

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS FORUM  
FRIDAY, 25TH JUNE, 2010**

**Present:-** Geoff Jackson (in the Chair); Councillor Paul Lakin; Val Broomhead, Steve Clayton, Margaret Hague, Lyndon Hall, Mick Hall, Peter Hawkridge, Peter Leach and Philip Robins.

**In Attendance:-** David Ashmore, Steve Cope, Vera Njegic and Graham Sinclair.

**102. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Angela Burtoft, Geoff Gillard, John Henderson, Russell Heritage, Sarah Jackson, Ruth Johnson, Dorothy Smith, David Sylvester and Julie Westwood.

**103. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 23RD APRIL, 2010**

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2010 be approved as a correct record.

**104. CRC ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCHEME**

Steve Cope, Environmental Officer gave a powerpoint presentation in respect of the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme.

The presentation drew specific attention to:-

- Energy consumption by the Council and schools – 48% of the Council's CO2 emissions were from schools
- The cost of energy in 2008/ 09 for RMBC
- Rotherham's mandatory inclusion in the scheme owing to its levels of consumption
- Monitoring and managing usage through SystemLink software (RMBC server) and SMART Metering
- CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme
- Carbon Reduction Commitment
- Carbon Trading Equation
- Reimbursement Payment
- Risks
- Displaying Energy Certificates
- Property Environmental Section – Teams Actions and Responsibilities
- Local Authority Energy Financing Scheme (LAEF) Energy Responsibility

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

- Reference was made to Smart meters and when these would be installed in schools. Confirmation was given that some schools already had Smart meters, and the rest were scheduled to have them installed.
- Concerns were raised that some centres were open for 51 weeks per year which would have an impact on the amount of energy used. Assurance was given that this would not have a detrimental effect as schools were compared against their previous years performance and not against other schools.
- EDS proposed to publish schools CRC emissions online to enable local comparisons. This would be organised into geographic school clusters.

Members thanked Steve for his informative presentation.

#### **105. ACADEMIES - LETTERS TO HEADS FROM DFE**

Consideration was given to two letters received from the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Michael Grove MP relating to schools being given the opportunity to apply to become Academies. One was a generic letter to schools regarding new proposals for Academies and the second letter was an invitation to schools rated as 'outstanding' to become Academies from September 2010 onwards.

Graham Sinclair confirmed that Wales and Brinsworth Schools were in favour of becoming Academies, but Wickersley had clearly stated that they had no intention of taking up this option.

A query was raised as to whether there was a limit to the number of schools who could apply for academy status, and it was confirmed there was no limit.

A discussion ensued about Maltby Academy and how this would compare to the new academies. It was confirmed that the new Government's proposals for Academies were completely different to those under the former regime and in effect there would be two types of Academy. It was noted that funding for BSF was subject to Rotherham having an Academy provision. Previously Academies were often vulnerable schools and required sponsorship. New Academy status was currently only being offered to outstanding schools. Only very limited consultation with Governors was required.

Concerns were raised by members about the introduction of academies and how this would affect the relationship the authority had with them and that there would be inconsistencies within schools.

The Unions commented that they were opposed to Academy status and the potential impact on future pay and conditions of their members. Concerns were also raised regarding pupil admissions and Academies taking a more selective approach. Graham Sinclair indicated that Academies had to comply with a fair access policy.

Agreed:- That the information be noted and received.

#### 106. **BSF UPDATE**

Graham Sinclair, BSF Programme Director gave an update in respect of Transforming Rotherham Learning/ Building Schools for the Future (TRL/ BSF).

He reported on the following:-

- that the Authority was now in procurement for BSF
- there were two large consortium bidders – Carillion and Langer Rourke
- the Authority were training themselves in competitive dialogue
- TRL was one of the “Four Big Things” in the CYPP

A concern was raised as to what impact there would be with Wales and Brinsworth becoming Academies. The calculation methodology for distributing funding to Academies had not been finalised by DFE so the impact of funding was uncertain. Both schools had registered their interests in maintaining partnership working with the local authority and other schools.

Reference was made to the Academy buildings and whether they would remain under Local Authority control. Confirmation was given that they would be under a 125 year lease agreement.

A comment was made in respect of energy efficiency in new building and assurances were given that the design for all new buildings would include saving energy as part of the bid.

A query was raised as to whether the Local Authority would be writing out to Phase 2 and 3 schools in relation to ICT. It was suggested that copies of the letters sent out to Phase 1 schools be sent with the proviso that there may be changes further down the line.

Agreed:- That the report be noted and received.

#### 107. **DCSF SCHOOL FUNDING CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

David Ashmore presented the submitted report which detailed the DCSF School Funding Consultation Response which was agreed by members at the previous meeting of the Schools Forum.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

**108. SUMMARISED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES DIRECTORATE OUTTURN 2009/ 2010 (ALL WARDS)**

Consideration was given to the Children and Young People's Directorate Outturn report for 2009/ 10.

Agreed:- That the report be noted and received.

**109. SCHOOLS BALANCES 2009/ 10**

Vera Njagic, Principal Accountant (Schools) presented the report in relation to the School Balances for 2009/ 10.

She confirmed that all schools were below the DCSF threshold and therefore there would be no claw back for schools.

Agreed:- That the report be noted and received.

**110. IMPROVING ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY IN SCHOOLS ACTION PLAN**

David Ashmore presented the submitted report in respect of the Improving Economy and Efficiency in Schools Action Plan.

In July, 2009 the Audit Commission published a report "Valuable Lessons" regarding improving economy and efficiency in schools.

An action plan was produced to review the three key areas of school support which the Audit Commission believed could be strengthened:

**Financial Support**

- Availability and quality
- National benchmarking

**Staffing and purchasing in schools**

- Procurement and traded services
- Collaboration between schools on purchasing and staffing

**Accountability for value for money**

- School improvement partners (SIPs)
- Internal audit
- Governor support

The new Government had announced that frontline funding to schools would be protected, and money allocated to individual school budgets for 2010-11 would not be affected by the Government's proposed budget reductions. However, it had also been announced that efficiency savings were expected of schools and it was therefore critical that schools continued to offer good value for money through a range of measures including procurement and workforce deployment.

Agreed:- That the report be received and noted.

#### **111. FREE SCHOOL MEALS EXTENSION**

David Ashmore reported that the proposed extension to the free school meals pilot projects which had been agreed by the previous government had now been withdrawn.

Agreed:- That the position be noted.

#### **112. CONSTITUTION AND RE-APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS**

David Ashmore circulated a document which outlined the current member for the Rotherham Schools Forum Membership for consideration.

He confirmed that details would be circulated to the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Governors in the Autumn for consideration of the new membership with effect from January 2011.

A suggestion was made that the timings of these meetings be discussed with Head Teachers to establish a more suitable time in order for them to attend.

Agreed:- (1) That the details be circulated to the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Governors in order for the new membership to be established for commencement in January 2011.

(2) That Head Teachers be approached about the future timing of meetings.

#### **113. DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS FOR 2010/ 2011**

Agreed:- that the following dates be approved for 2010/ 11.

Friday	8.30 am – 10.30 am	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2010	Town Hal
Friday	8.30 am – 10.30 am	5 <sup>th</sup> November 2010	Town Hal
Friday	8.30 am – 10.30 am	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2010	Town Hal
Friday	8.30 am – 10.30 am	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2011	Town Hal
Friday	8.30 am – 10.30 am	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2011	Town Hal
Friday	8.30 am – 10.30 am	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2011	Town Hal
Friday	8.30 am – 10.30 am	24 <sup>th</sup> June 2011	Town Hal

**114. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Icelandic Bank

The following statement from Andrew Bedford, Strategic Director of Finance was read out:-

“Recovery of the full amounts owing from Icelandic banks, including interest, is subject to ongoing action by the Council, and is progressing in a satisfactory manner.”

**115. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed:- That the next meeting be held on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at 8.30 am.