

Rotherham Schools' Forum

Venue: Virtual via Microsoft Teams **Date:** Friday 17 September 2021
Time: 8.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Welcome by the Chair and introductions by all Forum Members present.

2. Apologies for Absence.

To receive apologies from any Forum Member who are unable to attend the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest.

To invite Forum Members to declare any interests they may have on agenda items to be considered at this meeting, to confirm the nature of those interests and whether they intend to leave the meeting for the consideration of the item.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting. (Pages 3 - 9)

Recommendation:- To receive and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th June, 2021.

5. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes.

To consider and report on any matters arising from the previous minutes:-

6. DSG Mid-Year Update (Pages 10 - 12)

Vera Njegic to report.

Recommendation:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

7. New Funding Announcements (Pages 13 - 15)

Vera Njegic to report.

Recommendation:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

8. Safety Valve Intervention Programme (DSG Recovery Plan)

Nathan Heath to report.

Recommendation:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

9. SEN Inspection Update

Julie Day to report.

Recommendations:- That the update be received and the contents noted.

10. Alternative Provision Review and Update

Kelly Crompton to report.

Recommendations:- That the update be received and the contents noted.

11. Education Unions Facility Time (Pages 16 - 18)

Ian Henderson to report.

Recommendation:- To approve the consultation with schools.

12. Any Other Business.

Recommendation:- To receive any other items of urgent business.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Recommendation:- To consider and agree the date and time of the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum on Friday, 19th November, 2021 at 8.30 a.m. – venue to be confirmed.

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY 25 JUNE 2021**

In Attendance:-

Deborah Ball (Treeton Primary (Academy) (in the Chair);
 Angela Acomb – Primary Maintained Governor
 Raymund Brent – Primary Maintained Governor
 Lianne Camaish, Aspire
 John Coleman – Nexus MAT
 Pepe Di'lasio – Wales High (Academy)
 Dean Fenton - Head of Access to Education
 Neil Hardwick – Head of Finance, CYPS, RMBC
 Nathan Heath – Assistant Director of Education, CYPS, RMBC
 Janet Hodgkinson – GMB Representative
 Andy Krabbendam – Kiveton Park Infant and Harthill Primary (Academy)
 Angela McComb – Primary Maintained Governor
 David Naisbitt – Oakwood High (Academy)
 Vera Njelic - Principal Finance Officer, RMBC
 Kirsty Peart - Sitwell Infant (Maintained)
 Lynne Pepper – Herringthorpe Infant (Maintained)
 Debbie Pons – Clerk, RMBC
 Alan Richards – Secondary Governor
 Jackie Ross – Interim Head of SEND, CYPS
 Steve Scott – PVI Sector
 Sharon Stones – Head of Arnold Nursery and Children's Centre
 Paul Silvester – Newman Special School (Maintained)
 Nevine Towers – Diocese of Sheffield

Apologies were received from:-

Ian Henderson - H.R. Officer, RMBC

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to today's virtual meeting and introductions were made.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pepe Di'lasio representing Wales High (Academy) declared an interest in Minute No. 3 (Membership of the Schools Forum) on the grounds that he was a NEU Trade Union Member. He did not vote on that item.

3. CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM

Further to Minute No. 99(c) of the previous meeting the Forum were asked to consider the inclusion of a trades union representation from the

NEU on the membership.

The Chair also asked that if any Schools' Forum member also wished to have a named substitute then they should forward this to the Clerk for it to be agreed at a forthcoming meeting.

Agreed:- That Colin Price be the named NEU member and that Patricia Graham be the named substitute.

(2) That any suggestions for named substitutes for other Schools Forum members be forwarded to the Clerk for inclusion on a future meeting for approval.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th April, 2021.

Agreed:- That the minutes of the last meeting held on 16th April, 2021, be approved as a true and accurate record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no matters arising that were no contained within the agenda items for this meeting.

6. 2020/21 OUTTURN AND 2021/22 FUNDING

Consideration was given the report presented by Neil Hardwick, Head of Schools' Finance which provided information on the 2020/21 outturn position of the dedicated schools grant (DSG).

A summary was also provided on details to maintained members of Schools Forum as to the surplus/deficit balances of the maintained schools within Rotherham.

The report also outlined the national picture on the High Needs Block as part of the overall Dedicated Schools Grant and the additional funding the Government was investing in education in the next two years as part of its spending review.

Further information was provided on the DSG central reserve deficit balance brought forward from 2020/21 being £19.9m. Pressures on high needs expenditure continued with a further deficit in 2020/21 of £2.0m which had contributed to a net deficit in the DSG Central Reserve of £21.3m after taking account of DSG balances in other DSG funding blocks and PRU balances.

The local authority had modelled the impact of the January 2021 early years census data and were expecting a reduction in funding of £222k.

The High Needs Block overspend was due to a number of factors; an increase in Education Health and Care Plans, an increase in the number of young people aged 16 to 25 with an EHCP who were now the responsibility of the Local Authority to fund, an increase in the number of children accessing higher cost provision and an increase in the number of pupils in Alternative Provisions (Pupil Referral Units).

In terms of Early Years the Government spending review announced additional funding for schools and high needs, compared to 2019-20, which would rise by £4.8 billion for 2021-22 and £7.1 billion for 2022-23.

In 2021/22 the £4.8 billion is split £4.020 billion to the Schools Block and £0.780 billion to the High Needs Block; the funding split for future years was still to be determined. For Rotherham this was an additional £5.5m for schools and £5.3m in the High Needs Block.

With regards to deficit balances individual schools were permitted to carry forward balances to be spent or replenished in subsequent financial years. In total, the carry forward on individual school budgets was an overall combined surplus of £3.180m.

Surplus balances, however, as of the 31st March, 2021 when compared with 2019/20 reflected an increase in year of £1.022m.

The increase in the level of surplus took account of the five schools that have converted to academies during 2020/2021. The in-year academy conversions were schools with cumulative balances of £303k as at 31ST March. 2020.

Of the total 2020/21 surplus balances, 10 schools hold balances above the thresholds set out in the Scheme for Financing Schools. The Scheme for Financing Schools sets out the financial arrangement between the local authority and the maintained schools. The scheme states that if a schools balance has exceeded the allowable surplus (8% of school budget share for nursery, primary and special, 5% for secondary) and allowing for commitments and any amounts assigned for a specific purpose then the local authority may deduct an amount equal to the excess balance.

Schools have recently submitted excess surplus balance plans detailing intended use.

Of the seven schools that were previously identified to be in deficit, three have now entered a surplus balance position, one had academy status with a deficit balance of £11k and three schools remain in deficit.

For all schools that were in a deficit position, individual three year budget recovery plans were in the process of being compiled. These would then be subject to formal review throughout the year.

A further update would be provided at the next Forum meeting in September, 2021.

Agreed:- (1) That the information contained within this report, particularly that the reserve balances have increased to £21.3m (centrally retained), be noted.

(2) That the deficit balance be noted, which was subject to change as this will be dependent on the early years adjustment for the Spring 2021 census count. Within the figures, an anticipated reduction of £222k has been accounted for.

(3) That a further update be provided for the next meeting.

7. DSG HNB RECOVERY PLAN

An update was provided via Nathan Heath, Neil Hardwick and Jackie Ross on the DSG/HNB Recovery Plan and the informal discussions that had been taking place with the DfE which would continue on a frequent basis.

For some Local Authorities in the same position as Rotherham these discussions have led to a Safety Valve Agreement, which would effectively agree a five-year repayment plan with an eventual write off. It was hoped that Rotherham, from the discussions, could be considered for the same such agreement. However, no presumption could be made that this would be extended to include Rotherham.

It was clear to Local Authorities there was a lack of High Needs Capital and insufficient funding.

In order to understand the position further for Rotherham's High Needs Budget a presentation was delivered via Powerpoint highlighting:-

- Strategy and Approach to the Plan.
- Understand and Managing Demand.
- The Improving Financial DSG Position.
- The need for strong grip.
- Benchmarking data to inform local system cultural change – Moderate Learning Difficulties.
- Benchmarking data to inform local system cultural change – SEMH.
- Benchmarking data to inform local system cultural change – Severe Learning Difficulties and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties.
- Benchmarking data to inform local system cultural change - Scrutinising our budget for best value - Place Funding.
- Benchmarking data to inform local system cultural change - Scrutinising our budget for best value - Top-up funding.
- Engaging stakeholders through strong governance and leadership.

- Shared commitment to good outcomes for children and young people.
- SEND Sufficiency Progress.
- LAC Sufficiency and transport.
- National, regional and sub-regional engagement.
- Strategic Approach to Spend Triangle.
- Next Steps on SEND Sufficiency Phases.

Forum Members welcomed the presentation and the progress to date. Due to the sequence of meetings taking place a further update on progress would take place at the next Forum meeting.

Agreed:- (1) That the update and presentation be received and the contents noted.

(2) That a further update be provided for the next meeting.

8. HIGH NEEDS SUB-GROUP UPDATE

Paul Silvester gave a brief summary of the outcome of the High Needs Sub-Group Meeting which took place on Monday, 14th June, 2021.

The Group looked at in detail at:-

- The current data available.
- Multi-agency working and partnerships.
- Lack of contact and engagement.
- Numbers of Education and Health Care Plans.
- Funding and regulatory structures.
- Expectations from the Green Paper.
- Sharing of Expertise.

The input of Forum Members was welcome and invitations could be extended to anyone interested in becoming part of the Sub-Group.

A further meeting was scheduled for 12th July, 2021 and a further update on progress would be provided for the next Forum Meeting.

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

(2) That a further update be provided to the next Forum meeting.

9. PUPIL PREMIUM

Neil Hardwick gave an update on Pupil Premium which was to be based on the October census rather than January.

In Rotherham this impact was around £900k on the school sector due to the Free School Meal voucher system. There had been a significant

increase in family eligibility and registrations.

Agreed:- That the update be received and noted.

10. FREE SCHOOL MEALS UPDATE

An update was provided by Neil Hardwick and Nathan Heath on the success and progress of the Free School Meal voucher system which had now been extended to include the six week holiday period.

This was still subject to final approval and details would be confirmed shortly.

Agreed:- That the update be received and noted.

11. SUMMER SCHOOLS

Nathan Heath provided the Schools Forum with an update on the situation with Summer Schools. The DfE had recently issued Summer Schools guidance with the aim of the programme being to deliver a blend of academic education and enrichment activities.

Schools would be asked to determine which pupils, from any year group, would most benefit from a summer school probably focusing this provision primarily on pupils making the transition into Year 7 and those eligible for Free School Meals.

Agreed:- That the update be received and noted.

12. HEALTHY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME GRANT

Amy Woodhead provided insight into the Healthy Activities and Food Programme Grant which would provide holiday provision for children who received benefits-related free school meals.

Local authorities were being asked to ensure that the offer of free holiday club provision was available for all children eligible for and in receipt of free school meals in their area. This did not mean they were all required to attend as the provision was voluntary.

Local authorities must get written approval to use their funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children who were not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals.

Some local authorities may co-ordinate their own provision and others may choose to work with another organisation to co-ordinate the provision on their behalf.

There was a good spread of provision across the borough and those children who were eligible would be provided with a unique reference

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number which must be given to the provider in order to receive their free place. These numbers would be sent to schools initially.

Further publicity on the pack on offer would be issued to schools shortly so this could be communicated to eligible groups.

Agreed:- That the information be received and the contents noted.

13. SEMH FREE SCHOOL UPDATE

Nathan Heath updated Forum Members on the current position with SEMH Free School as part of SEND Sufficiency Phase 3.

Well Spring Academy Trust from Barnsley was the successful bidder.

Ongoing dialogue would continue with the DfE providing reassurance that the governance structures were in place and contractual arrangements secured.

Agreed:- That the update on progress to date be received and noted.

14. EDUCATION RECOVERY SUPPORT

Vera Njegic introduced the guidance that had been provided about the programmes and activities the Department for Education was funding to support education recovery and children and young people's wellbeing.

This included the recovery package announced in June 2021 as well as existing programmes announced in June 2020 and February 2021. There were programmes and activities for pupils and students of all ages, including with consideration to disadvantaged pupils and students and those with SEND.

This guidance would be circulated to all providers in due course.

Agreed:- That the guidance be received and the contents noted.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other items of business for consideration.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Schools' Forum take place on a virtual basis on Friday, 17th September, 2021 at 8.30 a.m.

Schools Forum Briefing

1.	Date of meeting:	17 th SEPTEMBER 2021
2.	Title:	DSG 2021/22 – MID YEAR UPDATE REPORT
3.	Directorate:	CYPS

1. SUBJECT: DSG 2021/22 – MID YEAR FUNDING UPDATE REPORT

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update all members of Schools Forum on the the wider dedicated schools grant (DSG) position for 2021/22.

3. RECOMMENDATION (S)

That members note the current position.

4. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S)

To ensure Schools Forum members are aware of the current year position of the wider dedicated schools grant (DSG) and the impact this has on the DSG reserve.

5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5.1 The 2020/21 outturn provided the closing DSG reserve balances to be;

High Needs Block	-£22.378m
Early Years Block	£ 0.430m
Schools Block	£ 0.906m
Central Block*	£ 0.000m
Pupil Referral Units	-£ 0.216m
Total	-£21.258m

*It was agreed by Schools Forum to transfer the central block reserve against the High Needs Block deficit

On closure of the 2020/21 accounts the local authority had not been notified of the final early year's adjustment for 2020/21 as a result of the January schools & early year's census. The local authority estimated that this would be a clawback of £221,660. Notification of the actual adjustment has been delayed until the autumn.

The spring 2021 census is also used to re-run the allocations for 2021/22 financial year as outlined further in 5.2 below.

5.2 2021/22 overall DSG position

The initial allocations were issued in December 2020 and the latest July 2021 allocations have been updated as follows;

	Dec 2020 (£m)	Jul 2021 (£m)	Movement (£m)
Schools block (incl. academy allocations)	£211.310m	£211.310m	Nil
Central schools block	£1.371m	£1.371m	Nil
High Needs block (incl. EFA funded places)	£42.159m	£42.192m	(+£0.033m)
Early Years block (inc. estimated Jan 20 Census Adjustment)	£17.942m	£17.942m	Nil
Total	£272.782m	£272.815m	(£0.033m)

The above table excludes block transfers

The High Needs adjustment can be analysed as:

Additional Funding for Imported Places (Jan 21 Census)	(£33k)
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This adjustment is to reflect any changes either in the placement by a local authority of pupils in schools and colleges located in other local authority areas (exports), or in the funding required by schools and colleges accepting pupils and students resident in other local authority areas (imports).

Excluding EFA direct funding of academies (and high needs places) the revised DSG allocations are;

	Allocation	Additional information
Schools block	£32,979m	After recoupment for all conversions as notified by the DfE in July 2021
Central schools block	£1.371m	
High Needs block	£35,340m	Allocation less £6.852m for ESFA direct funded places
Early Years block	£17.942m	Incl. EYPP & DAF funding allocations
Total	£87.632m	

5.3 As at the end of August (period 5), the anticipated outturn position is as follows:

Early Years are currently forecasting a breakeven position at year end.

High Needs DSG has a forecast overspend of £0.756m based on the DSG recovery plan and included anticipated growth on EHCs numbers and the implementation of new developments linked to the SEND Sufficiency Strategy see table below for details:

High Needs Block Budget Monitor @ 31 August 2021	Budgeted Place Numbers April to August 2021	Budgeted Place Numbers September - March 2022	Original Budget 2021/22	Revised Budget 2021/22	Forecast Expenditure 2021/22	Forecast Variance Revised Budget 2021/22	Comments
	800	970	16,534,647	18,606,782	18,606,783	0	£2m growth relates to increase in place numbers above HNL returns. Actual places have grown by 10 above October census, with Rotherham pupils increasing by 23 and other LA's reducing by 13. Funding transferred from Top Up Budget.
Special Schools							
Primary Resource Units	19	23	212,144	242,144	242,144	0	
Secondary Resource Units	21	30	332,447	332,447	332,447	0	
Top Up Funding	201	212	7,790,102	5,720,967	6,238,437	517,470	Based on additional place and top up funding for Special School academies
Alternative Provision	268	212	5,543,479	5,543,479	5,596,021	52,542	
External Residential	4	5	2,331,700	2,331,700	2,027,123	-304,577	Underspend relates to fewer post 18 in educational residential placements
Independent Service Providers	208	239	8,358,600	8,358,600	8,735,808	377,208	Pressure relates to number and cost of post 16 ISP placements.
Inclusion Services	19	19	2,292,169	2,292,169	2,433,399	141,230	Pressures relate to Hearing Impaired Service and Inclusion Services
Other Education Services	14	15	351,958	351,958	323,779	-28,179	
CCP & FE Places	223	239	1,449,643	1,449,643	1,449,643	0	
Total	1,778	1,965	45,196,889	45,229,889	45,985,584	755,694	

Based on the above, the level of DSG central reserves deficit will increase from a deficit of £21.258m (carried forward from 2020/21) to £22.014m at the end of 2021/22
This would equate to 8.07% of the overall DSG allocation.

In summary, the financial sustainability of the high needs block remains a significant cause for concern for the borough and will require the support of the School Forum to implement the strategies to assist in reducing the financial pressures in the High Needs Bloc.

Name and contact details

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Schools Forum Briefing

1.	Date of meeting:	17 th September 2021
2.	Title:	New Funding Announcement – Pre 16 Schools Revenue Funding for 2022/2023
3.	Directorate:	Finance and Customer Services Directorate

1. SUBJECT: NEW FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Schools Forum members of the recently announced School Funding Update

3. RECOMMENDATION (S)

That members note this information and ensure they make school/academies that they represent aware of this information.

4. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S)

To ensure Schools Forum members are aware of the latest announcements relating to funding.

5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 5.1 On 19th July the Minister of State for School Standards made a written statement setting of the key aspects to schools, high needs and central school services national funding formula for 2022/2023.

6. SCHOOLS AND HIGH NEEDS

- 6.1 Provisional funding allocations for 2022/2023 through the schools, high needs and central services national funding formula (NFF) have been published.

School funding is increasing by 3.2% overall and by 2.8% per pupil, compared with 2021 to 2022.

High needs funding is increasing by £780m or 9.6% in 2022/2023. The high needs NFF will ensure that every local authority receives at least an 8% increase per head of population.

The DfE has made a technical change to the historic spend factor within the high needs NFF, following consultation this year. The factor has been

updated to use 50% of local authorities' actual spend data in 2017 to 2018 rather than their planned spend.

Funding factors used in the 2022 to 2023 schools national formulae

- 6.2 The DfE are decreasing the funding lag for the "FSM6" deprivation funding factor by 9 months, by moving from using the previous year's January census to the October census for measuring eligibility.
- 6.3 In calculating low prior attainment proportions, data from the 2019 early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP) and key stage 2 (KS2) tests is used as a proxy for the 2020 tests, following the cancellation of assessment due to the pandemic.
- 6.4 Pupils who joined a school between January and May 2020 attract funding for mobility on the basis of their entry date, rather than by virtue of the May school census being their first census at the current school (the May 2020 census did not take place due to the pandemic).
- 6.3 Schools' business rates will be paid by ESFA to billing authorities directly on behalf of all state funded schools from 2022 to 2023 onwards. More information to follow.
- 7. Local authorities will only be able to transfer 0.5% of their Schools block with School Forum approval. To transfer more than this or any amount without Forum approval, they will have to submit a request to the DfE.
- 7.1 Final dedicated schools grant allocations will be released in December 2021 (following the October 2021 census).
- 7.2 The DfE has issued an initial consultation on how they propose to move towards a hard NFF in which all mainstream schools will have their funding allocated according to a single national formula rather than individual local formulae as in the current system. The consultation closes on 30th September 2021. For reference, 2021/2022 NFF and Rotherham factor and values are shown on Appendix A along with the recently published 2022/2023 NFF.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fair-school-funding-for-all-completing-our-reforms-to-the-national-funding-formula>

8.1 **CENTRAL SCHOOLS SERVICES**

Central schools services funding in 2022-23 will increase by 2% for the ongoing responsibilities that local authorities continue to have for all schools.

Name and contact details

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Appendix A

Table 1

2021/2022 National Funding Formula (NFF)		
Factors	Primary	Secondary
AWPU Primary	£3,123.00	
AWPU KS3		£4,404.00
AWPU KS4		£4,963.00
Dep Ever 6	£575.00	£840.00
Dep FSM	£460.00	£460.00
IDACI Band F	£215.00	£310.00
IDACI Band E	£260.00	£415.00
IDACI Band D	£410.00	£580.00
IDACI Band C	£445.00	£630.00
IDACI Band B	£475.00	£680.00
IDACI Band A	£620.00	£865.00
LPA	£1,095.00	£1,660.00
EAL 3	£550.00	£1,485.00
Lump sum	£117,800.00	£117,800.00

Table 2

2021/2022 Rotherham Funding Formula		
Factors	Primary	Secondary
AWPU Primary	£3,123.00	
AWPU KS3		£4,404.00
AWPU KS4		£4,963.00
Dep Ever 6	£575.00	£840.00
Dep FSM	£460.00	£460.00
IDACI Band F	£215.00	£310.00
IDACI Band E	£260.00	£415.00
IDACI Band D	£385.00	£535.00
IDACI Band C	£405.00	£560.00
IDACI Band B	£422.00	£590.00
IDACI Band A	£580.00	£790.00
LPA	£995.00	£1,560.00
EAL 3	£550.00	£1,485.00
Lump sum	£117,800.00	£117,800.00

Table 3

2022/2023 Indicative National Funding Formula (NFF)		
Factors	Primary	Secondary
AWPU Primary	£3,217.00	
AWPU KS3		£4,536.00
AWPU KS4		£5,112.00
Dep Ever 6	£590.00	£865.00
Dep FSM	£470.00	£470.00
IDACI Band F	£220.00	£320.00
IDACI Band E	£270.00	£425.00
IDACI Band D	£420.00	£595.00
IDACI Band C	£460.00	£650.00
IDACI Band B	£490.00	£700.00
IDACI Band A	£640.00	£890.00
LPA	£1,130.00	£1,710.00
EAL 3	£565.00	£1,530.00
Lump sum	£121,300.00	£121,300.00

<h1>BRIEFING</h1>	TO:	Schools Forum
	DATE:	17 September 2021
	LEAD OFFICER:	Ian Henderson HR Manager Assistant Chief Executive's 01709 822467
	TITLE:	Education Unions Facility Time

1. Background

- 1.1** There are several pieces of legislation which provide a legal obligation on employers to provide paid time off to elected trade union representatives from their employment to enable them to carry out trade union duties. These include the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1997.
- 1.2** The amount of secondment time granted to each education union in Rotherham is dependent upon the funds available from contributing Schools/Academies to the Facility Time Buyback Scheme. The funding received pays for the release of the union officials from their employing school. The amount of facility time available is reviewed and agreed each year and should the funding be reduced or increased, for example through variations in the number of schools contributing, the amount of seconded time off is reduced or increased accordingly.
- 1.3** Schools who decide not to “opt in” to the buyback scheme have a legal responsibility to fully train and accredit trade union representatives who would then be entitled to reasonable time off with pay to carry out trade union duties.
- 1.4** Over the past twelve months local trade union representatives have continued to provide advice to, support, and represent members in many maintained schools and academies across the borough. Union advice given in such a way, helps to clarify a member’s rights, entitlements, and can resolve a potential dispute without recourse to any school procedure and can prevent any unnecessary conflict/dispute in school. This type of work frequently prevents the escalation of a situation in a school and avoids possible disruption/additional cost to the school. ACAS estimate the annual cost (including management and resolution) for each individual involved in conflict at just under £3,000 (£2,939).
- 1.5** During the pandemic, trade unions, through engagement with the Local authority, have also enabled coherent and consistent messages to be communicated to colleagues in schools.
- 1.6** Following consultation with Schools Forum in October 2020, it was agreed that from April 2021 all Council maintained schools’ budget would be de-delegated to support the provision of trade union representatives in schools.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1** The teaching profession continues to be one of the most unionised professions in the country and consequently the recognised education unions in Rotherham represent over 99% of teachers in the borough.
- 2.2** The total facility time able to be funded from the buyback budget and afforded to the education unions currently equates to 1.2 FTE (6.25 days). This amount of facility time falls short of the normal industry practice of granting 1 day facility time per 1,000 members.
- 2.3** The NEU has 1348 members which would equate to 6.75 days facility time for that union if the above ratio was applied, half a day more than the total amount of time currently provided to the NEU, NASUWT, NAHT and ASCL combined. A total of 13 days facility time would be required to align to current union membership figures and a ratio of 1 day per 1,000 members.
- 2.4** Benchmarking has identified that Rotherham's per pupil charge is the lowest in the region, being less than half that of our nearest statistical comparator, Barnsley Council (table 1).

Table 1

Barnsley	£4.75 per pupil
Bradford	£5.26 per pupil
Doncaster	£10.14 per pupil
Kirklees	£5.72 per pupil
Leeds	£5.50 per pupil
Rotherham	£2.00 per pupil
Sheffield	£3.25 per pupil
Wakefield	£5.70 per pupil

- 2.5** To provide a more representative facility time to the education unions, to enable them to represent their members effectively, the per pupil rate could be increased in line with our statistical neighbours to provide a higher budget for the allocation.
- Option 1**
- 2.6** Maintain policy of increasing the per pupil charge by the rate of inflation. It is not recommended that this approach is taken as it fails to address the insufficient facility time required for schools to be adequately supported in employee relation issues in a timely manner by the unions.
- Option 2**
- 2.7** Increase the per pupil charge to £4.75 from 1 April 2022. This option would provide the budget required to increase the facility time allocation to representative levels, however schools will not have budgeted for such an increase and the pressure from the current pandemic has already put on school budgets it is not recommended that this approach is taken.
- Option 3**
- 2.8** The per pupil charge could be increased incrementally over the next 5 years by 55p over the normal inflationary price increase from 1 April 2022. This phased approach would allow schools to accommodate the increase into their medium to long term budget planning.

3. Key Actions and Timelines	
3.1	Prices for the April 2022 buyback are required to be set by the end of December 2021.
4. Recommendations	
4.1	Forum is asked to agree to consult schools on the 3 options contained within this report with the recommendation that the per pupil charge for the facility time buyback is increased in line with our statistical neighbours and this is achieved by the implementation of option 2 from 1 April 2022.