

Rotherham Schools Forum

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham

Date: Friday, 11 December 2009

Time: 8.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. Introductions
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 9th October 2009 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 9)
4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes
5. BSF Funding
6. Early Years Single Funding Formula - Consultation Feedback (herewith) (Pages 10 - 23)
7. Free School Meals
8. Improving Economies and Efficiencies in Schools Action Plan (herewith) (Pages 24 - 30)
9. DCSF 'OPEN' Procurement System
10. Any Other Business
11. Date and Time of Next Meeting
- 22nd January 2010 at 8.30 am at Bailey House, Rawmarsh Road, Rotherham

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS FORUM
FRIDAY, 9TH OCTOBER, 2009**

Present: Mr G Jackson, Mr M Hall, Mr L Hall, Mr P Hawkrige, Ms S Jackson, Ms J Henderson, Mr M Firth, Mrs K Borthwick, Mr I Swan, Ms R Johnson, Mrs J Thacker, Ms V Njegic, Mrs J Robertson, Mr D Ashmore, Mr G Sinclair, Ms A Kitchen and Mrs M Hague.

52. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Agreed:- That Geoff Jackson be elected as Chairman of the Schools Forum.

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Ms J Fearnley, Mr G Gillard, Mr R Heritage, Ms A Jones, Ms C Kinsella and Rev A Wood.

54. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 26TH JUNE, 2009

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum held on 26th June 2009 be approved as a correct record.

55. LSC FUNDING AND UPDATE

Mike Firth (LSC) circulated the following documents:

- Identifying Effective Practice in Raising Young People's Aspirations
- Timetable for the involvement of Local Authorities (LAs) Sub-Regional Groupings (SRGs) and Regional Planning Groups (RPGs) in the 2009/10 Planning and Business Cycles for 2010/11 Academic Year –
- Local Area Statements of Need 2009-10

The timetable set out key dates as follows:-

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Local Area Statements of Need | October 2009 |
| • Regional Strategic Analysis | September/October 2009 |
| • Regional Priorities | September/October 2009 |
| • National Statement of Priorities Published | November 2009 |
| • Regional Commissioning Statement For Young People's Learning | November 2009 |
| • Provider Briefings 2009 | November/December |
| • Provider Dialogue | October 09 – February 10 |
| • National Moderation of exceptional | |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Cases | December 2009 |
| • Issue of Consolidated/sustainable Baseline | January 2010 |
| • Negotiated Growth Allocations issued | January 2010 |
| • Issuing of Invitations to Tender | January 2010 |
| • Shadow Local Commissioning Plan | February 2010 |
| • Regional/National Moderation | February 2010 |
| • Issue of final allocations | March 2010 |
| • Formal Notices to Improve (NTIs) Issued | March 2010 |

The Local Area Statements of Need document set out guidance for the preparation of the Local Area Statements of Need for 14-19 commissioning priorities. The key considerations were:-

- To relate only to 14-19 activity
- To remember that they are summary statements as opposed to formal plans
- To follow the pro forma provided
- To remember that they are an output of the dialogue, between Local 16-19 Teams and LAs/14-19 Partnerships, to agree the key conclusions from the LSC 14-19 Data Pack and associated analysis for each LA area within the context of the LA 14-19 Plan.

Each Statements of Need should include:-

- 16-18 Commissioning Priorities
- Key conclusions from data analysis and impact on commissioning priorities
- Infrastructure changes
- Travel to Learn
- Historical learner number statement

A question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised:-

- Mike Firth explained that due to overall falls in pupil numbers, reductions were applied at a national level to funding. Rotherham figures however were up on 2008 and therefore presented funding issues. He informed the Forum that there were 'unfunded' places in 2008. It was noted that consolidated baseline allocations to providers do not include growth and it was uncertain whether additional funding would be available to meet any growth needs.
- Mike Firth alluded to 'competitions' run by the LSC for providers to respond to, in order to meet and deliver specific identified local needs.
- Issues regarding the RCAT build were raised. Graham Sinclair/Karen Borthwick informed the Forum that the 14-19 offer to students would not be disadvantaged by the RCAT building issues

and overall provision addressed through the TRL vision and strategy.

- Peter Hawkrige questioned progress on a local University. Joyce Thacker was leading on this with John Healey MP and in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University. A proposal was being prepared for 5th December.

Agreed:- That the information be noted and that a further update be given at the meeting in January 2010.

56. TRANSFORMING ROTHERHAM LEARNING

Graham Sinclair, Programme Director – BSF presented the submitted report in relation to Building Schools for the Future Strategy for Change Part 2.

The defining principles that have informed the Local Authority's work since 2006 would continue to drive BSF. These were:-

- We are all responsible for all Rotherham's children and young people
- All Rotherham learners will achieve; no one will be left behind
- Learning is the core business: investment, policy and strategy must be driven by opportunities for learners
- Learning communities will be rooted in and responsive to the needs of local people

The consultation feedback identified four main determinants for the underperformance of children and young people over time;

- The failure to acquire language early
- Underdeveloped literacy skills
- Inadequate provision for vulnerable learners
- 'Stuck' families

The collective response of these principles and findings centre upon developing 16 Learning Communities across the Borough that will provide coherent and progressive pathways for each and every learner.

In accordance with the stated principles, all of the learning communities will be challenged to build a partnership that better connects primary, secondary and special schools with children's centres, colleges, other providers and users to ensure broad outcomes are delivered in a local context. Life chances will be transformed by determining partnerships designed to enable early intervention, improve literacy and numeracy and forge integrated approaches to moving 'stuck' children and families.

The SEN Specialist Schools programme and BSF would be vital elements in these partnerships, building both capacity and co-located learning environments. This approach would provide a continuum of provision

extending from a child and family's local primary or secondary school, to an enhanced provision within the local area, and to a specialist facility within the Local Authority. The outcomes of this element of TRL would include improved parental preference, a more cohesive and tolerant community, improved student outcomes and post 16 progression rates and reduced permanent exclusions. Through these and allied developments RMBC are determined to:

- Ensure Learning Communities are places where people want to work and learn, providing greater personalisation, choice and personalised learning spaces designed to raise levels of attainment and engagement at all ages
- Create a seamless 0-19 learning pathway with more effective and engaging transition programmes, including those to Higher Education. Our aspiration is to enable 100% positive progression.
- Support parents, schools and communities to raise aspirations, particularly in areas of deeply embedded disadvantage
- Provide for comprehensive, integrated childcare and education with local delivery points for inter-agency family support ensuring success for all of our learners including the most vulnerable
- Encourage more local people to become involved in learning, reducing numbers of working age adults lacking essential skills and improving employability.
- Develop comprehensive sport, leisure and community learning provision.

The effective delivery of these would necessitate changes to strategy and practice at all levels with our operations:- LA level; Learning Community level; School level; Staff and Student level.

Graham Sinclair reported that positive feedback had been received from Partnerships For Schools (PfS) and unconditional approval expected for the Authority to progress to the Outline Business Case (OBC), the next stage in the process.

A concern was raised that as a result of new requirements on schools, some headteachers are reducing the amount of CPD for teachers. Confirmation was given that a key strand in the strategy was workforce development and School Improvement Partners would continue to work with schools to ensure good professional development for all staff.

A full copy of the Strategy for Change Part 2 is available on the Council website.

<http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/graphics/Learning>

Resolved:- That the content of the report be noted and that copies of the SFC Part 2 be sent to Forum Members.

Joanne Robertson, Finance Manager circulated a report relating to the Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn for 2008/09 and budget for 2009/10. She confirmed the figures as follows:-

| | |
|--|--------------|
| The final DSG for 2008/09 was | £167,663,000 |
| Brought forward from 2007/08 | £1,101,000 |
| Carry forward to 2009.10 agreed in advance | £357,000 |
| Agreed budget for 2008/09 | £168,407,000 |
| Carry forward to 2009/10 | £382,000 |
| Final DSG for 2009/10 | £170,154,000 |
| Brought forward from 2008/09 | £382,000 |
| Agreed budget for 2009/10 | £170,536,000 |

Agreed:- That the grant outturn for 2008/09 and the budget for 2009/10 be noted.

58. SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS SERVICE

Graham Sinclair circulated a report which set out the context and request for further contribution from the Schools Budget towards the School Effectiveness Service (SES). This was in order to focus on raising the attainment of our children and young people, especially in the primary phase.

It was noted that the Schools Forum had already supported the SES with £100,000 from 2007/08, which had enabled the service to work in partnership with all schools, but with a concentration on secondary, contributing to the GCSE success of this summer. The service had used the funding to pay for existing expertise in both the secondary and primary phases so that it could be shared with their peers, thus enabling weaker areas to become stronger.

In addition to the link with the secondary area there was a causal link between the SES and actual school improvement. This relationship was currently demonstrable in the following areas:-

- i. The very low Ofsted category of concern profile across all three Phses in relation to national averages and Statistical Neighbours
- ii. The strong 'Outstanding' profile in all three Phases against national and Statistical Neighbours averages
- iii. Marked improvement in the performance of schools/groups of schools targeted by SES intervention programmes over successive years, eg Improving Schools Programme (ISP), Junior Schools

- programme and Primary Partnership Programme
- iv. External evaluations of SES by National Strategies, Department for Children, Schools and Families, National College for School Leadership and the recent review by Children First

Alongside this success, all schools had signed up to the defining principles of Transforming Rotherham Learning, the strategy behind the aim to create 16, 0-19 Learning Communities across the borough.

Funding Context

School improvement, as measured by the 2009/10 Section 52 benchmark figures was in the lower quartile of spending compared to statistical neighbours, metropolitan authorities and England, which was £35 per pupil compared to £69, £67 and £64 respectively. Equally, the percentage of the Total Schools Budget was well above average (91.9% compared to 89.3% for statistical neighbours, 89% for mets and 87.6% for England.

This reflected the LA's current and historical strategy in delegating a significant proportion of funding to schools so that prevention and early intervention work could take place with children in the front line, and consequently to have fairly lean central services.

Funding Requests

Against the background of School Improvement, TRL and the funding context, the Schools Forum was requested to agree to a contribution of £400,000 from their budget for a Senior Adviser, 2 Primary Consultants, to increase the Primary Consultant Headteacher workforce to 4.0 FTE and support a FTE Headteacher Consultant with the TRL/BSF team.

The funding would be used from 1st April 2010 and would secure:

- The resources to mount and sustain intervention programmes across a greater number of primary schools when capacity constraints in SES did not allow the service to drive higher standards and attainment across the broad middle tier of schools.
- Support the Assistant Head of School Effectiveness Vulnerable Groups in establishing coherent and comprehensive provision in an area where the LA, over recent years, had had significant difficulties. This required driving the integration of Special Education in TRL, securing the new behavioural provision in Secondary and building the equivalent in Primary, reconfiguring Learning Support and developing high profile programmes for Ethnic Minority Achievement and Looked after Children.
- The work of TRL, ensuring the SES was contributing to the creation of Learning Communities and all of the attendant key issues within this major strategy, from early years to post 16
- Sustain the strategic partnerships with serving Headteachers and

lending schools which were expected by '21st Schools' and which were a defining element of the Learning without Limits mission.

- A corporate and co-ordinated response to Ethnic Minority Achievement/English as an additional language, a complex and volatile area of both learning needs and community cohesion whose scale and scope were beyond SES working in isolation,

The SES had remodelled its workforce to begin to tackle all of the above but, because of lack of resources, was still well short of where schools needed the LA to be. If this targeted investment was agreed from April 2010m the LA and schools would be able to build on the gains made from 2007/08 and accelerate the improvement cycle.

Members of the group agreed that this would be an effective use of money but expressed concerns about there being little investment made into youth services. Confirmation was given that this issue was being reviewed. Provision had changed over the years and a great deal of excellent work was being done in this area.

It was agreed that an evaluation of the impact of the additional investment in SES, would be undertaken during 2011/12 and reported back accordingly.

Agreed:- That the Schools Forum agree to the contribution of £400,000 from the Schools Budget towards the Schools Effectiveness Service.

59. EARLY YEARS SINGLE FUNDING FORMULA

David Ashmore gave an update on the position relating to the Early Years Formula Funding Group.

Meetings had been held in July and September and a further meetings scheduled to take place each month until January 2010.

The following issues were discussed:-

- The analysis of provider costs undertaken for all early years providers both in the maintained sector and PVI sector.
- Details of how each sector was currently funded and the differences between each.
- The process by which pupil counts were conducted and the budget adjustments that were made in the PVI sector which contrasts to that in the maintained sector.
- The two model variants from the DCSF guidance 'Implementation of a single formula for early years'
- Pilot Authority approaches that had implemented formula changes in 2008/09.
- The structure of the formula as recommended by DCSF which involved a base rate per pupil for each hour of attendance plus consideration of a number of supplemental factors ie deprivation

quality, flexibility, SEN; Sustainability; Training; Rates/Rents; Premises.

- It was noted that the formula proposed by the Early Years Formula Funding Group (EYFFG) for Rotherham was:- Base Rate (variable between PVI and Maintained) plus supplements for Deprivation and Quality.
- The deprivation indicator should be measured against the child and not the setting as settings in deprived areas may draw children from more affluent backgrounds and equally settings in more affluent areas may attract children from deprived backgrounds. It was agreed that the IMD of the child be used as the measure for deprivation. This brought a level of consistency with the schools formula, although not being identical.
- Two potential quality indicators had been discussed:- Ofsted rating and progress towards achievement of the 'Quality in Action' standard.

Consultation with providers on the recommendations of the EYFFG would be undertaken through presentations to the School Cluster Reps Group, the Early Years Working Group and a questionnaire to all providers.

Agreed:- That the information be noted and that progress be reported to the next meeting of the Schools Forum.

60. RESPONSE ON CONSULTATION ON SCHOOLS FORUMS REGULATIONS 2009

Further to minute number 49 of the previous meeting, David Ashmore presented his response to the Schools Forums (England) Regulations Consultation.

Agreed:- That the response be noted.

61. REPORTS FROM THE AUDIT COMMISSION ON IMPROVING ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY IN SCHOOLS 'VALUABLE LESSONS'

David Ashmore presented the report from the Audit Commission on Improving economy and efficiency in schools, a Local Government summary which was published in July 2009. The summary drew attention to:-

- Education expenditure per pupil has increased by two thirds in a decade
- Schools have weak incentives to be economical and efficient
- Schools could save over £400 million through better procurements alone
- Workforce deployment is the most important decision in schools and must be undertaken with economy and efficiency in mind
- Many schools have excessive balances, of which over £500 million

could be released nationally

- There are many ways schools can save money without adversely affecting children's education

It was noted that the Audit Commission had published a series of guides for headteachers, governors and council staff to help encourage a stronger emphasis on economy and efficiency in schools. It was agreed that these be reviewed and an action plan drawn up. This would be brought to the meeting in December for further consideration.

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

(2) That an action plan be drawn up and presented at the next meeting in December 2009.

62. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting be held on Friday 11th December 2009 at 8.30 am at Rotherham Town Hall.

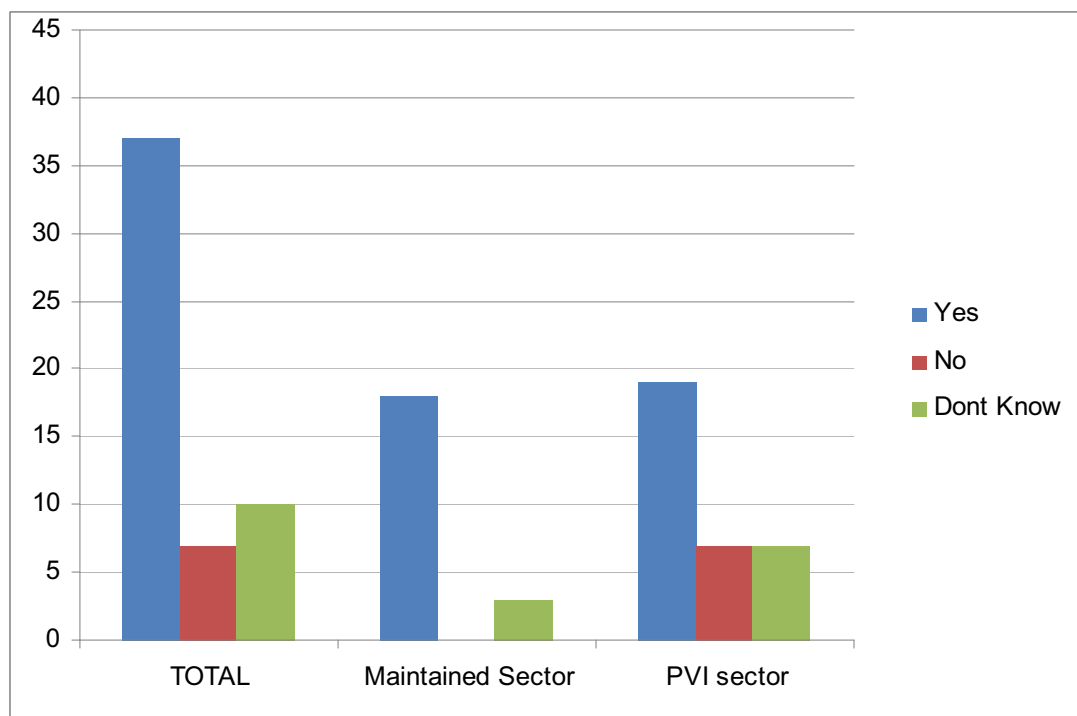
To note: that meetings from January onwards would be held in Bailey House whilst the Town Hall refurbishment takes place.

**Early Years Single Funding Formula
Consultation Questionnaire Response Summary
November 2009**

Total number of returns: 54
Maintained Sector: 21 (39%)
PVI Sector: 33 (61%)

Q1. Do you agree with the three differential base rates for each of the types of setting?

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|-------------------|-----|----|------------|
| TOTAL | 37 | 7 | 10 |
| Maintained Sector | 18 | 0 | 3 |
| PVI sector | 19 | 7 | 7 |



Maintained

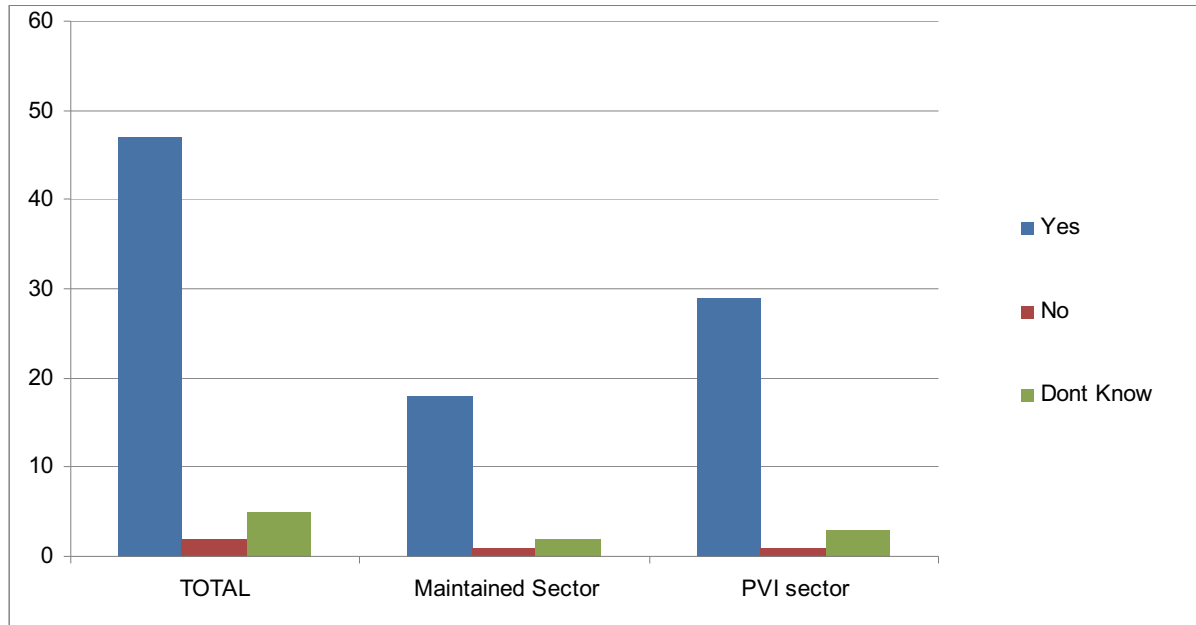
- Different pay scales should be reflected

PVI

- The process should be open and honest. Has the fact that staff costs in PVI are limited by income – qualified staff in PVI earn less because of income.
- If we are all working to EYFS and have the same quality of care, it shouldn't be different
- Provided it is truly cost reflective
- If all settings work to EYFS should all get same base rate – this is a divisive move
- Would need to know how the base rates have been reached
- I am concerned about settings that have satisfactory Ofsted ratings who are involved in projects with the LA to improve practice, losing out due to a lower rating than others.
- We are all working to the same standards and all have same quality of care.

Q2. Do you agree that the mandatory factor for deprivation should be measured against children attending a setting as opposed to the geographic location of the setting itself?

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|-------------------|-----|----|------------|
| TOTAL | 47 | 2 | 5 |
| Maintained Sector | 18 | 1 | 2 |
| PVI sector | 29 | 1 | 3 |



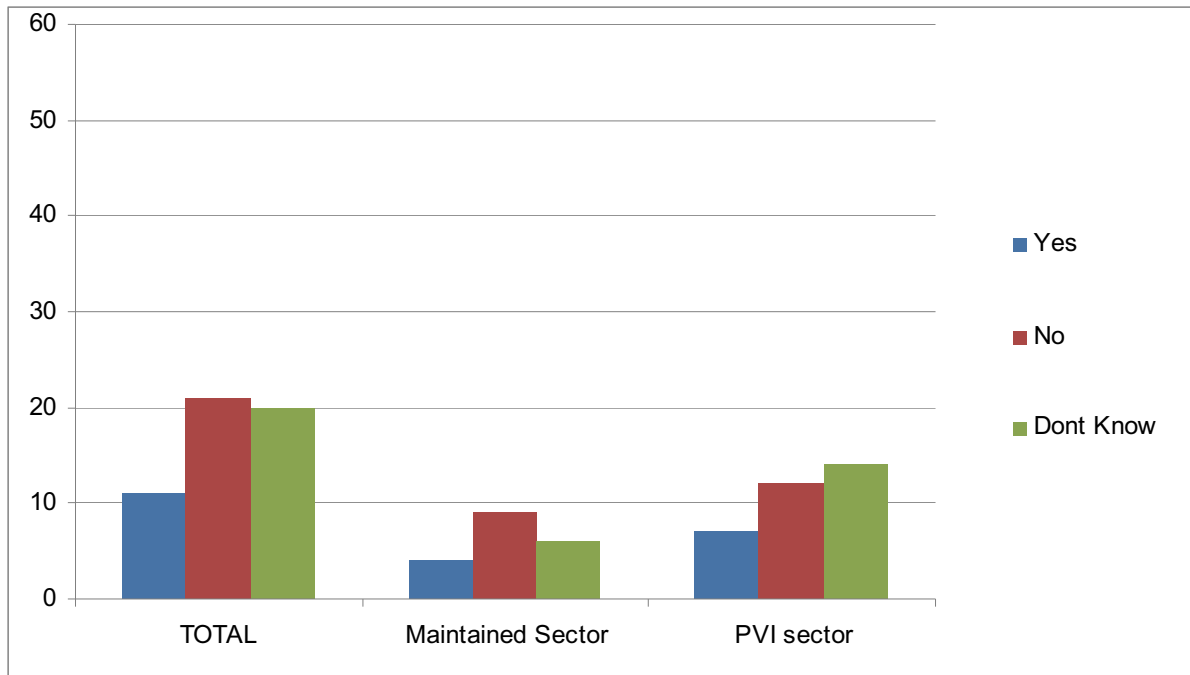
Maintained

PVI

- Don't like the post code lottery
- Our setting is not in a deprived area but this should not matter as the funding should be the same
- All children should receive the best start in life... all families have different financial circumstances and we shouldn't have to ask parents this information.
- We get a lot of non-funded children not being able to afford fees , so if we had more per child funded, it would help with sustainability

Q3. Do you foresee any issues with using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) to measure the relative deprivation of children attending settings/schools to determine a deprivation rate?

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|-------------------|-----|----|------------|
| TOTAL | 11 | 21 | 20 |
| Maintained Sector | 4 | 9 | 6 |
| PVI sector | 7 | 12 | 14 |



Maintained

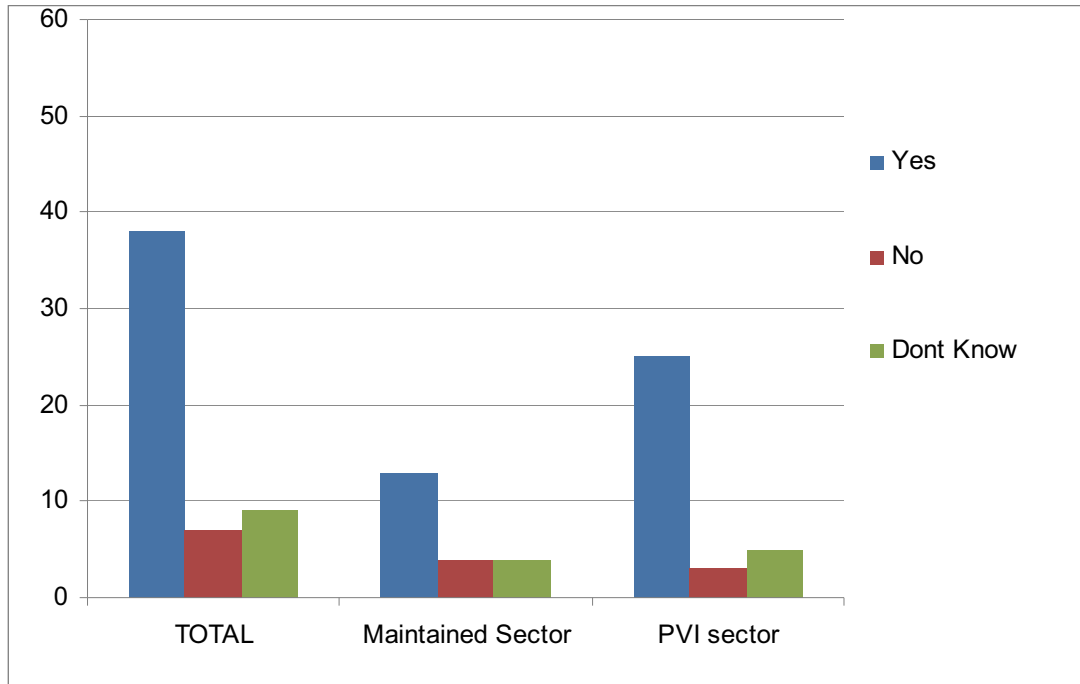
- There may be variations in income annually owing to particular cohorts – faith schools.
- Is all the data available for FS1
- Setting in deprived area but affluent children attend

PVI

- Children from deprived areas can have a rich home learning environment and vice versa
- Don't understand the question
- Parents who may have recently lost their jobs should not have to produce documents showing they are on low incomes
- If worked out by post code not so much
- A child's circumstances can change rapidly – there can also be pockets of deprivation in comfortable postcodes.
- Settings on the border of a deprived area may get children from the deprived area but not actually have an address that is in the deprived area.
- Some families may be overlooked due to them living in a 'good' postcode area – there are always exceptions.

Q4. Do you agree that a 'quality' factor be included within the formula in accordance with DCSF recommendations?

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|-------------------|-----|----|------------|
| TOTAL | 38 | 7 | 9 |
| Maintained Sector | 13 | 4 | 4 |
| PVI sector | 25 | 3 | 5 |



Maintained

- Settings that are more in need of support require additional funding
- Good progress can be made with pupils but age related expectations still not met i.e. pupils arrive 'below' par
- Wider indicator than Ofsted judgements required as these can last up to 6 years
- Quality settings can be a historical judgement
- Settings in different areas may be at a disadvantage
- May be counter productive – should have outreach to support those not meeting standards
- ECAT should be considered also
- Quality judgements based on outcomes do not take enough account of entry levels, mobility and EAL – all can have negative impact in terms of Ofsted judgements. A school with relative low attainment may also be making good progress.
- Other national quality schemes should be considered – Quality Mark; Investors in Pupils
- Ofsted have a lot of variations – no consistency

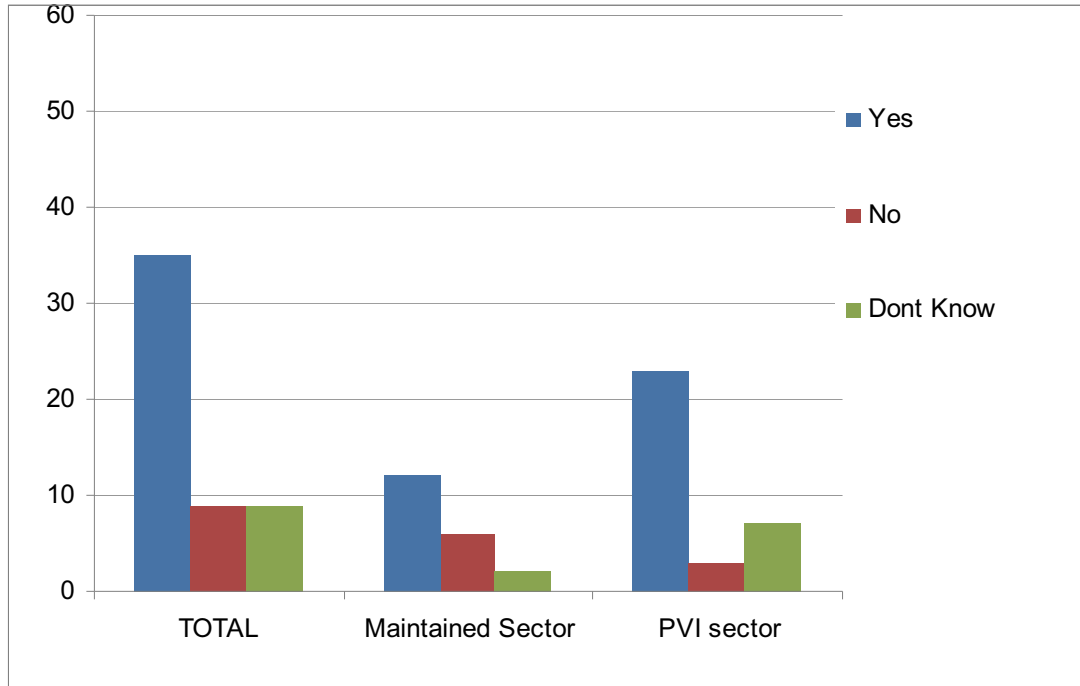
PVI

- Yes but against Ofsted judgement and staff training/qualifications
- If a nursery is of poor quality, it is usually because of lack of funds – they should receive more not less.
- It is difficult to meet the increase number of varying quality indicators in a small setting with a small number of staff and funding.
- It is unfair to settings over the sector – Children's Centres are going to be rewarded when they are staffed differently and in private sector this is not always achievable.

Q5. If a 'quality' factor were to be included within the formula, do you agree with the use of the following indicators?

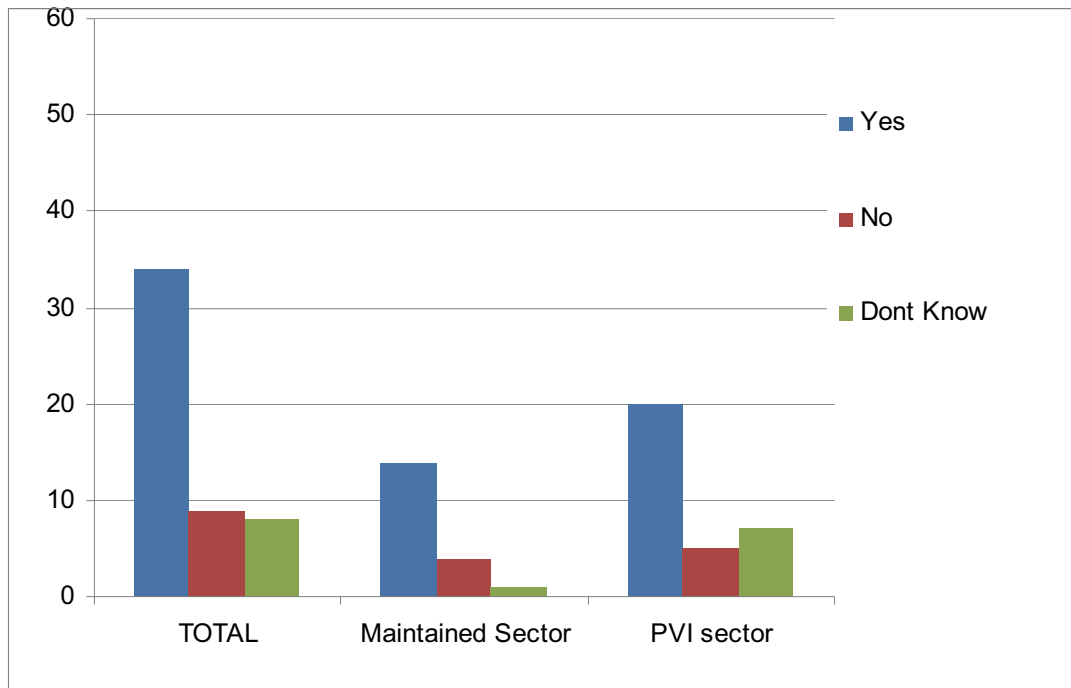
Ofsted Judgement in the Foundation Stage?

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|-------------------|-----|----|------------|
| TOTAL | 35 | 9 | 9 |
| Maintained Sector | 12 | 6 | 2 |
| PVI sector | 23 | 3 | 7 |



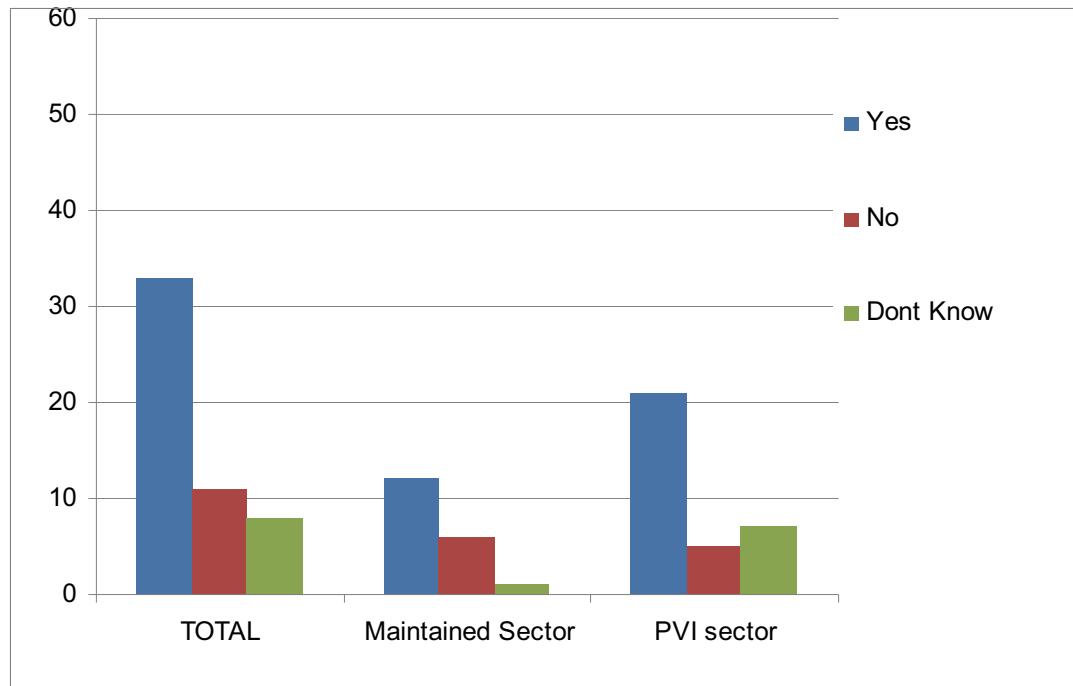
Commitment towards the Quality in Action Scheme?

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|-------------------|-----|----|------------|
| TOTAL | 34 | 9 | 8 |
| Maintained Sector | 14 | 4 | 1 |
| PVI sector | 20 | 5 | 7 |



Achievement of the Quality in Action Scheme?

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|-------------------|-----|----|------------|
| TOTAL | 33 | 11 | 8 |
| Maintained Sector | 12 | 6 | 1 |
| PVI sector | 21 | 5 | 7 |

**Maintained**

- Ofsted inspection judgements not consistent
- Ofsted new regime a concern
- Ofsted judgement should be taken on its entirety rather than on a key stage
- Ofsted – 3 years between judgements

- QIA is self-assessment so room for falsifying
- QIA needs clarifying
- QIA toolkit time consuming
- QIA onerous – quality mark fairer that more settings could achieve
- QIA appropriate for PVI; more rigorous Ofsted inspection for Maintained schools
- Use Early years Quality Mark too

- Use a selection of Quality schemes
- SIP to judge
- Positive external judgements may precede attainment

PVI

- Quality - Maybe other awards such as Basic Skills
- Quality – this should include Basic Skills Quality Mark

- Ofsted – is a snapshot indicator lasting ½ day over a 3 year cycle
- Ofsted – judgements have previously been made on the funded children – doesn't show a true judgement of the practice – Quality Marks show this.
- Ofsted – what if a setting is not Ofsted registered but registered with ISI
- Ofsted – is a national body applying national standards – settings can have good Ofsted grades and be committed to quality without going through QIA

- QIA – a commitment is very vague – this should be time bound as a minimum otherwise why bother?
- QIA – length of time to achieve

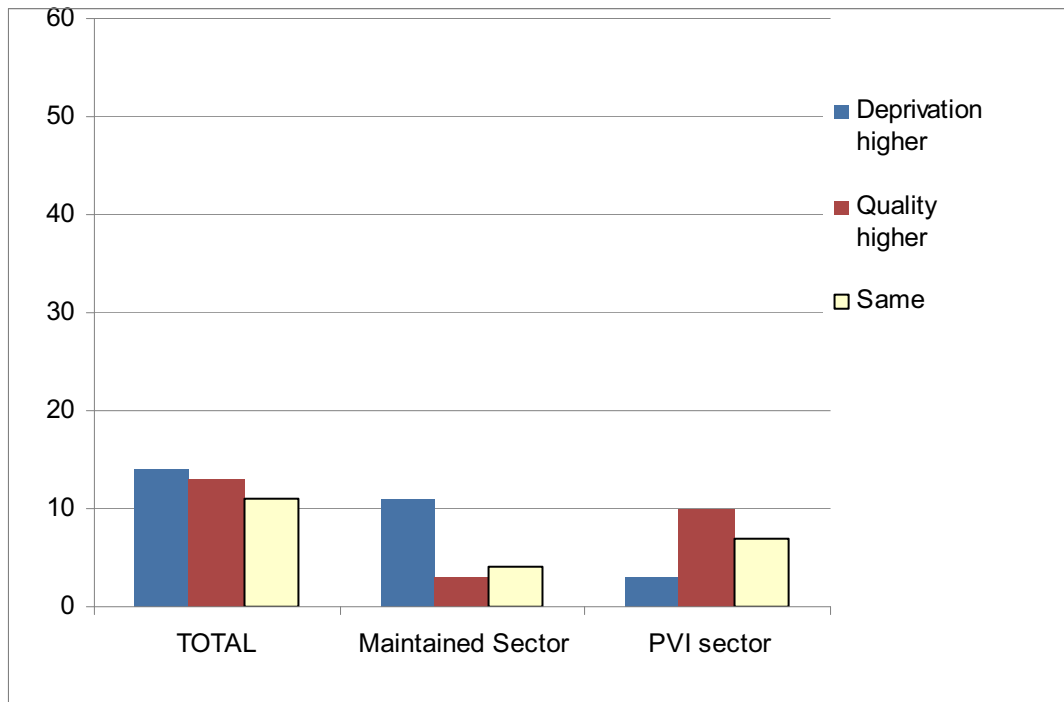
- Staff are gaining higher qualifications to provide higher quality care/education
- Staff qualification levels

- Every setting should be of good quality but the judgement should take into account happy parents and children

- Not achievable by all – not a true formula

Q6. If a 'quality' factor were to be included within the formula, should it be weighted more than deprivation, less than deprivation or about the same?

| | Deprivation higher | Quality higher | Same |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|------|
| TOTAL | 14 | 13 | 11 |
| Maintained Sector | 11 | 3 | 4 |
| PVI sector | 3 | 10 | 7 |



Maintained

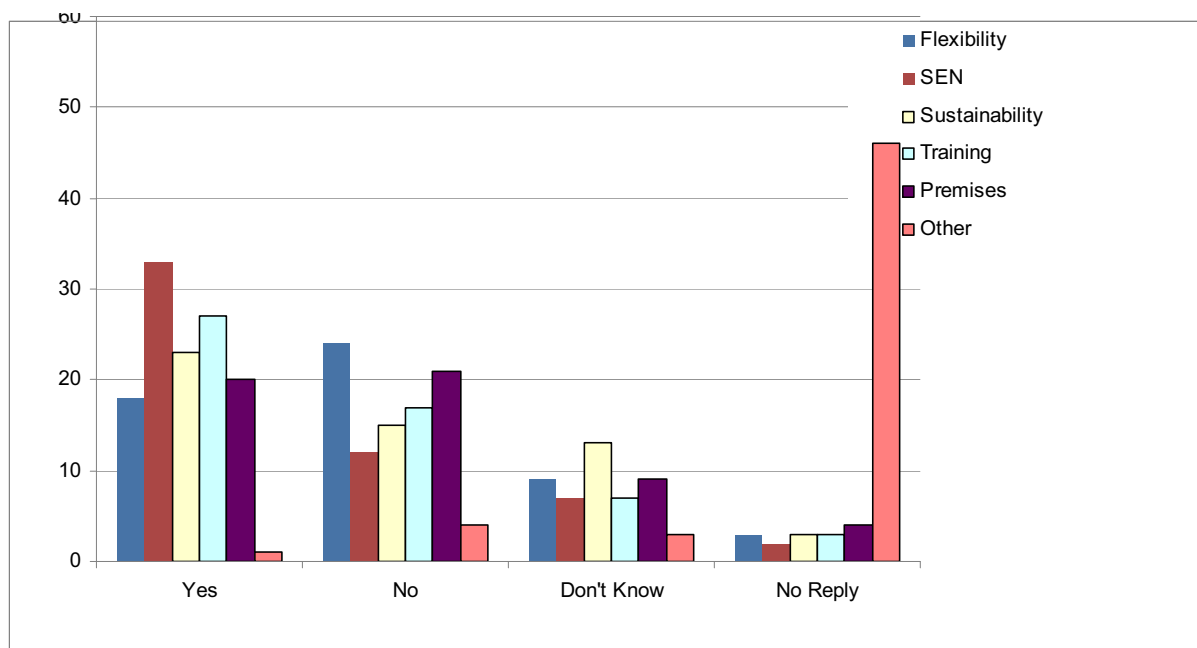
- Quality higher – all children should reach their potential and at least average profile scores

PVI

- It costs more to put quality into the setting
- We should all be working towards quality practice
- Quality should be consistent whether in a deprived area or not
- Better quality settings should improve the outcomes for identified deprivation

Q7. Do you feel strongly that any of the other factors put forward by the DCSF for consideration, should be included in Rotherham's formula?

| | Flexibility | SEN | Sustainability | Training | Premises | Other |
|------------------|-------------|-----|----------------|----------|----------|-------|
| Yes | 18 | 33 | 23 | 27 | 20 | 1 |
| No | 24 | 12 | 15 | 17 | 21 | 4 |
| Don't Know | 9 | 7 | 13 | 7 | 9 | 3 |
| No Reply | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 46 |
| | | | | | | |
| Maint Yes | 5 | 15 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 0 |
| Maint No | 10 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 3 |
| Maint Don't Know | 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| Maint No Reply | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 17 |
| | | | | | | |
| PVI Yes | 13 | 18 | 16 | 19 | 13 | 1 |
| PVI No | 14 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 1 |
| PVI Don't Know | 4 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| PVI No Reply | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 29 |



Maintained

- SEN – additional staffing costs
- SEN – high number of pupils should attract funding
- SEN – training linked to
- SEN to be included if Inclusion Grant to be discontinued

- Flexibility – full provision limits ability to provide flexibility
- Flexibility – provides a better balance of provision to parents/carers

- Premises conditions – costs
- Premises – rest areas needed

PVI

- To provide quality care we feel all the above need to be included
- Diversity, sustainability, well qualified staff.... Is a must to deliver good EY education and should be rewarded
- Ensures flexibility and inclusion for everyone... hope it doesn't include more paper work

- Flexibility definitely – parents are offered choice and needs are met
- Flexibility – if settings are meeting parents needs flexibly this needs reflecting
- Flexibility – 15 hours entitlement demands flexibility and this should be rewarded
- Depending on how a parent wishes to use the hours, it could have an effect on sustainability

- SEN – children may need differentiation of activities/resources at a cost
- SEN – may require different activities/resources
- SEN – higher staffing for SEN
- SEN – there are a number of settings that put barriers in the way of SEN children because of increased work load and cost

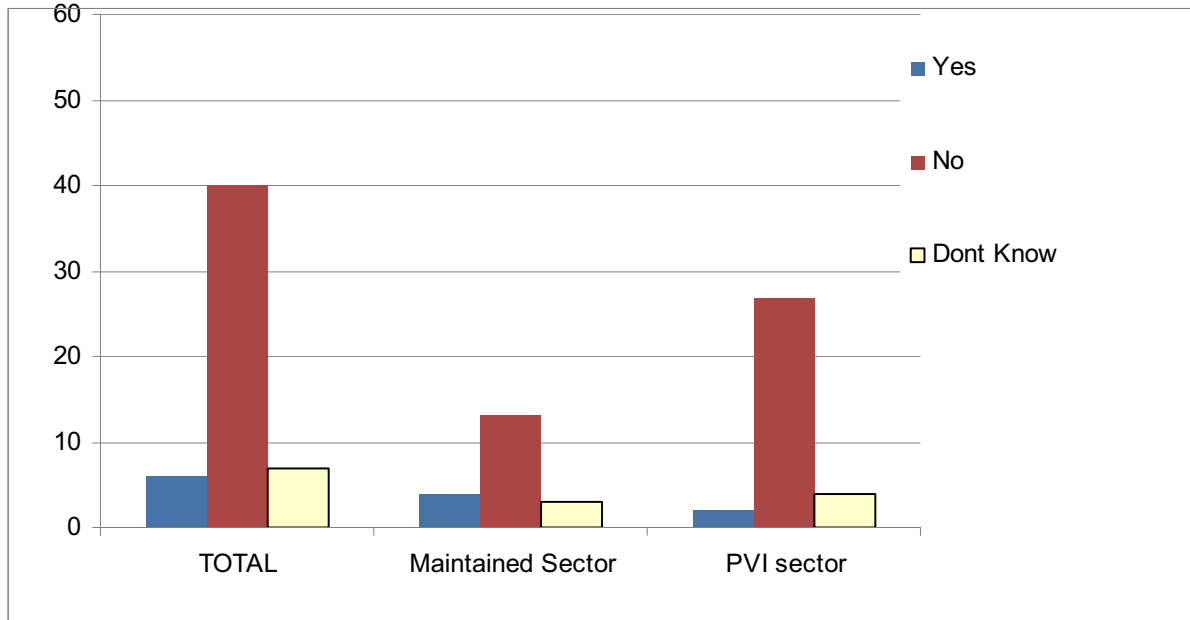
- Staff are gaining higher qualifications to provide higher quality care/education
- Quality of staff – training and qualifications should be taken into account – not a quality accreditation
- Training – is needed to improve the setting and is difficult to fund.
- Although training is funded, it still comes at a cost to the setting and it would be beneficial if this were recognised
- Well trained staff improve quality and best practice

- Premises – decorating, outdoor areas
- Premises – continued maintenance and development of premises where quality is in evidence will maintain sustainability and growth

- Sustainability – dips in birth rates and schools policies on taking children is difficult to maintain sustainability

Q8. Do you foresee any funding issues arising from the termly counts?

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|-------------------|-----|----|------------|
| TOTAL | 6 | 40 | 7 |
| Maintained Sector | 4 | 13 | 3 |
| PVI sector | 2 | 27 | 4 |



Maintained

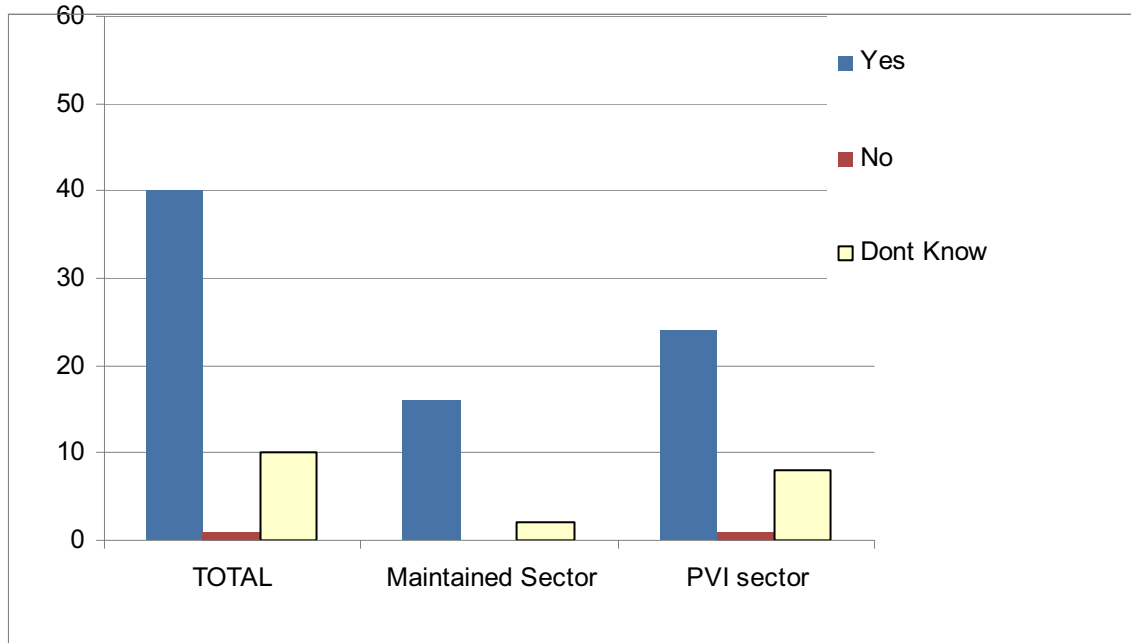
- Stability of provision potentially compromised in maintained – use to knowing budget in advance
- Staffing issues for planning budget each financial year
- Compromise of planned, phased introduction of children
- If always same day of week, not a true count

PVI

- Some issues will arise due to children attending state schools in Sept term
- The schools which we feed into will take 4's earlier – it could lead to our pre-school closure

Q9. Do you agree that a protection factor should be applied to limit any gains or losses for each school/setting?

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|-------------------|-----|----|------------|
| TOTAL | 40 | 1 | 10 |
| Maintained Sector | 16 | 0 | 2 |
| PVI sector | 24 | 1 | 8 |



Maintained

- Depends on how it works – FS soaking up budget disproportionately
- Unemployment is impacting on take-up of day care – will the base rate be adjusted regularly
- Need to protect staff

PVI

- How long would a transitional protection last? Agree with limiting losses but not gains.
- Settings are at risk once protection is removed

Q10. Do you have any other comments?

Maintained

- Staffing ratios will require additional funding
- SEN
- Old building conditions

PVI

- We are struggling to keep our heads above water since the Children's Centres were opened and we need all the help we can get
- We are more concerned with how parents may use the hours for sustainability and staffing reasons
- These proposals have very concerning implications for the future viability of our setting. The level of flexibility we can offer is restricted by the physical environment in which we operate. We hope therefore that RMBC will allow us to charge for time above 15 hrs in order to secure our future.
- What we currently charge per session to non NEF children is higher than NEF, therefore we are running at a considerable loss. Highering the number of hours or having to be more flexible may considerably affect our sustainability.
- Please can we get information before parents as they are receiving information independently and it is frustrating for parents if we cannot clarify the situation.

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| ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM |
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| | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---|
| 1. | Meeting: | Rotherham Schools Forum |
| 2. | Date: | 11th December, 2009 |
| 3. | Title: | Valuable Lessons – Improving economy and efficiency in schools |
| 4. | Directorate: | Children and Young People’s Services |

5. Summary:

In July, the Audit Commission published a report ‘Valuable Lessons’ regarding improving economy and efficiency in schools. Following a decade of substantial real terms increases in expenditure, funding growth has already slowed. Forecasts for public expenditure beyond 2010/11 suggest tighter funding for schools. The Audit Commission propose that Councils have a role in three key areas of school support where the focus on economy and efficiency can be strengthened:

- Financial support
- Staffing and purchasing in schools
- Accountability for value for money

6. Recommendations:

That the Action Plan arising from the Audit Commission’s recommendations be implemented.

7. Proposals and Details:

In July, the Audit Commission published a report ‘Valuable Lessons’ regarding improving economy and efficiency in schools. The report is the conclusion of Audit Commission research undertaken during the autumn term of 2008, which included documentary analysis, data collection and semi-structured interviews in a sample of 23 case study schools, in seven council areas.

Separate reports present the messages for councils, school staff with financial responsibilities, and governing bodies.

Schools have received substantial real terms funding increases in the last ten years. The Audit Commission’s focus is on the way this significant public resource is spent, as it is essential that it provides good value for money. This is even more important in the context of future public spending constraints.

The widely accepted definition of value for money in schools, supported by the DCSF in its own guidance, refers to three elements described as the ‘three Es’: economy; efficiency; and effectiveness. In simple terms, this means making the best use of available resources, including getting better outcomes for the same spend, or freeing up resources that are being used inefficiently for other purposes.

Box 1: The three components of value for money

| | Definition | Example |
|---------------|---|--|
| Economy | Minimising the costs of resources used for a good, service or activity | Are school supplies purchased at the best available price? |
| Efficiency | The relationship between outputs and the resources used to produce them | Does the timetable make best use of teachers? |
| Effectiveness | The extent to which objectives have been achieved | To what extent has the deployment of teaching assistants raised levels of attainment and pupil well-being? |

Source: Audit Commission

Since 1988, schools have gained greater autonomy from councils with regard to decision making, with 85 per cent of decisions relating to schools taken by the schools themselves. While councils’ accountability for money spent by schools is similar to other areas of council expenditure, councils have less influence on financial decisions. Council roles still include:

- responsibility for financial control, which remains with the section 151 officer at the council, despite budget delegation to schools;
- provision of internal audit;
- responsibility to monitor, challenge, support and intervene in school improvement; and
- power to intervene in schools causing concern

The Audit Commission found that the main focus of regulation and accountability in the schools sector is on promoting well-being and raising standards or, in other words, effectiveness. However, value for money cannot be achieved without also considering economy and efficiency. Even though substantial funds are at stake, councils' ability to support improvement in economy and efficiency in schools is constrained. The central expenditure limit constrains councils from increasing spending on central services by more than the individual schools budget.

The Audit Commission propose that Councils have a role in three key areas of school support where the focus on economy and efficiency can be strengthened:

Financial support

- availability and quality; and
- national benchmarking.

Staffing and purchasing in schools

- procurement and traded services; and
- collaboration between schools on purchasing and staffing.

Accountability for value for money

- school improvement partners (SIPs);
- internal audit; and
- governor support.

An action plan to address improvements in each of these 3 areas is proposed. In several of the areas outlined, work is already in progress and this is reflected in the plan.

Recommendations and Action Plan

| Audit Commission recommendation | RMBC Action | By Whom | When |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Financial support</p> <p>1. Offer resource management and value for money training to schools as part of the council's financial package, targeting those with limited capacity;</p> | <p>Support schools to achieve FMSiS – that shows that a school is financially well managed. SFT supporting schools preparation and performance of the assessment (45 achieved to date, 24 assessments booked).</p> <p>Continue to encourage and advocate schools' use of DCSF national CFR benchmarking data as well as local benchmarking data provided by the Schools Finance Team.</p> | <p>Schools Finance Team</p> <p>Schools Finance Team</p> | <p>In progress DCSF deadline Mar 2010</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p>2. Align and share knowledge between finance and service improvement teams to improve schools' experience of these services.</p> | <p>Undertake an analysis of staffing costs in each school and share findings with School Improvement Partners and National Challenge Advisers for school leadership dialogue and challenge.</p> <p>Encourage schools to use the Audit Commission tool to help schools cost workforce expenditure and compare this with performance.</p> <p>Engage SIPs in challenge to schools on surplus balances.</p> | <p>Schools Finance Team - Secondary Schools - Primary Schools School Effectiveness Service</p> <p>Resource & Business Mgmt Schools Finance Team</p> <p>Resource & Business Mgmt</p> | <p>Jul 2009 Dec 2009</p> <p>Apr 2010 Jan 2010</p> |
| <p>Staffing and purchasing in schools</p> | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| 3. Raise schools' awareness of high quality alternative providers of traded services, including them in any portfolio of traded services; | Liaise with DCSF Regional Education Procurement Centre (EPC) to identify quality assured providers of traded services in Y&H region and include on Rotherham's Portfolio of Services to schools. | Schools Finance Team CYPS Business Support | In progress Apr 2010 |
| 4. Identify schools spending more than others on items of procurement and support them to find savings; | Undertake an analysis of schools spend on standard items. Engage RBT and DCSF (EPC) to support with more complex/high value procurement items i.e.photocopier leases. | Schools Finance Team RBT | Jan 2010 Jan 2010 |
| 5. Ensure that schools use electronic procurement systems to minimise purchasing costs; and | Demo of DCSF 'Open' system to LA undertaken Demo of DCSF 'Open' system to schools undertaken 19/11/2009 (47 schools attended) Pilot 'OPEN' system with schools | Schools Finance Team | Oct 2009 Nov 2009 Apr 2010 |
| 6. Encourage schools to collaborate on purchasing to benefit from economies of scale. | Identify if DCSF 'Open' system offers enhanced opportunities. Raise awareness of Headteachers; Business Managers in schools. Consider pooled budgets in TRL vision. | Schools Finance Team Schools Finance Team BSF Team/Schools Finance | Jul 2010 Jan 2010 Jan 2010 |
| Accountability for value for money | | | |
| 7. Ensure that internal audit provides assurance to governing bodies and councils on questions of resource management and recommends value for money improvements as a matter of course; | Ensure that Internal Audit challenge on vfm is sufficiently robust and recommendations reported through the LA and Governing Bodies, including any highlighted areas of best practice. | Internal Audit | Dec 2009 |
| 8. Ensure that SIPs consider resource deployment as part of their role. | To review the flow of financial information to SIPs, ensuring it is fit for purpose under their | Schools Finance Team | Feb 2010 |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------------------|
| <p>Councils may need to provide further training to SIPs to support them</p> | <p>new role definitions – summary reports. To raise awareness of specific budget issues through the Schools of Concern meeting (surpluses and deficits). To add qualitative school financial performance to existing benchmarking data.</p> | <p>School Effectiveness Service Resource & Business Mgmt Resource & Business Mgmt</p> | <p>Ongoing Dec 2009</p> |
| <p>9. Ensure that accessible financial training is available for all governing bodies. Training should cover value for money, and the links between finance and school performance.</p> | <p>Governor Support Service to review training package.</p> | <p>CYPS Governor Support Schools Finance Team</p> | <p>Apr 2010</p> |

8. Finance:

The Audit Commission Report suggests that schools nationally could save over £400 million through better procurement alone. Alongside procurement, in a more austere future, schools will need to ensure that the number of staff is affordable and the mix offers good value for money. Schools will need to examine more flexible ways to deploy classroom staff efficiently.

School balances in Rotherham are declining but several retain balances over the acceptable limits specified by DCSF. Clawback will be applied again in 2009/10 as it was in 2008/09 to those schools with excessive balances.

9. Risks and Uncertainties:

Excessive school revenue balances represent an inefficient use of public money. Uncertainty about future funding could lead to schools retaining excessive surpluses but the right response to such uncertainty is good financial management, rather than retaining resources. The measures proposed in the Action Plan mitigate the retention of surpluses happening but do not eliminate it in totality.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:

Schools' budgets are now growing more slowly and the future is likely to be more austere.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) claimed over £3 billion of school efficiencies between 2005/06 and 2007/08, with a target of £3.7 billion in the next three years. Schools will be subject to tighter budgets in the next spending review period but the expectations of schools to deliver against national attainment targets will continue.

11. Background Papers and Consultation:

Audit Commission Report – 'Valuable Lessons', July 2009.

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