

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY 24 JUNE 2022**

In attendance:-

Deborah Ball (Treeton Primary (Academy) (in the Chair);
Lianne Camaish - Aspire
Pepe Di'Lasio - Head of Wales (Academy)
Dean Fenton, Head of ATE, CYPS
Barbel Gale – Governance Manager, RMBC (Clerk and Minute Taker)
Neil Hardwick – Head of Finance, CYPS
Nathan Heath – Assistant Director of Education, CYPS
David Naisbitt – Oakwood High (Academy)
Vera Njelic - Principal Finance Officer, RMBC
Kirsty Peart - Sitwell Infant (Maintained)
Colin Price – NEU Representative
Alan Richards – Secondary Governor
Sharon Stones – Head of Arnold Nursery and Children's Centre
Nevine Towers – Diocese of Sheffield
Pam Ward – Inclusion, CYPS
Amy Woodhead – Early Help and Family Engagement, RMBC

41. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.

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

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from:-

- Andy Krabbendam - Primary Academy representative
- Dom Curran – Aston (Academy)
- Angela McComb – Primary Maintained Governor
- Steve Scott - Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector Nursery representative
- Councillor Victoria Cusworth – Cabinet Member for CYPS
- Ian Henderson - H.R. Officer, RMBC

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were none.

44. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

Consideration was given to the minutes from the previous meeting held on 8th April 2022.

Agreed:- That the minutes be approved.

45. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES.

There were no matters arising.

46. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR (FROM SEPTEMBER, 2022)

Nominations are sought for the position of Chair of the Schools Forum to take up the role from the next academic year in September 2022.

No nominations were received, therefore, this item was deferred to the next meeting due to be held in September 2022.

47. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR (FROM SEPTEMBER, 2022)

Nominations are sought for the position of Vice Chair of the Schools Forum to take up the role from the next academic year in September 2022.

No nominations were received, therefore, this item was deferred to the next meeting due to be held in September 2022.

48. SAFETY VALVE BUDGET MONITORING

Consideration was given to the report presented by Nathan Heath, Assistant Director of Education, CYPS and Neil Hardwick, Head of Finance, CYPS where it was explained that the Council was included within the Dedicated Schools Grant 'High Needs Safety Valve' arrangement. Positive progress was being made with targets on track in all areas. The Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs were highlighted to ensure any plans offered mitigations. A meeting of the High Needs Sub-Group would be called before the end of term to develop a strategy for moving forward.

The DSG central reserve deficit had been increased to £21.37m. This was taking account of other balances in other DSG funding blocks including the pressures on high needs expenditure. However, during 2021/22 Rotherham was approved to enter the DfE's Safety Valve programme and received funding of £8.53m, reducing the DSG Centre Reserve deficit to £12.84m.

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

49. SEMH FREE SCHOOL UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report presented by Nathan Heath, Assistant Director of Education, which confirmed that a pre-Ofsted inspection had taken place on the site at Dinnington.

Work would be undertaken with the Department for Education (DfE) and the Academy Trust to ensure that all H,R, and Financial systems were in place. Plans were also being developed to assist students transferring to the new site.

It was clarified that the final adaptations were being carried out and would be completed within the next couple of weeks.

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

50. SEND GREEN PAPER OVERVIEW

Consideration was given to the report presented by Nathan Heath, Assistant Director of Education, which detailed the views of stakeholders collated to feed into the Council's response to the Green Paper. It was also noted that the Council was being supported by the DfE in order to outline the intentions of the strategic Safety Valve paper ensuring those intentions were evident in the Council's response to the Green Paper.

It was also confirmed that the first draft of the response could be shared with the School's Forum, which would be a high-level overview including headlines from place-based reviews.

The Forum were also informed that the DfE had invited Neil Hardwick to be part of a working group where he would be able to input both his views and those of the Forum.

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

51. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Consideration was given to the report presented by Neil Hardwick, Head of Finance, which provided an update on the National Funding Formula (NFF) Government Consultation Response along with the next steps. Sections 5.2 and 5.3 of the covering report outlined the main direction of travel, which indicated in respect of the transition to the direct NFF the response set out that from 2023/24 it was required that:-

- Local authorities to use all, and only, NFF factors in their local formulae.
- All local formulae factors to move at least 10% closer to the NFF, except where local formulae were already 'mirroring' the NFF.
- Local authorities to use the NFF definition for English as an Additional Language (EAL) factor.
- The approach to transition in subsequent years would depend on the impact in the first year.

It was also indicated that in respect of improvements to the schools NFF

the DfE set out that over the next year they would:-

- Consult on an approach to the split sites factor and PFI factor.
- In the second stage consultation:
 - Include proposals for a revised growth and falling rolls factor – and in some options which would allow a degree of local flexibility
 - Include proposals for an exceptional circumstances factor.

It was clarified that Rotherham was already following the requirements listed in section 5.2 of the report.

Agreed:- (1) That this information be received and the contents noted.

(2) That Forum Members ensure they make the schools/academies that they represent aware of this information.

52. 2021/2022 OUTTURN AND 2022/2023 FUNDING

Consideration was given to the report presented by Neil Hardwick, Head of Finance, referring to the 2021/22 outturn position of the dedicated schools grant (DSG). It was highlighted that reserves within maintained schools had increased and the number of schools with a deficit had reduced. The academies were in a similar position.

It was also confirmed that information on the updated DSG provision including the High Needs Block would be provided in September 2022.

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

(2) That the centrally retained early years balance be subject to change as this will be dependent on the early years adjustment for the Spring 2022 census count. Within the figures, an anticipated increase of £75k has been accounted for.

53. HR UPDATE RE TEACHERS PAY FOR 2022/23 ACADEMIC YEAR

Consideration was given to the report presented by Neil Hardwick, Head of Finance, which provided an update regarding the 2022/23 Teachers pay uplift and the current national position. The proposals identified a potential two year pay award for Teachers leading to a significant two-year increase for schools' budgets.

A further update could be provided at the September meeting, but would need to be taken account of in any future budget projections.

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

54. HEALTHY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME GRANT

The School's Forum received a presentation regarding the Holiday Activities and Food Programme. The presentation detailed the aims for the programme along with the funding available. Information was provided as to which school could promote the Healthy Holidays programme together with the benefits of becoming involved.

It was clarified that any child listed on the Free School Meals entitlement list was eligible for the programme. The available grant funding had not yet been maximised so there were opportunities for more schools to become involved. Any remaining funding not used by the end of the programme would be returned to Government.

In response it was explained that if a child did not qualify through the Free School Meals entitlement, they could still be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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

55. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

Members of the School's Forum considered aspects of the Forum's operation with the main points listed below:-

- Succession planning for the appointment of the new Chair and Vice-Chair would be discussed outside of the meeting.
- There was a consensus that holding the Forum meetings in person was more beneficial.
- The constitution and membership of the Forum would be re-visited.
- The role of the Forum would be promoted.
- The September meeting would be held at Rockingham.

Agreed:- (1) That the points above be received and the contents noted.

(2) That arrangements be made for the next meeting to be held at Rockingham Professional Development Centre.

56. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Agreed:- (1) That the next meeting of the Schools' Forum take place on a virtual basis on Friday, 16th September, 2022 at 8.30 a.m. at Rockingham Professional Development Centre.

(2) That the dates of future meetings of the Rotherham School Forum at 8.30 a.m. be noted:-

Friday, 18th November, 2022

Friday, 13th January, 2023

Friday, 28th April, 2023