

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS FORUM
FRIDAY, 9TH DECEMBER, 2011**

Present: - David Silvester (in the Chair)

Primary Schools: - Angela Heald, John Henderson, Donna Humphries, Sue Warner, Kay Jessop and Geoff Jackson

Secondary Schools: - Paul Blackwell, Roger Burman, David Butler, Bev Clubley, John Day, David Pridding and Stuart Wilson.

Early Years: - Margaret Hague.

Extra Representation: - Michael Waring and Nick Whitaker.

Non-School: - Councillor Simon Currie, Sue Brook, Val Broomhead and Geoff Gillard.

Also in attendance: - Dorothy Smith, Clare Burton, Jonathon Baggaley, Stuart Booth, Joanne Robertson, Vera Njelic, Andrea Baldwin and Steve Cope.

Apologies for absence were received from Joyce Thacker, Karen Borthwick, David Sutton and Lynne Pepper.

34. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 7TH OCTOBER 2011

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 7th October, 2011, be approved as a correct record.

35. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

(1) Constitution

It was agreed that the Constitution of the Rotherham Schools Forum be amended to enable a representative of the Rotherham Teaching Schools Alliance (David Ashmore) to attend all meetings held in the period until 31 March 2012.

(2) Removal of Rotherham Schools Forum Budget – Transfer to Rotherham School Improvement Partnership

David Silvester introduced this item which concerned an amount of approximately £1,500. A suggestion was made that meetings of the Rotherham Schools Forum might take place at venues in the various learning communities around Rotherham. Important factors were the adequate size of the meeting room, to accommodate all members, as well as there being car parking facilities at or near to the venue.

It was agreed that the budget be transferred and Vera Njelic will ensure the necessary recoding of the precise amount being transferred.

36. SCHOOLS RETAINING OVER 8% OF SCHOOL BUDGET

David Silvester introduced this item stating that there are five schools carrying

forward between 9% and 12% of the schools' budgets from the 2010/11 financial year into the current 2011/2012 financial year. The reasons for the carry forward were matters about learning communities, Sure Start and premises/building issues.

The Schools Forum noted that it was important to study the schools' history to establish their needs to carry forward these amounts. It was considered reasonable for there to be year-on-year budget variations.

It was also noted that there may eventually be a change in HM Government policy about this issue of schools being allowed to carry forward budget amounts.

The Schools Forum concluded that there are logical, common sense reasons for the five schools carrying forward these budget amounts.

Agreed:- That the five schools be permitted to carry forward the budget amounts from the 2010/11 financial year to the 2011/12 financial year.

37. EXTENDED SERVICES 2012 - 2013

David Silvester presented a report about funding for Extended Services. The report stated that the coalition Government merged a number of former Standards Fund Grants into the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2011/12 under the guiding principle that schools were to be given freedom and flexibility across all their budgets to choose how best to support their pupils. Any previous targeting of funds and earmarking of specific amounts was removed.

For 2011/12, the Schools Forum agreed that funding levels for Extended Services be maintained through the Dedicated Schools Grant at the same levels as they were provided for in 2010/11 and Rotherham Borough Council continued to direct and manage this funding. The agreement was for one year only. Therefore, schools must decide how this funding (£1,487,545 in 2011/12) should be distributed in 2012/13.

The key issues for consideration are:-

i) do schools wish to continue to ring-fence and therefore target funding for extended services in 2012/13 ?

ii) do schools want the Borough Council to retain funding for extended services and deliver services on their behalf (ie: this is the current position), or do schools want the freedom and flexibility to choose how resources are deployed ?

iii) is the current mechanism for the distribution of funding appropriate, or does it need to be amended ?

Reference was made to the need for formal consultation with all schools and learning communities, in accordance with the schools' financial regulations. Clarity would be sought on this matter, prior to the next meeting of the Schools Forum.

The Schools Forum considered that learning communities are the way forward

and therefore the delegation and distribution of the Extended Services' funding to learning communities are necessary.

Agreed:- (1) That the Rotherham Schools Forum notes that HM Government's removal of ring-fencing from the former Standards Fund Grants, including the former 'Extended Services Grant', gives schools the freedom to decide how this funding is deployed to best meet the needs of pupils; therefore, from 2012/13, this funding shall be delegated to schools and form part of the 'Individual Schools Budget', with each school receiving an allocation through an agreed formula.

(2) That a decision on the recommendation that the £1.487 millions (an estimated £36 per pupil) shall continue in part, to be funded on the basis of free school meals, is deferred until the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum, pending further discussions within the various learning communities.

(3) That the financial implications of the options listed in the report, now submitted, must be included in the further report to be submitted to the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum (nb: this information will be distributed to Schools Forum members, if possible, during the current Autumn School Term).

38. TRADE UNION BUDGET REVIEW

The Schools Forum discussed the budget for the facilities time for local Trade Union officials. The proposal is that funding continues to be met from the Dedicated Schools Grant. Until the 2011/12 budget for Trade Union facilities time was set, the allocation was £112,000 per annum. The Schools Forum had previously decided that for 2011/12 the budget would be halved, with an allocation of £56,000 per annum being made.

Reference was made to the workload of trades union officials.

Agreed:- That the current allocation of £56,000 be maintained for Trade Union facilities time for the 2012/2013 financial year.

(footnote – Susan Brook (NASUWT) was not present in the meeting during consideration of this item)

39. CARBON REDUCTION COMMITMENT

Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme, the statutory carbon dioxide emissions trading scheme for the United Kingdom. The Scheme began on 1 April 2010, with a four years' introductory phase and there will be two further phases, each one lasting six years. The Borough Council, as a registered participant in the scheme, is required to produce carbon emission reports and all state-funded schools are required to be included. However, the legislation may change, so that the Academies may eventually not have to be included in the Borough Council report, but instead produce their own reports.

Discussion took place on the cost implications for the Education service and for schools. It was noted that older, less energy efficient buildings may be penalised by this carbon tax. Advice and assistance was available from the Borough Council, to enable schools to improve their energy efficiency.

In future, carbon allowances will have to be purchased by schools, on the basis of the amount of carbon emissions in the previous year. The purchase of carbon allowances will be mandatory from 2012. Schools will be individually charged for their element of the allowances.

Agreed:- That this matter be acknowledged as being a significant budget pressure and considered further as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2012/2013.

40. PFI CHARGES

Jonathon Baggaley presented a report which explained that Rotherham Borough Council's Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with Transform Schools (Rotherham) Limited (TSRL) lasts for a period of 30 years from 1st April 2004. The contract is a standard PFI design, build, finance and operate contract, with TSRL being a company established specifically for the purpose of this contract. All of the companies involved in the PFI arrangement are Balfour Beatty group companies. The contract has involved the transfer of all the risks associated with school buildings and their operation and maintenance, to the PFI contractor.

The report included the future implications for school budgets and the Dedicated Schools Grant. It was noted that separate legal agreements would be required with any PFI Academy (school) to ensure that they continue to pay their premises budgets to the Borough Council, enabling the Borough Council to fund its payments to the PFI contractor on the Academies' behalf.

Concerns were expressed about the historical issue of non-PFI schools having to contribute to the costs, via the Dedicated Schools Grant, an arrangement applicable from the very beginning of the contract.

Agreed:- (1) That the contents of the report be noted with concern.

(2) That this matter be acknowledged as being another significant budget pressure and considered further as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant for the 2012/2013 financial year.

41. BUDGET SETTING INFORMATION

Joanne Robertson presented a report providing information about the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget setting (nb: the report will be distributed to Schools Forum members by electronic mail). A number of specific budget pressures would affect the Dedicated Schools Grant budget for the 2012/13 financial year:-

: Early Years Places (in maintained, private, voluntary and independent schools);

: the carbon reduction commitment;

: Private Finance Initiative : increasing costs;

: Borough Council savings proposals affecting Children and Young People's Services (nb: the precise impact upon the DSG is not yet known).

The report included details of the centrally retained element of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

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

42. COMMISSIONING ITEM - VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW OF EDUCATION CATERING SERVICE

Further to Minute No. 9 of the meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum held on 24th June 2011, consideration was given to a report presented by Clare Burton concerning the review the Education Catering Service. This review, utilising the EFQM Excellence Model, had enabled an assessment of both the value for money and the quality of the service. The conclusion of the review is that there is an opportunity to modernise the service, improve quality and increase value for money. The report contained various options describing alternative ways in which these objectives may be achieved.

It was noted that:-

i) there had been a limited response only to the consultation process, from parents and from the head teachers of the 30 plus schools invited to comment;

ii) a number of schools were already making their own individual arrangements for the provision of school meals to their pupils.

Agreed:- (1) That the contents of the report and the outcome of the value for money review of the Education Catering Service be noted.

(2) That this matter be considered further at the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum.

43. HOSPITAL TEACHING SERVICE

Consideration of this item was deferred until the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum, to be held on 20th January, 2012.

44. INFORMATION ITEMS

The Rotherham Schools Forum noted, for information, the contents of the following reports:-

(1) Schools Financial value Standard

(2) Roma / Slovak communities – distribution of funding

(3) 16-19 Funding Formula Review Consultation (all post-16 providers were encouraged to respond to the consultation).

45. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum be held on Friday, 20th January, 2012, at the Rockingham Teachers' Centre, beginning at 8.30 a.m.