well as Schools' Forums on changes to local Early Years funding formulas including agreeing central spend by 28th February although the final decision rested with the local authority concerned.

It was proposed to retain the current local funding formulate in 2020/21 as follows:-

Retention for Central Spend	5% of 3/4 year olds and 30 hour budgets
3/4 year olds hourly rate	£4.08 plus Deprivation Supplement if eligible (increase of 8p per hour)
3/4 year olds Deprivation Supplements	Up to 2% of 3/4 year olds and 30 hour budgets to be distributed as an additional hourly rate maintaining the 10p/15p supplement
2 year old hourly rate	£5.28 (increase of 8p per hour)
Nursery Stability Funding	Lump sum to be passported to 3 nursery schools as required by guidance

The 2020/21 increases in hourly rate for Early Education providers would be the first increase they had received for 3 years. The increase was essentially for ongoing sustainability as the cost of delivery had increased significantly over the last 3 years with increases in minimum wage, business rates increases as well as increased running costs.

Following a review of the Inclusion Support Grant (ISG) in 2019/20 by the CYPS Directorate Leadership Team, the offer of the ISG in its current format for 2020/21 was approved. It was anticipated that a budget of £410,000 would be required in the forthcoming financial year. It would be funded from the Early Years Block through a contribution of carry forward from 2019/20 and in-year 2020/21 budget.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Disability Access Funding was an annual award and its carry forward could be used to supplement Dedicated Schools Grant
- Request for projected figures to be provided for each element of the above table. That could be provided once the Section 251 had been completed
- The use of the Central Spend

Rotherham was part of the DfE's Early Outcomes Project this year which was aimed at improving speech, language and communication. It would be rolled out as from next year.

Agreed:- (1) That the Early Education funding rates for 2020/21 be noted.

(2) That the retention of 5% of the 3 year old and 30 hour budget to cover Central spend (Early Years and Childcare Service) be approved.

(3) That the Inclusion Support Grant proposals be noted.

(4) That the Section 251 submission be submitted for information to the next meeting.

31. 2020/2021 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT AND FUNDING FORMULA

Vera Njelic, Schools Finance, presented a report updating the Forum on the 2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for Rotherham together with proposals on the formula for allocation of the schools block and the central schools block element of DSG.

The DfE had issued the final version of the Authority Pro-forma Tool (APT) to local authorities with the Autumn 2019 pupil census. Rotherham had until 21st January, 2020 to submit the final version to the DfE.

In October 2019 the Local Authority sought consultation with schools, academies and the Schools Forum on the local funding formula decisions as set out in the Regulations. The report set out the summary information on the impact of those decisions.

As agreed at the Schools Forum meeting on the 22nd November, 2019, a request to transfer 1.5% from the school block to the high needs block was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 28th November, 2019. If the request was not approved, 0.5% would be transferred, therefore the Local Authority had completed 2 versions of the Authority Pro-forma Tool (APT).

Table 2 within the document showed 'Successful Disapplication request to transfer 1.5%'; Table 3 showed 'Unsuccessful Disapplication request -

transfer 0.5%' both of which showed comparisons to last year.

Vera explained the funding in table 6 for the Central Services Schools Block allocation and the group agreed with the comments.

The Teachers pay grant would continue in the 2020/21 financial year as set out in the teachers' pay grant methodology document as well as the teachers' pension employer contribution grant continuing in the 2020 to 2021 financial year as set out in TPECG methodology document.

Pupil premium rates for the 2020/21 financial year would be confirmed in the New Year.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Transition to National Funding Formula was still continuing
- An email would be sent once a decision was received from the DfE on the Disapplication transfer percentage
- Confusion as to the definition of "low prior attainment" used and what formula used

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

(2) That clarification be sought as to the definition of "low prior attainment" and the funding used by the DfE.

32. EXCLUSIONS/PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS STRATEGY UPDATE

Mary Jarrett, Head of Inclusion, presented an update on SEMH developments for 2020.

The SEMH Strategy had been finalised in September, 2019, and had 6 priorities:-

- Sufficiency – develop local education provision that responds to need – this will include flexible and specialist provision
- Seamless pathways – ensure that pathways to support are connected and aligned and develop a clear behaviour pathway that includes responses to attachment and trauma
- Partnerships – develop and sustain robust inclusion partnerships that enable schools to meet need through a collective approach to responding to the needs of individual children
- Evidence-Based Approaches – ensure that the local authority offer (from Early Help and Inclusion Services) responds to need and is underpinned by evidence-based approaches and aligned with clear pathways

- Workforce – develop a robust training and support offer, enabling professionals to feel confident in responding to the needs of children and young people with SEMH needs
- Outcomes Focused and Value for Money – ensure that all activity can demonstrate a clear outcome and value for money

In order to progress the above, 3 pieces of work had been identified which would take place during the remainder of the 2019/20 academic year. These were:-

- Creation of small grants to 'seed fund' secondary schools to support the development of Alternative Provision in Rotherham. The monies were calculated according to pupil numbers and deprivation indices. These would be supported by a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between secondary schools and the Local Authority. The SLA would support schools to work together and clarify the use of Aspire as Alternative Provision
- Review of Pupil Referral Units in Rotherham and use of Alternative Provision in the Borough. This work would be subject to competitive tender bids by the end of January
- Workforce development project. The Local Authority had commissioned Sara Graham from Maltby Academy Trust via ROSIS to evaluate the current workforce offer in relation to SEN and to develop evidence based programme of CPD for education staff.

Attention was also drawn to:-

- The Exclusions Team had been subject to a restructure and now formed part of Access to Education managed by Dean Fenton. The Team's role and remit had changed significantly looking at the Local Authority's role in supporting/challenging schools and ensuring everyone was working within the framework
- The Primary Outreach Team would be going into primary schools looking at the graduated response in relation to SEM and the specific needs of the children involved which would feed into the work of Sara Graham. It was hoped to open a new SEN provision by the Easter Term, based at Thrybergh Primary School, to provide turn round provision for children and young people that needed a break from mainstream education with the aim of them returning
- A report would be submitted to the Forum when the review of the PRU and Alternative Provision was undertaken. The external consultant would be asked to undertake a specific piece of work analysing numbers/trends/data to inform Rotherham's sufficiency needs

Agreed:- That the update be noted.

33. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to report.

34. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Agreed:- That future meetings of the Schools Forum take place in April, June, September and November, 2020, exact dates to be confirmed.