

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY 28 MARCH 2025**

In Attendance:

Mark Windle – Badsley Primary (Primary Maintained) (in the Chair)
Chris Eccles – Oakwood (Academy)
Lynsey Hadfield - Executive Head, Rawmarsh & Arnold Nursery & Children's Centre
David Horrigan – Maltby Learning Trust (Primary Academy)
Lee Morritt – Aspire
Colin Price – NEU Representative
Mark Ryan – RNN Group
Karen Smith - Nexus MAT (Special Academy)
Nathan Williams – Roughwood Primary (Primary Academy)

Mark Cummins, SEND Project Lead, CYPS
Louise Keith – Principal Finance Officer, CYPS
Helen Sweaton – Joint Assistant Director of Commissioning and Performance, CYPS
Cary-Anne Sykes – Head of Service (SEND)
Pam Ward – Head of Service, Education, CYPS
Sarah Whitby – Head of Service – Access to Education
Angela Kemp – Secretary to the Rotherham Schools Forum

Observers:

John Barnett – Headteacher - Rawmarsh Thorogate School
Viktoriya Rentyuk – Business Support Assistant, Democratic Services, RMBC

Apologies were received from:

Joshua Amahwe – Head of Finance, CYPS
Niall Devlin – Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion
Dr Sipra Deb – Wickersley Nursery (PVI Nursery)
Lisa McCall – Wales High School
Lewis Moat – GMB Representative
Alan Richards – Wickesley Partnership Trust Academy Governor
Steve Scott – Happy Kids (PVI Nursery)
Sacha Schofield – Kelford School Special Academy Governor
Nevine Towers - Head of Business and Operations (Primary Academy)

58. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

60. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:

- That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2025 were agreed and approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

61. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

No matters arising arose during the consideration of the previous meeting minutes.

62. MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION OF THE ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS FORUM (STANDING ITEM)

Consideration was given to the membership and constitution of the Schools' Forum and suggested changes were put forward for approval.

Resolved:

- That the appointment of John Barnett as a maintained Primary School Headteacher representative for a term of 3 years be agreed.
- That the appointment of Kate Blythe as a maintained Primary School Headteacher representative for a term of 3 years be agreed.
- That the appointment of Paul Higginbottom as a Primary Academy representative for a term of 3 years be agreed.
- That the appointment of Carol Brookes as a substitute attendee for Lisa McCall, Secondary Academy representative be agreed.
- That the removal of Phil Davies, Secondary Academy representative be agreed.
- That the removal of David Sutton, Academy Governor representative be agreed.

63. DEDICATED SCHOOL GRANT (DSG) AND SCHOOLS BUDGETS 2024-25 LATEST POSITION

The Principal Finance Officer presented a report on the latest position of the schools' budget for 2024/25 and commented on the following:

- The latest confirmed DSG funding allocation position which remained unchanged from the last reported position to Forum on 30th January 2025.

- The de-delegated budgets position which remained on track to spend to budget, with the exception of the Schools in Financial Difficulty which had a small over-commitment forecasted for the year.
- The Central block position which remained within budget.
- The latest forecasted position for the High Needs Block which had increased from the last reported position to Forum on 30th January 2025 and the factors that were attributable to the cost pressure in this area.
- The latest forecasted position for the Early Years Block and the factors that were attributable to the cost pressure in this area.
- The local authority maintained delegated school budget position, which had seen a positive shift due to changes to the nursery and secondary budgets that were partially offset by a negative shift in primary school budgets noting that the reduction in primary school budget balances had been largely driven by the recent conversion of two schools.
- The February budget monitoring submissions which indicated a decrease in net surplus compared to the 2023/24 outturn position reflective of the increased financial pressures faced by schools as well as the in year academy conversions.
- The latest position of those schools operating with licensed deficits which continued to be closely monitored.
- The associated timescales for maintained schools to submit their budget plans covering a three-year period from 2025-26 to 2027-28.
- The funding arrangements for the National Insurance Contributions (NICs) grant for mainstream schools in 2025/26 noting that for 2026-27 the funding for mainstream primary and secondary schools would be incorporated into the schools national funding formula (NFF). Separate national base rates would apply for each age range in respect of the Early Years NICs grant (as set out in the presented report).
- Accessibility of the National Insurance Contributions (NICs) grant calculator tool for mainstream schools.
- The provisional 2025-26 Pupil Premium Grant allocation for Rotherham, noting that a further increase was expected next year as a result of the additional pupils identified through the Free School Meals exercise recently undertaken.

Resolved:

- **That the Schools Forum note the latest published DSG funding for schools for the 2024/25 financial year.**
- **That the Schools Forum note the financial positions of Rotherham's maintained schools and the identified financial risks against the schools DSG budgets for the year.**

64. HIGH NEEDS BUDGET AND FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS 2024/25

Form Members agreed to the deferral of this item to the next scheduled meeting.

65. SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN

Forum Members reviewed the Forward Plan circulated with the agenda pack and confirmed no additions or amendments were required.

Resolved:

- **That the Forward Plan be noted.**

66. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other urgent business items raised.

The Chair of the Forum concluded business and thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.