

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY, 20TH APRIL, 2012**

Present: - David Silvester (in the Chair).

Learning Community Representatives: - Jane Fearnley (Oakwood), Simon Parton (Swinton), Sue Warner (Wickersley), Louise Pink (St Pius), Stuart Wilson (Rawmarsh), Paul Blackwell (Dinnington), David Sutton (Maltby), Bev Clubley (Thrybergh), Ann Abel (Oakwood), Lynne Pepper (Clifton), Donna Humphries (Aston), John Henderson (Brinsworth), David Butler (St Bernard's) and Roger Burman (Winterhill).

Other School Members: - Geoff Jackson (Governor Representative), Margaret Hague (Early Years Representative), David Ashmore (Rotherham Teaching School Alliance Representative)

Non-School Members: - Val Broomhead (Unison), Susan Brook (Teaching Trades Unions Representative), Karen Borthwick (14-19: Raising Participation Representative), Geoff Gillard (Sheffield Diocese Representative).

Also in attendance: - Dorothy Smith (CYPS), Jonathan Baggaley (Resources Directorate), Andrew Parry (EDS), Vera Njelic (Resources Directorate), Joanne Robertson (Resources Directorate).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence had been received from: - Michael Waring (School Business Manager Representative), David Pridding (Swinton Comprehensive School; represented by Simon Parton), and David Naisbitt (Oakwood Technology College; represented by Ann Abel).

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 2ND MARCH, 2012.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 2nd March, 2012, were considered.

Agreed: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES.

David Ashmore, Rotherham Teaching School Alliance, provided an update in relation to Minute 65 (ROSIP Funding) of the previous meeting. Wickersley School and Sports College, on behalf of the Rotherham Teaching School Alliance, had submitted a bid in conjunction with two Sheffield Teaching Schools to the National College to deliver levels one, two and three of their leadership qualification programme. This bid had been successful and a licence to deliver the programme had been granted for four years.

4. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM FOR THE 2012/13 FINANCIAL YEAR.

Agreed: - [1] That David Silvester be elected to the role of Chair of the

Rotherham Schools' Forum for the 2012/13 financial year.

(2) That the Rotherham Schools' Forum express their appreciation and continued confidence in David Silvester in respect to his Chairmanship of the Forum in the previous and forthcoming financial years.

(3) That Geoff Jackson be elected to the role of Vice Chair of the Rotherham Schools' Forum for the 2012/13 financial year.

5. CONFIRMATION OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES TO THE ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM FOR THE 2012/13 FINANCIAL YEAR.

Agreed: - (1) That the following Learning Community Representatives to the Rotherham Schools' Forum be confirmed for the 2012/13 financial year: -

Learning Community	Nominated representative
Aston	Donna Humphries
Brinsworth	John Henderson
Clifton	Lynne Pepper
Dinnington	Paul Blackwell
Maltby	David Sutton
Oakwood	David Naisbitt
Rawmarsh	Stuart Wilson
St Bernard's	David Butler
St Pius	Louise Pink
Swinton	David Pridding
Thrybergh	Bev Clubley
Wales	TBC
Wath	David Silvester
Wickersley	Sue Warner
Wingfield	TBC
Winterhill	Roger Burman

(2) The Rotherham Schools' Forum wished to record their appreciation for the members who were leaving the group: Jane Fearnley (stepping down as Learning Community Representative), Angela Heald (secured a new position in Nottinghamshire) and Val Broomhead (retiring from the Local Authority), and wished them all the best for the future.

6. MAINTENANCE OF CARETAKER PROPERTIES.

Andrew Parry, Project Officer, Internal Audit and Asset Management, attended the meeting to provide an update to the Rotherham Schools' Forum about the maintenance of caretaker properties. Approval was also sought from the Forum to continue to operate the budget in respect of caretaker properties in 2012/13 along the same lines as 2011/12.

In the previous financial year, the upkeep and maintenance of caretakers'

properties was operated on a cost neutral basis with rental income used to fund repairs and maintenance work on properties.

This had proved successful, and the 2011/12 outturn budget had achieved it's target on income and spend.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised: -

- Impact of new and existing Academies on the overall budget available;
- Reported concerns around increased rents;
- General issues referred to trades union representatives in relation to caretaker accommodation and terms and conditions.

Agreed: - [1] That the repair and maintenance of caretaker properties continue to be achieved on a cost neutral basis from rental income received in the 2012/13 financial year.

[2] That a report be presented to the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum assessing the impact of existing and potential Academies on this arrangement.

7. RATES FUNDING REVIEW FOR 2012/13.

Consideration was given to a report presented by Joanne Robertson, Finance Manager – CYPS Business Partnering, Resources Directorate, that proposed a new method of allocating the payment of rates within individual school budgets.

Previously, funding for rates had been allocated on an actuals basis. However, in the preceding three years there had been a shortfall of budget that had required contingency funding to cover the shortfall.

The report proposed two options in response to the pressure on the contingency budget: -

- Option one: maintain current arrangements with the risk that, until the actual rates charges for all schools was known, the availability of the contingency budget for other purposes was not certain. Or;
- Option two: Allocate individual schools the estimated amount for their rates charges at the beginning of the financial year within their school budget. If the actual charges were higher or lower than the allocation, schools would have to re-align their own budget.

The second option supported the overall aim of the School Funding Reform – Next Steps Toward a Fairer System policy as it provided schools greater autonomy around decision making.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised: -

- Reasons why rates would change in-year;
- Potential for 'winners' and 'losers' in the proposed option two;
- Support available for schools who 'lost' under the proposed option two.

Agreed: - (1) The Rotherham Schools' Forum voted to maintain current arrangements as set out in Option one, whereby rates funding was allocated on an actual basis, with contingency funding toping-up any shortfall in funding for the 2012/13 financial year.

(2) That financial profiling be shared at the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum that showed the variance of rates funding under the 'actuals' method for Rotherham's schools.

8. MEETING DATES FOR THE ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM FOR THE 2012/13 SCHOOL YEAR.

Agreed: - That the meeting dates of the Rotherham Schools' Forum for the 2012/13 academic year will be: -

- Friday 5th October, 2012;
- Friday 7th December, 2012;
- Friday 18th January, 2013;
- Friday 1st March, 2013;
- Friday 19th April, 2013;
- Friday 21st June, 2013.

9. UPDATE ON PRIVATE FINANCE ISSUES.

Further to Minute 66 (Private Finance Initiative – Update) of the previous Rotherham Schools' Forum meeting, consideration was given to the report submitted by Jonathan Baggaley, Finance Manager, Financial Strategy, Resources Directorate.

The report provided an update on renegotiation of the contract's concession structure, which had been agreed between PFI and local authority and school representatives.

The report also provided an overview of the annual increased contributions from the DSG to the PFI contract from the 2009/10 financial year to the proposed contribution for the 2012/13 financial year.

Agreed: - That the report be received and it's content noted.

10. SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM CONSULTATION.

David Silvester, Chair of the Rotherham Schools' Forum, and Joanne Robertson, Finance Manager – CYPS Business Partnering, Resources Directorate, circulated information to the meeting in relation to the ongoing Government Consultation entitled 'School Funding Reform: Toward a Fairer System'. This consultation was running until 21st May, 2012.

Papers tabled gave an overview of the proposed changes that aimed towards moving to a national funding formula. The overarching aims of the proposed policy changes were: -

- Simplify local funding arrangements;
- Improve the ways that local areas were funded;

- Improve arrangements for funding pupils and students with high needs;
- Simplify arrangements for the funding of early years provision.

Under the proposed changes, a number of detailed changes were anticipated: -

- From 2013/14 the Dedicated Schools' Grant would be split into three notional funding blocks: a Schools' Block, an Early Years' Block and a High Needs' Block. The current systems of allocations that it was proposed would be replaced was: -
 - Delegated budgets of special schools;
 - Centrally funded provision for individual pupils;
 - Special Educational Needs support services;
 - Support for inclusion;
 - Independent school fees;
 - Inter-authority recoupmnt;
 - Pupil referral units;
 - Education out of school;
 - Delegated allocations relating to individual pupils – individually assigned resources;
 - Delegated allocations relating to special units and specially resourced provision in mainstream schools;
 - Post-16 SEN expenditure.
- Exceptions where funding would either be returned to or retained by the local authority included: -
 - Where maintained schools agreed that a service should be provided centrally;
 - Historic commitments;
 - Statutory functions of the local authority.
- Local authorities would need to introduce one value for the Age Weighted Pupil Unit for primary Schools, and either one, or one value for KS3 and KS4, for Secondary Schools.
- Funding for high needs pupils and students (aged 5 – 25) in all settings would significantly change from April, 2013, and local authorities would become commissioners in respect of high needs pupils and students aged up to 25.
- Current school finance regulations gave local authorities the power to apply 37 different formula factors when distributing the budget (25 of which were applied in Rotherham), the proposals suggested that funding would be allocated on 10 factors.
- The DfE intended to simplify the arrangements for operating the Minimum Funding Guarantee.
- There were proposed changes to the constitutions of Schools' Forums, including that the Education Funding Agency would have observer status at Schools' Forum meetings.
- Local authorities would have to submit a budget pro-forma in respect of 2013/14 financial year by the end of October, 2012.

The implications for Rotherham under these proposals was considered.

Issues where clarification was awaited included: -

- Implications of the proposed changes to benefit entitlement/amount;
- Eligibility for membership of the Rotherham Schools' Forum;
- Implications of a School dropping out of the structure, or converting to Academy status;
- Impact for services/functions that could not be maintained under the proposed changes.

A meeting to draft a formal response to the consultation would be arranged, and members of the Rotherham Schools' Forum should approach David Silvester to indicate if they wished to attend or submit their thoughts.

The Consultation would also be considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 27th April, 2012.

Agreed: - (1) That the contents of the reports and discussion be noted.

(2) That further information be presented to the Rotherham Schools' Forum at the end of the Consultation.

(3) That Helen Barre, School Organisation, Planning and Development and SEN Manager, be asked to present a report to the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum providing further information on the implications of the High Needs Block funding proposed in the 'School Funding Reform: Next Steps Toward a Fairer System' Government Consultation on Rotherham's SEN Services.

(4) That a financial modelling exercise be shared at the next meeting showing projections based on the proposed changes, to include Free School Meal modelling.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS: -

The following items were raised: -

- Charges to schools were pupils had been excluded for more than a year.
- Two Government Consultations were ongoing in relation to Alternative Provisions (live until 15th May, 2012) and Financial Management (live until 11th May, 2012).

12. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Agreed: - That the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum be held on Friday 22nd June, 2012, to start at 8.30 am in Rockingham Professional Development Centre.

13. AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING: -

- Education Catering – update report – Ron Parry (from March meeting of the RSF)
- RoSIP – update on deployment of resources – David Ashmore (from March meeting of the RSF)
- School Effectiveness Service – update - Karen Borthwick
- School expansions – potential future requests against the DSG - Helen Barre (from January meeting of the RSF)
- Value for Money Review of the PRU Service – update on progress – Martin Fittes (from January and March meetings of the RSF)
- Early Years PVI Budget Requirement – Aileen Chambers/ Steve Scott (from January Meeting of the RSF)
- Yorkshire and Humber Grid for Learning contract – update report - Susan Gray (from October meeting of the RSF)
- Caretaker properties – Andrew Parry (from April meeting of the RSF)
- Further information on the implications of the High Needs Block funding proposed in the 'School Funding Reform: Next Steps Toward a Fairer System' Government Consultation on Rotherham's SEN Services – Helen Barre (from April meeting of the RSF)