

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY, 16TH JUNE, 2017**

Present:- Mr. D. Naisbitt (Oakwood High School - in the Chair); Learning Community representatives:- Mrs. D. Ball (Aston Learning Community), Mrs. L. Pepper (Clifton Learning Community), Mrs. P. Dobbin (Redscope Primary School) and Mr. P. Di'lasio (Wales High School).

Other stakeholders:- Mrs. J. Mott (Special Schools), Mr. P. Gerrard (Maintained Nursery Schools), Mr. S. Scott (Day Nurseries – Private, Voluntary, Independent), Mr. A. Richards (Secondary Governors), Mrs. G. Rae (RNN Group) and Mr. S. Mahmood (UNISON).

Also in attendance:- Mrs. K. Borthwick (RMBC Assistant Director of Education and Skills), Mr. M. Chambers (RMBC Finance), Mrs. V. Njegic (RMBC Finance) and Mrs. P. Williams (RMBC Head of Inclusion).

Apologies for absence were received from:- Mrs. S. Kent (St. Bernard's RC High School), Mr. J. Morrison (Swinton Academy), Mr. G. Gillard (Sheffield Diocese), Mrs. S. Brook (NASUWT) and Mrs. L. Reid (RNN Group).

Observer in attendance : Mrs. E. Crossland (Education and Skills Funding Agency).

41. RETIREMENT OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERS

The Chairman informed everyone that this would be the last meeting to be attended by Mrs. J. Mott (Head Teacher of the Newman Special School, Rotherham) and by Mrs. K. Borthwick (RMBC Assistant Director of Education and Skills). Both Mrs. Mott and Mrs. Borthwick would be retiring in July 2017.

The Rotherham Schools' Forum thanked Mrs. Mott and Mrs. Borthwick for their contributions to the work of the Forum and wished them both a long and happy retirement.

42. LEARNING COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATIVES

Details were submitted of the current membership of the Rotherham Schools' Forum for the 2016/2017 academic year.

Agreed:- (1) That there shall be continual review of membership to ensure that the balance of academy and non-academy schools represented on the Rotherham Schools' Forum accurately reflects the balance of the sectors in the Rotherham Borough area.

(2) That, in advance of the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum, to be held on Friday 6th October, 2017, all Learning Communities, Multiple Academy Trusts, Schools and other stakeholders shall be asked to confirm the names of their representatives on the Rotherham Schools' Forum.

43. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17TH MARCH, 2017

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum, held on 17th March, 2017, be approved as a correct record.

44. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The following item was discussed:-

Minute No. 38 (Strategic Plan for High Needs Provision and Spend (Including Financial Strategy Update)) – it was agreed that the following updated documents shall be distributed to all members of the Rotherham Schools' Forum with the minutes of this meeting:-

(a) Special Education Needs and/or Disability (SEND) – the Sufficiency Assessment Report on Specialist Provision in Rotherham to 2021 (projection of future requirements for the Borough Council); and

(b) Forecasting Specialist Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs until 2021 (project framework for the Borough Council) – copies of the presentation slides.

45. PRIMARY SCHOOL - WAVERLEY COMMUNITY

Further to Minute No. 5(2) of the meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 14th October, 2016, it was reported that a shortlist of five prospective sponsors had been selected for the new primary school within the Waverley settlement and these companies had been asked to provide their prospectuses for consideration at stage two of the process (March and April 2017). A panel representing stakeholders had been convened to engage in the identification of a potential sponsor.

The Government Department for Education continued to be kept informed of progress and the chosen sponsor would be formally ratified by the Regional Schools' Commissioner later in June 2017. The Local Authority would notify the unsuccessful companies. The submissions from all of the five prospective sponsors had been of a very high quality.

The new primary school at Waverley was scheduled to be opened at the beginning of the 2020/2021 academic year, in September, 2020 and was to be situated in a prime location in the Rotherham Borough area, near to the Advanced Manufacturing Park.

Agreed:- That the information about this new primary school be noted.

46. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS / HIGH NEEDS

Further to Minute No. 38 of the meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 17th March, 2017, discussion took place on a draft document submitted by the Head of Inclusion (RMBC Education and Skills) containing a summary of the High Needs funding block out-turn for the 2016/17 financial year. The draft document and the Schools' Forum discussion highlighted the following salient issues:-

: the continuing large amount of expenditure and over-spending on the High Needs Block; the intention was that the over-spent sum of money (deficit) should gradually reduce during the course of the next three financial years;

: the continuing pressure on this Block of funding, compounded by the requirements for Education, Health and Care plan assessments of some children;

: the cost of specialist equipment for those pupils whose special educational needs require the use of such equipment;

: high needs sufficiency provision, including the cost of out-of-Authority placements;

: the probable impact of the High Needs National Funding Formula, which has been the subject of recent consultation and is yet to be announced by the Government Department for Education;

: the increasing demand of pupils with special needs;

: the capacity within the Special Schools within the Rotherham Borough area; most of these Schools are full, with no spare capacity and the consequence is that some pupils with slightly less severe needs are remaining in mainstream schools even though a placement at a special school would be appropriate for them;

: the Schools' Forum members acknowledged that the high needs sufficiency provision must meet the needs of students, in spite of the budget limitations;

: the importance of joint working between schools, children's social care and the health services in terms of meeting the needs of children who have special educational needs;

: the High Needs Sub-Group of the Rotherham Schools' Forum has a scheduled meeting on Monday, 10th July, 2017, during which there will be further discussion of high needs sufficiency provision;

: members of the Rotherham Schools Forum were invited to attend the conference for school leaders which was taking place on 22nd and 23rd June, 2017, with the session about High Needs scheduled for Friday 23rd June, 2017.

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

(2) That the final approved version of the High Needs funding block out-turn report for the 2016/17 financial year be distributed to members of the Rotherham Schools' Forum in due course.

(3) That the documents listed at Minute No. 44 above shall also be distributed to members of the Rotherham Schools' Forum.

47. EARLY YEARS

Further to Minute No. 28 of the meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 13th January, 2017, it was noted that the Government Department for Education required local authorities to allocate the funding to early education providers based on a local single funding formula. In addition, local authorities were required to fund all providers at the same base rate and must include a deprivation supplement for three and four year-olds' early education funding, with the option of including additional supplements. It was reported that the hourly rate had increased both for Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) Early Years and for the maintained sector.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

48. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

Further to Minute No. 27 of the meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 13th January, 2017, it was noted that a maximum contribution, totalling £154,000, had been approved in respect of the funding of the School Admissions Service in the 2017/2018 financial year. This allocation from the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant affected only the current 2017/18 financial year. In future financial years, such funding would be included in the Block Grant.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

49. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA AND HIGH NEEDS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA: DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION CONSULTATION (STAGE 2)

Further to Minute No. 39 of the meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 17th March, 2017, it was reported that the calling of the General Election (held on Thursday 8 June 2017) had delayed the issuing of the outcome of the Government's consultation (stage 2) about the National Funding Formula for Schools, including the High Needs National Funding Formula. The Schools' Forum discussed the following issues:-

(i) Rotherham has a history of large expenditure on High Needs;

(ii) during the current 2017/18 financial year, there has been a realignment of the budget with an allocation of £3 millions being transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

Agreed:- (1) That the eventual outcome of the Government's consultation (stage 2) about the National Funding Formula for Schools, including the High Needs National Funding Formula be reported to the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum to be held on Friday, 6th October, 2017.

(2) That, further to (1) above, the High Needs Sub-Group of the Rotherham Schools' Forum shall consider further the detail of the High Needs National Funding Formula at its meeting scheduled to take place on Monday 3rd July, 2017.

50. ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM - REVIEW OF PURPOSE

A discussion took place on the role and purpose of the Rotherham Schools' Forum, during which the following issues were highlighted:-

: ways of ensuring representation from the widest possible range of learning communities, multiple academy trusts, schools and other stakeholders;

: identifying the challenges and schedule of activities for the Schools' Forum;

: ways of enabling the Schools' Forum to perform the scrutiny role, especially in terms of budget monitoring;

: the importance of sharing appropriate information;

: the practice of the Chair serving for a period of two years;

: the establishment of appropriate sub-groups enabling specific issues to be considered in detail;

: identifying issues which require a decision of the Schools' Forum;

: the membership list shall be updated during the Summer 2017.

Members of the Schools' Forum were invited to submit any additional comments to the Chair and/or the Vice Chair, via electronic mail:-

D.Naisbitt@oakwood.ac

trpdball@rgfl.org

Members of the Schools' Forum were also invited to study the following relevant documents concerning the role and purpose of a Schools' Forum:-

Operational and Good Practice Guide

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/572724/Schools_forums_operational_and_good_practice_guide.pdf

Schools' Forum Structure

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417331/Schools_forums_structure.pdf

Schools' Forum's Powers and Responsibilities

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/572987/Schools_forums_powers_and_responsibilitiesFINAL_Nov16.pdf

Schools' Forum Self-Assessment Tool Kit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-forums-operational-and-good-practice-guide-2015>

Agreed:- (1) That the Rotherham Schools' Forum shall continue to endeavour to ensure the full participation of all learning communities, multiple academy trusts, schools and other stakeholders in the role of the Forum.

(2) That an updated membership list be reported to the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum, to be held on Friday, 6th October, 2017.

51. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- (1) That the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum take place on Friday 6th October, 2017, at the Rockingham Professional Development Centre, commencing at 8.30 a.m.

(2) That future meetings of the Rotherham Schools' Forum shall take place at the Rockingham Professional Development Centre, commencing at 8.30 a.m., on the following Fridays (all of these dates are subject to confirmation):-

24 November 2017

26 January, 2 March, 27 April and 15 June 2018.