

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM  
FRIDAY, 19TH JANUARY, 2018**

**Present:-** Mr. D. Naisbitt (Oakwood High School - in the Chair); Learning Community representatives:- Mrs. D. Ball (Aston Learning Community), Mr. C. Harris (Wickersley Learning Community), Mr. P. Di'lasio (Wales High School) and Mr. D. Sutton (Maltby Learning Community).

Other stakeholders:- Mr. P. Silvester (Special Schools), Mrs. N. Towers (Diocese of Sheffield), Mr. S. Scott (Day Nurseries – Private, Voluntary, Independent), Mr. A. Richards (Secondary Governors), Mrs. J. Arechiga (RNN Group), Mrs. T. Brooke (Nexus Multi Academy Trust) and Mr. M. Stowe (UNISON).

Also in attendance:- Mr. M. Chambers (RMBC Assistant Director of Commissioning, Performance and Quality), Mrs. V. Njelic (RMBC Finance), Mrs. P. Williams (RMBC Head of Inclusion) and Mr. D. Fenton (RMBC Service Leader, School Organisation, Admissions and Appeals).

Apologies for absence were received from:- Mrs. S. Kent (St. Bernard's RC High School), Mrs. P. Dobbin (Redscope Primary School), Mr. S. Graves (Thrybergh Academy), Mr. P. Gerrard (Maintained Nursery Schools), Mr. W. Carratt (Nexus Multi Academy Trust), Mr. H. Thomas (Diocese of Sheffield), Mr. J. Austin (RNN Group), Mrs. S. Brook (NASUWT) and Mr. S. Mahmood (UNISON).

**64. LEARNING COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATIVES**

Details were submitted of the current membership of the Rotherham Schools' Forum for the 2017/2018 academic year. A number of membership changes were noted and everyone was asked to notify the Clerk to the Forum of any additional changes which might occur.

Agreed:- 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.

**65. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER, 2017**

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum, held on 24th November, 2017, be approved as a correct record.

**66. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The following items were discussed:-

(1) Minute No. 58 (Dedicated Schools Grant Funding for School Admissions and Appeals) – Schools had been informed of the proposal to fund the School Planning, School Admissions and School Admission

Appeals services from the Dedicated Schools Grant and, although there had been relatively few responses, there had been no opposition from Schools to this proposal.

(2) Minute No. 57 (Contingency for Pupil Growth Funding Allocations) - (a) at the 24th November, 2017 meeting, the Schools' Forum had agreed to top-slice £530,940 from the Schools Block allocation for the 2018/2019 financial year; and

(b) the new Central Services block for the 2018/2019 financial year would fund the following items:-

:: Charge for National Copyright Licences - £249,547 as notified by the Education and Skills Funding Agency;

:: Servicing of the Schools' Forum - £3,000.

(3) Minute No. 62 (The Value of the Rotherham Schools' Forum) – The Forum was transacting business via the three Sub-Committees (High Needs; Finance and Early Years) and increased use was now being made of e-communications.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

**67. SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA 2018/19 AND UPDATE ON THE NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA**

The Rotherham Schools' Forum continued its detailed consideration of the Schools Funding Formula, the National Funding Formula and the Funding for High Needs (with reference to Minutes Nos. 59, 60 and 61 of the previous meeting held on 24th November, 2017). Since the last meeting, the budget issues and proposed transfer of funding had been the subject of consultation with all Schools (29 November to 15 December, 2017) and the Finance Sub-Committee had considered the responses to the consultation and had brought forward a recommendation to this meeting of the Schools' Forum.

The three options considered by the Finance Sub-Committee were in respect of the transfer of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block during the 2018/2019 financial year:-

First option – the transfer of 0.5% out of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, with 2.5% cap on gains and -1.25% minimum funding guarantee.

Second option – the transfer of 1.3% out of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, with 1.5% cap on gains and -1.5% minimum funding guarantee.

Third option – the transfer of 2.4% out of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, with 0% cap on gains and -1.5% minimum funding

guarantee.

The recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee was that the Rotherham Schools' Forum should agree to the adoption of the second option, with the transfer of 1.3% of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block during the 2018/2019 financial year.

The Authority had now notified the Government Department for Education of this proposal to transfer 1.3% of the budget to the High Needs Block for the 2018/2019 financial year. The Department for Education had replied that it was minded to agree to this proposal and would monitor the position on an annual basis, but would first require additional information about the effect of the proposal upon individual Schools within the Rotherham Borough area.

During discussion of this matter, reference was made to the very large majority of responses from Schools to the consultation during November and December 2017 being in favour of the first option (ie: the transfer of 0.5% of the budget). There had been a much lower amount of support from Schools for the second option. It was confirmed that Finance Sub-Committee had deliberated at length on this issue, but after due consideration, the Sub-Committee believed that the second option (ie: the transfer of 1.3% of the budget) offered the most sustainable way forward. The third option had received no support from Schools and had been the least favoured option by the Finance Sub-Committee because of a possibility of some Schools being placed in financial difficulty.

The Rotherham Schools' Forum was informed of the significant pressure to reduce expenditure within the High Needs Block of funding and the intended formulation of a sufficiency strategy for High Needs which would apply to the next three financial years. As part of this intended sufficiency strategy, Finance Officers were asked to provide Schools with projections of budgets and funding for High Needs for the 2019/2020 financial year.

It was also noted that a sufficiency plan for pupils with special educational needs would be considered by the Council at a Cabinet and Commissioners' meeting to be held on 19th February, 2018. The proposal would provide for 125 additional places for pupils within Special Schools in Rotherham and at the same time significantly reduce the reliance upon and use of out-of-Authority placements of pupils with special educational needs.

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

(2) That the recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee be accepted and the Rotherham Schools' Forum agrees to the adoption of the second option, as now reported, with the transfer of 1.3% of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block during the 2018/2019 financial year.

(3) That, at each meeting, the Rotherham Schools' Forum continue to receive updates and progress reports about the High Needs Block of funding.

(4) That, in respect of the funding of service provision for pupils with special educational needs, the Head of Inclusion provide a presentation to the meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum to be held on 15th June, 2018, detailing strategic developments across the area and the impact of the transfer of funding (detailed at (2) above), with reference to a comparison of the service provision at 31 December, 2017 with the service provision at 31 May, 2018.

**68. TRANSFER OF FUNDING TO HIGH NEEDS 2018/19**

Consideration of this item had been included within the matters considered at Minute No. 67 above.

**69. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed:- (1) That the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum take place on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2018, 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:-

27th April 2018 and 15th June 2018.