

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY, 27TH APRIL, 2018**

Present:- Mr. D. Naisbitt (Oakwood High School - in the Chair); Learning Community representatives:- Mrs. P. Dobbin (Redscope Primary School), Mr. S. Graves (Thrybergh Academy), Mr. A. Krabbendam (Kiveton Park Primary School), Mr. C. Harris (Wickersley Learning Community) and Mr. P. Di'lasio (Wales High School).

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

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

Observers present : Mrs. G. Donnelly and Mrs. C. Muffett (Education and Skills Funding Agency).

Apologies for absence were received from:- Mrs. D. Ball (Aston Learning Community), Mrs. S. Kent (St. Bernard's RC High School), Mr. A. Richards (Secondary Governors), Mr. W. Carratt (Nexus Multi Academy Trust), Mrs. P. Williams (RMBC Head of Inclusion) and Mrs. S. Brook (NASUWT).

70. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19TH JANUARY 2018

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum, held on 19th January, 2018, be approved as a correct record.

71. LEARNING COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATION.

Agreed:- That there shall be continual review of and discussion about 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.

72. EARLY EDUCATION RATE 2018-2019

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Service, Early Years and Childcare (RMBC) stating that after the outcome of the Department for Education's Early Years national funding formula consultation in 2016, a single funding formula was introduced in 2017/18 for the allocation of early education funding to all schools and providers. Local Authorities are required to allocate the funding to early education providers based on a local single funding formula made up of a single base rate and a mandatory deprivation supplement (for 3 to 4 years old early education). Local Authorities can retain 5% of the 3 to 4 years old education budget

allocation to fund central services. Details of the Government guidance on central retention of Early Years block funding was appended to the submitted report. A local consultation was carried out in 2016/17 with all private, voluntary and independent providers and with schools to gather views on the make-up of the local funding formula and the proportion of the budget to allocate to supplements. Rotherham Borough Council had retained 5% of the 3 to 4 years old education budget in 2017/18 for central services and proposed to maintain the same formula for the 2018/19 financial year, as detailed within the submitted report.

Members of the Rotherham Schools' Forum had been contacted via electronic mail during mid-March 2018 and asked to provide their individual responses and there had been unanimous agreement to maintain the same formula for the 2018/19 financial year.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

73. PROVISIONAL 2017/18 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUT-TURN AND 2018/19 UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 67 of the meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 19th January, 2018, discussion took place on the specific budget pressures of the Schools Funding Formula, the National Funding Formula and the Funding for High Needs, these matters also having been the subject of deliberations by the High Needs Sub-Group at its meeting held on 16th April, 2018.

Reference was made to the cumulative deficit of the High Needs budget, with specific pressures being caused by the out-of-Authority placements of children and young people who have special needs and also the cost of independent provision. There would be a review of the Local Authority's Learning Support Service, which was offered to all schools on a trading basis.

The Schools' Forum noted that the Government Department for Education had ultimately consented to the transfer of 0.5% of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block during the current, 2018/19 financial year (therefore refusing the request to transfer 1.3%). Discussions with the Department for Education would be continuing in preparation for the submission in respect of the 2019/2020 financial year.

It was also noted that, at a meeting held on 19th February, 2018, the Cabinet and Commissioners of the Council had approved an increase in educational provision for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) across the Borough (Minute No. 110 refers).

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

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

funding and the measures being taken to reduce the budget deficit.

(3) 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 0.5% funding (described above), with reference to a comparison of the service provision at 31 December, 2017 with the service provision at 31 May, 2018.

74. SCHOOL BUDGETS 2018/19

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Principal Finance Officer, confirming the distribution of the Schools Block allocation of funding for the current, 2018/19 financial year.

The report stated that the operational responsibility for the funding formula will remain with local authorities and schools' forums for the 2019/2020 financial year, but pass to Central Government in April, 2020 through the National Funding Formula.

There is to be consultation with all schools during the Autumn Term 2018, prior to submission (during January 2019) of the proposed 2019/2020 budgets to the Department for Education.

Discussion took place on the production of budget allocation figures in respect of each individual school.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum, to be held on Friday, 15h June, 2018, detailing the budget allocation figures in respect of each individual school for the current, 2018/19 financial year.

75. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS - CLARIFICATION OF FUNDING 2018/19 AND 2019/2020

Reference was made to Minute No. 58 of the meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 24th November, 2017, concerning the agreement for the eventual replacement the current Service Level Agreement/Service Level Entitlement trading model with the funding of the School Planning, School Admissions and School Admission Appeals services being from the Dedicated Schools Grant, at a cost of £450,000 per year, which would generate a saving to schools.

The Schools' Forum received clarification that the new arrangement would begin on 1st April, 2019, with an interim Service Level Agreement (based on the previous method of funding) in operation only for the 2018/19 financial year. All schools had been consulted on this matter and there

was a unanimous consensus for this arrangement from the responses received to the consultation.

Post-meeting Note

A retrospective representation was received on the 27th April 2018, after the Schools' Forum meeting and consultation period had concluded. The representation requested that where an Academy had made alternative arrangements to administer its own admissions, that the SLE for 2019/20 onwards should make provision for 'own admissions authority schools' to have the option to 'opt out' of the arrangement and receive a 'pro rata' payment from the allocated funding to contribute towards their own administration arrangements. This would then ensure that the right to administer their own admissions as their 'own admissions body' was maintained, this being one of the distinguishing features of academies.

Following receipt of this late representation, the Local Authority confirmed that the 2019/20 SLE and subsequent SLE's thereafter would make provision for an 'opt out' and reimbursement of a 'pro rata' amount from the allocation, to allow own administering Academies the option to continue to make their own arrangements.

Agreed:- That the clarification be noted.

76. SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN (WORK PROGRAMME).

Discussion took place on suggestions for the future work programme (and meeting agenda items) for the Rotherham Schools' Forum. It was agreed that the items listed below shall be included in the future work programme and scheduled for discussion on the agenda of the Schools' Forum's next meeting:-

High Needs Block (funding)
Schools' budgets – balances at the end of the financial year

Representation on the Schools' Forum
Relevance of the Schools' Forum
Remit of the Schools' Forum

Constitution of the Schools' Forum
Communications - between members of the Schools' Forum and also with academies and schools
Connectivity - amongst members of the Schools' Forum and also with academies and schools and with the Local Authority

The positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Rotherham Schools' Forum for the 2018/19 academic year (to be decided at the first meeting in the Autumn term)

77. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum take place on Friday, 15th June, 2018, at the Rockingham Professional Development Centre, commencing at 8.30 a.m.