

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY, 5TH OCTOBER, 2012**

Present:- David Silvester (in the Chair).

Learning Community Representatives: - Kay Jessop (Wingfield), Paul Blackwell (Dinnington), Lynne Pepper (Clifton), Bev Clubbley (Thrybergh), Donna Humphries (Aston), Roger Burman (Winterhill), Ann Abel (Oaskwood), Andrea Kitchen (Swinton), David Butler (St. Bernard's), John Henderson (Brinsworth), Sue Warner (Wickersley).

Other School Members: - Jane Fearnley (Junior Schools), Margaret Hague (Early Years), Nick Whittaker (Special Schools), David Ashmore (Rotherham Teaching School), Sue Mellor (Primary Governor), Alan Richards (Secondary Governor), Geoff Gillard (Sheffield Diocese), Diane Mitchell (Unison/Support Staff Trade Union), John Dalton (NUT/ Teaching Staff Trade Union).

Also in attendance: - Joanne Robertson (Finance), Dorothy Smith (Schools and Lifelong Learning), Phil Marshall (Consultant Headteacher), Vera Njelic (Finance).

Apologies for absence had been received from: - Michael Waring (Business Manager Representative), Karen Borthwick (SES), Susan Brook (NASUWT – John Dalton representing), Louise Pink (St. Pius), David Pridding (Swinton – Andrea Kitchen), Councillor Paul Lakin (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Services), Stuart Wilson (Rawmarsh).

32. GEOFF JACKSON, VICE-CHAIR OF THE ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM.

David Silvester, Chairman of the Rotherham Schools' Forum, reported with sadness the recent death of Geoff Jackson. Geoff had stepped down from the Forum in the summer and had been a member since January, 2007. He had joined the Forum as a Primary Governor Representative following a recruitment drive to increase school representation.

Geoff had been Chair of the Rotherham Schools' Forum for the two financial years between 2009 and 2011, and Vice-Chair from 2011 until the summer, 2012.

David reported that Geoff had been a longstanding Governor at High Greave Infant School, and in this, and his work with the Rotherham Schools' Forum, he had made a huge contribution.

It was suggested that a letter be sent to Geoff's family on behalf of the Rotherham Schools' Forum to express sadness at his death.

33. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 6TH JULY, 2012.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th July, 2012, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as an accurate record.

34. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES.

There was nothing to raise under this item that was not covered on this

meeting's agenda.

35. **ROTHERHAM SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP / LEARNERS FIRST SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP LTD.**

Phil Marshall, Consultant Headteacher, provided an update to the Rotherham Schools' Forum on the Learners First Schools Partnership Ltd.

The Learners First Schools Partnership Ltd was a not-for-profit 'schools company' and operated as a formal partnership structure with clear governance arrangements. The company operated on behalf of the Rotherham Partnership and, through the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, the Local Authority was the supervising authority.

Key issues/ roles of the Learners First Schools Partnership included: -

- Key partners were the Local Authority and the School Effectiveness Service, but the Partnership remained an independent organisation;
- Would act as the provider of first resort, but would not preclude other partners;
- Partners included Sheffield, Doncaster and Wolverhampton;
- Would promote school-on-school support.

Functions included: -

- Leadership development: -
 - Plan, organise, develop and analyse;
 - Initial teacher training to executive headteacher level;
 - Build system-wide capacity and capability;
 - Succession planning;
 - Organisation's Leadership Licence equated to £1.2 million income over a four-year period for delivery of middle, senior and NPQH training, which would be recycled into schools for other training provision;
 - All training would be free at point of delivery;
 - Guaranteed until 2014.
- Governance: -
 - Directors;
 - Chairs of the sub-groups were practising headteachers;
 - Clear delineation between Chairs and Directors;
 - Sub-groups were responsible for scrutiny of funding streams;
 - The strategic groups were determined by the yearly audit of need. The sub-groups currently included: Key Stage 2, Targeted Professional Development, SEN, Leadership, Initial Teacher Training and Key Stage 4.

Discussion ensued on the information that was presented.

- Ensuring that all decisions are made with the needs of children/learners in mind;
- Rotherham Schools' Forum to act as a scrutiniser of the Learners First Schools Partnership Ltd.

Rotherham Schools' Forum voted on the proposal to deploy Dedicated Schools' Grant funding to the Learners First Schools Partnership Ltd. The proposal received unanimous support.

Resolved: - (1) That the Rotherham School Improvement Partnership Strategic Group 'Learners First Schools Partnership Ltd' be supported.

(2) That permission be sought from the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families' Services to confirm the budget allocation for the financial years 2013/14 and 2014/15.

(3) That permission be sought from the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families' Services to transfer the current balances of DSG funds held by the Local Authority in respect of 2011/12 to the school company 'Learners First Schools Partnership Ltd'.

(4) That a carry-forward of the balance from the 2011/12 financial year into 2012/13 be approved.

(5) That the Rotherham Schools' Forum receives the minutes of all meetings of the Learners First Schools Partnership Ltd and the annual audited accounts for information purposes.

36. BUDGET HOLDER INFORMATION WHERE FUNDING FOR THE SERVICE MAY BE DELEGATED TO SCHOOLS FROM APRIL, 2013.

The proformas returned by the Heads of Services who service received Dedicated Schools' Grant funding were considered.

The proformas asked Heads of Service: -

- What their Service provided;
- What impact on learners could the service demonstrate/evidence;
- What was the rationale for delivering the Service in its present form (centralised/de-centralised);
- What were the main opportunities and threats of the funding being delegated to schools;
- Financial measures, including actual expenditure over the past 3 years, budget for 2012/13, income breakdown and expenditure on staffing (as a % of the budget).

The Chairman asked members of the Forum to consider whether they felt they had sufficient information within the proforma returns to consider the opportunities and threats should the funding be delegated to schools from April, 2013.

1. Autism Communication Team: -

- Map required of other services that worked with autistic children and their families.
- How many/ profile of staff who worked in the Autism Communication Team?

- 2. Education Catering Service: -**
 - Noted proforma return.
- 3. Get Real Team: -**
 - Profile of staffing was required.
 - Stability of other funding streams?
- 4. Manual Handling Service: -**
 - Training income.
- 5. Outdoor Education Team: -**
 - Noted proforma return.
- 6. Safeguarding and Sexual Exploitation Team: -**
 - £126k DSG allocation.
 - Profile of the staff who worked on the education function within the team was required.
- 7. Training for Children with medical needs: -**
 - Secondment arrangement.
- 8. Voice and influence: -**
 - Received a small DSG contribution.
- 9. School Effectiveness Service: -**
 - Noted proforma return.

Discussion ensued and the following comments were made: -

Initial work had been undertaken on a Strategic Review of the Local Authority's provision for Special Educational Needs. A Strategic Reviewer had been appointed two days a week with a focus on reviewing service provision.

- Rotherham's Cabinet had approved a report on 3rd October, 2012, which agreed a proposal for a change management programme and project management approach to respond to the requirements of the Department for Education's SEN Green Paper, 'Support and Aspirations; a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability';
- A new Review Group to be established – terms of reference to be written and membership would include school representatives;
- To link with Learners First workstreams and priorities;
- To link with Troubled Families initiative work in Rotherham;
- To establish buy-in across all Partners/Sectors.

It would be necessary to receive information on the statutory aspects of the Services and how these would operate/be achieved if the funding was delegated to individual schools and a local agreement situation existed.

Historically in Rotherham the Autism Communication Team has been reported alongside Behaviour Support Services, hence it being located within the Schools' Block. It has now been confirmed that this budget should be moved into the High Needs Block.

Emphasis on the need to bear in mind the moral purpose, as agreed at the previous meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum, to achieve the best outcomes for children and learners in Rotherham, when making financial principle decisions.

Resolved: - (1) That members of the Rotherham Schools' Forum consider specific questions to be put to the Heads of Service that received DSG funding and forward these on to the Chairman.

(2) That the information relating to the contents of the three funding blocks be re-circulated to the Rotherham Schools' Forum.

(3) That a report on the progress of the strategic review of the Local Authority's provision for Special Educational Needs be presented to the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum to be held on 30th November, 2012.

37. EXCESS SCHOOL BALANCES.

The Chairman of the Rotherham Schools' Forum reported on the actions of the working party of the Forum that met on 27th September, 2012, to discuss excess school balances.

It was noted that there was approximately £9million of funds held in excess.

The Chairman recorded their appreciation to the members of the working party; representation included primary and secondary phases and Local Authority colleagues.

There were 32 schools with an excess balance position reported at the start of the 2012/13 financial year. At the start of the previous financial year there had been 4.

Scrutiny of the schools with an excess balance that was above the Department for Education's threshold of 8% for a primary school and 5% for a secondary school had taken place. Reference was made to a number of factors: -

- Reasons given by the school for the excess;
- Financial profile from the previous three years;
- Leadership profile considered – had there been recent changes or anticipated changes that may have meant funds were not being committed?;
- School's attainment profile;
- School's Ofsted profile.

The outcomes of the working party were: -

- No excess balances would be removed at this stage;

- However, the 32 schools with an excess balance were categorised to determine future actions: -

'Category'	Action	Future action
Red: - 2	Support required.	Action Plan to address issues of attainment, need, etc.
Amber: - 17	Need to submit further information or to have a further review after a specified period.	Request additional information.
Green: - 13	No further action required.	Letter to be sent to schools recognising reasons why the excess was being held.
All Schools with an excess balance above a certain percentage.	Letter to remind schools of the importance of spending the funds on the children currently in school in the current time of high need.	Future scrutiny of schools with an excess balance to be an ongoing exercise.

Overall, of the 13 schools where no further action was required, the excess balances were attributed in the main to the recent loss of the devolved formula capital. Schools were now earmarking funds to undertake building works.

The Chair asked the Learning Community Representatives to update their Learning Community colleagues on the outcomes of the Working Party.

The Primary Governor Representative suggested that a message also be sent to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors meeting given Governors' responsibility for school finance.

The Finance Manager, CYPS Business Partnering, provided an update in relation to the responses to the consultation "Improving the Assurance System for Financial Management in Local Authority Maintained Schools". One hundred responses had been received in total and, following this, the Department had decided to introduce additional assurance criteria.

From 2011-12, local authorities would need to provide further information about the financial management of their schools where:

- A local authority had overspent its Dedicated Schools Grant by 2% or more;
- A local authority had underspent its Dedicated Schools Grant by 5% or more;
- A local authority has 2.5% of schools that had been in deficit of 2.5% or more for the last 4 years; and
- A local authority has 5% of schools that had a surplus of 15% or more for the last 5 years.

The report could be downloaded at: <http://bit.ly/SvPEVk> .

Resolved: - (1) That the information shared be noted.

(2) That a further meeting of the Excess School Balances Working Party be convened to plan contact with schools identified and develop further actions to address those schools with excess balances.

(3) That the communications be shared with the Rotherham Schools' Forum and the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governing Bodies meeting.

38. DSG 2011/12 OUTTURN STATEMENT.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Finance Manager, CYPs Business Partnering, Financial Services, Resources Directorate, in relation to the 2011/12 financial year-end position for the Rotherham total schools budget.

Based on actual income and expenditure to 31st March, 2012, the main overspends were: -

- Contingency / schools carbon reduction charge;
- Special Educational Needs;
- School rates.

The main underspends were: -

- Pupil Referral Units;
- SEN Extra District Placements;
- Delegated Schools Budgets;
- Rotherham School Improvement Partnership;
- Former Specific Grants;
- Education Action Zones.

Agreed carry-forward balances were: -

- Rotherham School Improvement Partnership - £788k;
- Extended Services - £301k;
- Education Action Zones - £184k.

Requested carry-forwards for approval: -

- £45K for YHGfL carried forward into 2012/13, to pay for the 2011/12 contract not yet invoiced;
- Partnership PRUs – The Bridge (£13,454 deficit carry-forward), St. Mary's (£27,262 surplus carry-forward), Riverside (£10,742 deficit carry-forward).

Residual balance if the requested carry-forwards were approved: -

- £64k.

Discussion ensued around the level of funding available in relation to the

Education Action Zones.

Uses for the residual funding were considered. Options included using it to address the demands and needs/pressures areas of the DSG, or to return to school budgets.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That further information be sought in relation to the Thrybergh and North West Education Action Zones' outturn position at 2011/12.

(3) That consideration of the residual balance be deferred pending receipt of further information.

39. DSG 2012/13 BUDGET MONITORING - UP TO 31ST AUGUST, 2012.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Finance Manager, CYPS Business Partnering, Financial Services, Resources Directorate. This report confirmed the total schools budget allocation for 2012/13 and the projected outturn against the budget based on expenditure up to 31st August, 2012. The report had been emailed to the Rotherham Schools' Forum prior to the meeting and hardcopies made available to attendees at the meeting.

The total schools budget had been reduced by £287k, as a result of Academy recouplement being higher than expected and EFA funding being lower than expected. It had been projected that the DSG 2011/12 would be a deficit of £312k, however, the actual carry forward was a surplus of £64k. The overall effect was a reduction of £287k, making the 2012/13 total schools budget £184.118 million.

There were virements totalling £38k due to unachievable vacancy factors. This had been off-set against staff slippage in other services, totalling £84k. The resulting balance of £45k had been transferred to the projected overspend on Special Educational Needs.

Delegated schools budgets were reporting an underspend of £3.971 million as at the end of July, 2012.

Variances against revised budget allocations were: -

- Pupil Referral Units – overspends at The Bridge, Riverside PRU, The Rowan Centre and Broom Lane. Underspends reported at St Mary's, Education Other Than At School and Transport.
- Special Education Needs – overspend.
- SEN Extra district placements- over spend due to projected reduction in income from other local authorities.
- Extended Services – under spend due to staff slippage.
- Rotherham School Improvement Partnership – under spend of £380k. The service had request that the balance be carried forward into 2013/14.

The CYPS Business Partner informed the Forum that, if the Rotherham School Improvement Partnership carry-forward was agreed into 2013/14, the

projected outturn across the remaining total schools budget would be an £353k overspend.

The Chairman requested that a message to all budget holders should reiterate the importance of timely and accurate budget monitoring. The Finance Manager pointed out that the main area of variance was the SEN budget which was needs-led due to it being directly related to children's placements in educational settings.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That a decision on the report be deferred pending further information.

40. SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM - UPDATE - FORMULA 2012/13 UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS.

The Principal Finance Officer, Financial Services, Resources Directorate, provided an update to the Rotherham Schools' Forum on the consultation on the Local Funding Formula for 2013/14.

The proposed consultation questionnaire that would be sent to all schools was shared with the members of the Rotherham Schools' Forum.

Consideration was also given to the modelling exercise that had been undertaken with the new allowable formula factors.

Appendix 1: - Initial 12/13 formula factors mapped to new permissible factors.

Appendix 2: - Amended 12/13 formula factors mapped to new permissible factors

There were around 10 schools who would lose a significant percentage of their funding, as demonstrated through the model formula.

Members of the Rotherham Schools' Forum were asked to consider their responses to the consultation questions based on principles, rather than based on the 'winners' and 'losers' under the proposed formula.

The consultation deadline for schools to provide their comments to Financial Services was 17th October, 2012.

Discussion ensued on the consultation questions. It was proposed that the Behaviour Support and Pupil Referral Unit funding be moved into the High Needs block to allow the centralised strategic review work to take place. The funding would be held centrally until the outcome of the review, allowing a future decision about whether it would be de-delegated.

The Principal Finance Officer confirmed that the Behaviour Support budget would be delegated to schools in the first instance, but if the Rotherham Schools' Forum decided the Service should be provided centrally, funding from the maintained schools would be returned to the Local Authority (de-delegation). Academies would be able to choose to buy into such services by local agreement.

Resolved: - That the Principal Finance Officer circulate the consultation document to all schools.

41. THORNHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL.

The Chairman informed the Rotherham Schools' Forum that the building expansion at Thornhill Primary School had not been completed to schedule, and consequently, additional pupil numbers were not on roll as expected in September, 2012.

Minute 50 (Thornhill Primary School Pupil Number Change) of the Rotherham Schools' Forum meeting held on 20th January, 2012, resolved that funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant be made available to the School to enable additional teaching and support staff to be deployed at Thornhill Primary School from September, 2012, to March, 2013.

It was anticipated that the building works would be completed and additional places would be available for children to start the School after the October, 2012, half-term.

The Chair outlined options available to the Rotherham Schools' Forum in relation to the additional Dedicated Schools' Grant funding that Thornhill Primary School had received: -

- Leave Dedicated Schools' Grant funding allocation as agreed on 20th January, 2012;
- Recoup all funding for the Autumn term, 2012/13;
- Recoup half of the funding allocation for the Autumn term, 2012/13.

Discussion ensued and it was suggested that further information be provided based on the actual numbers on roll compared to the projected numbers considered by Rotherham Schools' Forum on 20th January, 2012.

Resolved: - That a decision be deferred until further information is received.

42. REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS PVI BUDGET - UPDATE.

Resolved: - That this issue be considered at the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum to be held on 30th November, 2012.

43. PRU AND BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT SERVICE UPDATE.

Resolved: - That this issue be considered at the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum to be held on 30th November, 2012.

44. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

The Unison / Support Staff Trades' Unions' Representative agreed to circulate information via email to the Rotherham Schools' Forum about support staff in schools administering medicines to pupils and proposals for how this could be recognised in their remuneration.

45. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS: -

Resolved: - (1) That the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum take place on Friday 30th November, 2012, to start at 8.30 am, Rockingham Professional Development Centre (delete 7th December).

(2) That the future meeting dates of the Rotherham Schools' Forum be held on: -

- Friday 18th January, 2013;
- Friday 1st March, 2013;
- Friday 19th April, 2013;
- Friday 28th June, 2013 (delete 21st June).