

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER, 2015**

Present:- D. Naisbitt (Oakwood) (in the Chair).

Learning Community Representative: - D. Naisbitt (Oakwood), T. Mahon (Saint Bernard's), J. Morrison (Swinton), L. Pepper (Clifton), K. Sherburn (Rawmarsh), P. Di'lasio (Wales), I. Holburn (Dinnington), R. Fone (Brinsworth), R. Burman (Winterhill), D. Sutton (Maltby), P. Dobbin (Wingfield), D. Ball (Aston).

Other stakeholder members: - G. Alton (Rotherham Colleges), S. Brook / F. Sprague (Teaching Trade Union Representatives), P. Bloor (PRU), D. Ashmore (Teaching Schools), G. Gillard (Sheffield Diocese), A. Richards (Secondary Governors).

Also in attendance: - V. Njagic (RMBC Finance), A. Baldwin (RMBC Finance), K. Borthwick (Director for Education and Skills), H. Etheridge (RMBC Legal and Democratic).

Observers: - M. Young, P. Noble.

Apologies for absence were received from: - M. Badger (Unision), S. Mallinder (Primary Governors), Councillor L. Pitchley (RMBC) and J. Robertson (RMBC Finance).

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No Declarations of Interest were made.

6. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 26TH JUNE AND 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2015.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 26th June and 18th September, 2015 were considered.

In relation to the minutes of 26th June at Minute number 124 (Progress Report on the Buy-Back of LA Services) it was confirmed that the information from the DfE/EFA relating to the re-coupmnt figures had been circulated.

In relation to the minutes of 18th September, it was noted that Julie Mott's apologies had not been recorded.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous two meetings be agreed as accurate records.

7. COMMUNICATIONS: -

David Naisbitt outlined two pieces of work requested that the RSF

Finance Sub-Committee had requested for future RSF consideration. These issues would take some time to bring together and would be presented to a future meeting/s.

- A protocol document on the principles relating to building new schools, using the experience gained through the creation of the Eastwood Village Primary School;
- Supporting EU Migrant pupils who were not currently eligible for Pupil Premium funding but who experienced multiple vulnerabilities.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.

8. ESTABLISHING A NEW COMMISSIONING MODEL FOR ROTHERHAM'S SCHOOLS FOR PERMANENTLY EXCLUDED PUPILS.

David Naisbitt welcomed Chris Harrison, SEND Policy Lead, back to the meeting to continue discussions started at the previous meeting (18th September, 2015).

Chris gave some examples of successful Alternative Provision partnerships he had recently visited that combined work experience/vocational training alongside teaching.

Discussion around a new commissioning model for Rotherham's permanently excluded pupils took place. In principle, an agreement was reached that structural change was required. An open and frank discussion was held on what shape the change must take, the areas covered included: -

- Issues needed to be taken in the round in order that that the system could succeed. Fair Access Panel, SEN and Special Schools were all complimentary issues;
- June 2016 represented a critical point when the system could be re-shaped;
- Some significant stakeholders were not represented in these discussions/decision making;
- Models would be useful to show student transitions.

It was agreed that Chris Harrison would pull together some of the thinking on the relationship between permanent exclusions and PRUs, cost recovery, the Fair Access Panel, SEN provision and Special Schools and create an information pack for Schools and RSF Representatives to consider in November. Firm decisions would then be taken at the December RSF meeting. A model that would allow learning communities to form cluster solutions in relation to commissioning permanently excluded provision would be initiated.

Resolved: - (1) That the information shared be noted.

(2) That this item be re-visited at the December RSF meeting.

9. ROTHERHAM TOTAL SCHOOLS' BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT FOR 31ST MARCH, 2015.

Andrea Baldwin, Principal Finance Officer, presented the report that gave the 2014/2015 financial year outturn position for the Rotherham Total Schools' budget based on actual income and expenditure to 31st March, 2015.

The Total Schools' Budget Outturn for the 2014/2015 financial year (excluding schools' delegated balances) was an under-spend of £1.036m.

The outturn variances for each Block within the Total Schools' Budget were: -

- Schools' Block - £0.933m under-spend;
- High Needs' Block - £1.010m over-spend;
- Early Years' Block - £1.113m under-spend.

The financial report outlined the reasons for cases of under and over-spend in each of the three Blocks.

The financial report outlined the agreed carry forwards from the under-spends within the Schools' and Early Years' Blocks. £433k from the Early Years' Block had been transferred to the High Needs' Block to alleviate budget pressures in 2015/2016.

Discussion followed and the following questions were raised: -

- Why was the High Needs' Block always over-spent? Why was the budget allocation insufficient for pupil numbers? – There was not sufficient funding;
- Mental health provision;
- Rotherham was an area of high take-up of the childcare entitlement;
- A question was asked about why the Schools in Financial Difficulty contingency reserve existed whilst other schools were not receiving their full formula allocation. It was agreed that this issue would be forwarded to the RSF Sub-committee.

Resolved: - (1) That the 2014/2015 financial year outturn position for the Rotherham Total Schools' budget based on actual income and expenditure to 31st March, 2015, be noted.

(2) That the RSF Sub-committee be asked to consider in further detail the carry-forward position reported by the Schools in Financial Difficulty budget heading in the context of the schools' funding formula.

10. ROTHERHAM TOTAL SCHOOLS' BUDGET MONITORING REPORT AS AT 31ST AUGUST, 2015.

Andrea Baldwin, Principal Finance Officer, presented the report that gave the budget monitoring position of the Rotherham Total Schools' budget as at 31st August, 2015.

The Total Schools' Budget allocation for 2015/2016 was confirmed following revisions in funding. The total amount available was confirmed at £127,820m.

The current projected outturn was an over-spend of £507k (0.40% over budget). This included the agreed carry-forward allocations from 2014/2015 to 2015/2016 financial year.

Resolved: - That the budget monitoring position of the Rotherham Total Schools' budget as at 31st August, 2015, be noted.

11. SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS' FINANCE CONSULTATION.

Karen Borthwick, Director of Education and Skills (CYPS), reported that the Department for Education had issued a consultation document on the following issues: -

- Centrally held Dedicated Schools' Grant funding and carry forward;
- Changes in Early Years place-led funding;
- Amalgamated schools;
- School age-range changes;
- Local authority functions;
- Changes to Schedule 2 (Classes or Descriptions of Planned prescribed for the Purposes of the Schools Budget of a Local Authority).

She asked RSF members to confirm whether or not they wish to respond to the consultation, which she agreed to circulate after the meeting. The submission deadline was 13th November. All responses would be collated, fed back to the full RSF, and submitted to the DfE.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted and circulated for consultation with RSF members.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS: -

Resolved: - (1) That the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum take place on Friday 4th December, 2015 (moved from 27th November,

2015), to start at 8.30 am at the Rockingham Professional Development Centre.

(2) That future RSF meetings take place on: -

- 15th January, 2016;
- 4th March, 2016;
- 22nd April, 2016;
- 17th June, 2016.

All meetings to start at 8.30 a.m. at Rockingham Professional Development Centre. Every effort would be made for the meetings to end by 10.30 a.m. prompt.