

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS FORUM  
FRIDAY, 10TH DECEMBER, 2010**

**Present:-** Mr. G. Jackson (in the Chair); Councillor Lakin; Ms A Burtoft, Mrs V Broomhead, Mrs J Fearnley, Mrs M Hague, Mr J Henderson and Mrs R Johnson

In attendance: Mr D Ashmore, Mr D Hill and Ms V Njegic.

**130. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Steve Clayton, Mike Firth, Lyndon Hall, Peter Hawkridge, Philip Robins, Dorothy Smith, Julie Westwood and Rev Ann Wood.

**131. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8TH OCTOBER 2010**

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 be approved as a correct record.

**132. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Council Review of Finance Functions

David Ashmore reported that a briefing would be taking place in respect of the review of finance functions this afternoon, which would include all staff involved. A revised structure would go out for consultation in the New Year to be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011.

**133. PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS**

Katy Edmondson, Advisor for Behaviour and Attendance presented the submitted report in respect of partnership PRU funding arrangements.

She reported that Rotherham had aligned three of its Secondary Pupil Referral Units to partnerships of schools who managed them to address behaviour issues proactively and develop the provisions to reflect their needs.

A Memorandum of Understanding was proposed to all partnerships for Heads and Chair of Governors to sign. This was presented to ensure that agreed protocols and processes were in place in relation to the delegated management of the PRUs by the schools on behalf of the LA.

As yet no school had signed this agreement as it was stated that "all additional costs incurred in running the PRU would be met equally by the partnership schools whilst any under spend would be returned to the LA. Dedicated Schools Grant was used to fund the PRUs and could currently be carried forward to the following financial year.

It was proposed that the Schools Forum agree to the carry forward of surpluses (to a maximum of 10%) to be ring fenced for PRUs in the following financial year. It would be necessary to account and report separately on spending in respect of PRUs.

Members considered the proposal and agreed that in principle the idea was

sound but felt that further discussion was needed with Headteachers.

Agreed:- (1) That the Schools Forum support the principle of allowing a 3 year spending profiles for each PRU to allow both over and underspends to be carried forward to the next financial year to allow more flexibility in the financial planning process.

(2) That further consultation be held with appropriate Headteacher forums in the context of existing discussions being held between Headteachers and Directors in CYPs regarding allocation of resources from Central DSG.

#### **134. TRUST SCHOOLS**

Paul Carney, School Effectiveness Officer circulated papers in respect of becoming a Foundation School with a Foundation (Trust School).

He reported that a Trust School was defined as a foundation school with a foundation. The statutory purpose of a foundation was to hold land on trust for one or more schools.

A Trust School would set its own admission arrangements, and have control over its land and buildings and employ its own staff (similar to voluntary aided schools).

Trust Schools operate within the same frameworks as other maintained schools; they would teach the national curriculum, follow the School Admissions Code, employ teaching staff under the terms of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions and be inspected by Ofsted. The Local Authority (LA) would fund the school on the same basis as all other LA schools and would retain its intervention powers if there were problem at the school.

PC outlined the process by which a governing body may acquire a Trust status including approximate timescales. The minimum timescale, from the governing body agreeing to consult to applying for a new Instrument of Government, was 14 weeks but it was recommended that governing bodies would not wish to rush such an important decision.

Agreed:- That the information be noted and received.

#### **135. CSR HEADLINES**

Consideration was given to a letter received from Michael Gove in relation to the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review and what it means for education and children's services spending over the next four years.

It confirmed that the budget in relation to schools would rise by £3.6 billion in cash terms by 2014-15 which equates to 0.1% real terms growth in each year of the spending review. The existing baseline had been protected which meant that money allocated to the following would still go to schools but the ring-fences would be removed so that head teachers had complete freedom over how money was spent:

- One to one tuition

- Every Child programmes
- Extended schools
- School Lunch Grant
- School Standards Grant
- School Development Grant
- Specialist schools grant
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
- National Strategies' budgets that were allocated to school
- Dedicated Schools Grant
- Academies running costs

The average per pupil funding in cash terms would be protected, there would be funding for the growth in pupil numbers and a pupil premium would be funded in each year of the settlement, rising to £2.5 billion by 2014-15. The premium would enable authorities to provide additional targeted support to the most disadvantaged children and young people.

In relation to early years, the 15 hours a week of free childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds would be maintained and would also be extended to disadvantaged 2 year olds. The overall cash funding for Sure Start would also be protected, including the investment in Sure Start health visitors.

Reference was made to the reductions in capital spending and it was noted that the Department's overall capital budget would be reduced by 60% over the spending review period. A total of £15.8 billion would be spent on capital between 2011-12 and 2014-15. All future capital spending would focus on ensuring that there were enough school places to meet demographic pressures and to address urgent maintenance needs. David Hill informed the Forum of current pupil trends in Rotherham, with falling rolls in secondary schools and slight increases in primary school numbers.

Action was being taken to streamline grants to ensure they provided good value for money and target support to those who needed it most. Action would include:

- Ending the Educational Maintenance Allowance and replacing it with targeted support to those young people who face genuine financial barriers to participation;
- Securing unit-cost reductions in 16-19 learning as we move towards full participation in education by 2015

It was noted that Academies had been given extra funding on top of the amounts allocated to cover for central services they now have to procure. It was confirmed that the extra funding had been allocated for VAT payments, set up costs, admission arrangements and other associated costs relating to the transfer of responsibilities.

Agreed:- That the content of the letter be noted and received.

### **136. SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER 'THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING'**

Consideration was given to a summary of the Schools White Paper 'The

Importance of Teaching’.

Members’ attention was drawn to Section 8 “School Funding” and the following issues were highlighted:

- More resources would be targeted to deprived pupils through a new ‘Pupil Premium’.
- Consultation to take place on developing and introducing a clear, transparent and fairer national funding formula based on the needs of pupils, to work alongside the Pupil Premium
- The intention to devolve the maximum amount of funding to schools.
- Measures were already in place to simplify schools funding by getting rid of ring-fences and giving schools a single funding stream – the Dedicated School Grant
- It was intended that over time, Academy status would become the norm and more resources would go direct to the frontline. A long term aspiration was to move to a national funding formula to ensure that resources going to schools were transparent, logical and equitable.
- It was intended to replace the existing Young People’s Learning Agency and set up a new Education Funding Agency (EFA) as an executive agency of the Department with responsibility for the direct funding of the growing number of Academies and Free Schools and all 16-19 provision. This would include the funding of 16-19 provision in FE colleges, sixth form colleges and independent provision. The EFA would also distribute resources to local authorities for them to pass on, as now, to those schools which were not yet Academies.
- Calculation of funding for Academies and Free Schools to be reviewed.
- The forthcoming Green Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disability would explore proposals for funding high cost provision, including exploring questions of how to increase transparency in how decisions about funding and support were made and increasing collaboration between local authorities. Subject to the success of trials of the new approach, it was anticipated that in the longer term money for alternative provision would go directly to schools.
- The disparity of funding between school sixth forms and FE colleges will be brought to an end with sixth form funding aligned to colleges by 2015.
- The requirement for LAs to operate a clawback mechanism for schools with excessive surplus balances will be removed from 2012-13.
- The Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS) was to be replaced by a much simpler standard during the 2011/12 academic year. This would be drawn up in association with schools, giving governors and head teachers real assurance that they were achieving value for money.
- Over the next four years there would be a 60% real terms reduction in education capital spending.

Agreed:- That the content of the report be noted.

### **137. EARLY SINGLE YEARS FUNDING FORMULA**

David Ashmore reported on the Early Single Years Funding Formula. He

confirmed that Rotherham's formula was to be based on three factors, a base rate and a factor for deprivation which were mandatory, and a factor for quality.

On the recommendation of the Early Years Working Group, it had been agreed that Quality in Action accreditation should be used as the single measure for the Quality factor. All providers would be given two years to achieve accreditation, after which the supplement would be removed for those providers that failed to achieve the standard.

It was also noted that from 2011/12, there was a requirement to adjust budgets in-year to reflect termly changes in 3 and 4 year old pupil numbers. Census dates in January, May and October would be used to calculate the adjustments. All schools would be supplied with statements to inform them of adjustments, but the financial adjustment itself would not be made until towards the year end.

### **138. CONSTITUTION OF SCHOOLS FORUM**

David Ashmore circulated the current Schools Forum Membership List for consideration. He reported that Secondary Headteachers thought it timely to review the constitution of the Forum. A suggestion that Forum membership should reflect the vision of Transforming Rotherham Learning and reflect the 14 learning communities was put to Forum Members.

Concerns were raised about the small number of head teachers on the forum who were making significant decisions, on occasions about funding within schools. It was felt that there needed to be involvement from more Headteachers in the decision making process.

Agreed:- That Headteachers be consulted early in the New Year on the Forum constitution and a report be brought back with recommendations from Heads.

### **139. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

David Ashmore informed Forum members that Headteachers were currently in discussions with Directors of CYPS regarding the consultation and decision making process in respect of allocation of resources from Central DSG and greater transparency.

### **140. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum be held on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2011 at 8.30 am.