

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM  
FRIDAY, 16TH JANUARY, 2015**

**Present:-** P. Blackwell (Dinnington) (in the Chair).

**Learning Community Representatives:** - K. Sherburn (Rawmarsh), L. Pepper (Clifton), J. Morrision (Swinton and representing St. Bernard's in voting), D. Silvester (Wath), D. Naisbitt and A. Abel (Oakwood – one vote), R. Burman (Winterhill), P. Dilasio and L. McCall (Wales – one vote), R. Fone (Brinsworth), T. Bishop (Saint Pius), J. Fearnley (Wingfield), C. Roberts (Wickersley), D. Ball (Aston).

**Other stakeholder representatives:** - G/ Gillard (Sheffield Diocese), S. Brooke (NASUWT, Teaching Trade Unions), M. Badger (Unison, Support Staff Unions), P. Gerard (Early Years), P. Bloor (PRUs), D. Ashmore (Teaching Schools – Learners First), S. Mallinder (Primary Governors).

**Officers in attendance:** - J. Robertson (Finance), V. Njelic (Finance), K. Borthwick (Interim Director for Schools and Learning), D. Rae (SEND Consultant), H. Etheridge (Committee Services).

**Observer:** - M. Young.

**Apologies for absence had been received from:** - S. Booth (Finance), S. Kent (Thryberh – voting intentions passed on), I. Thomas (Interim Strategic Director of CYPS), G. Alton and R. Williams (Colleges), N. Whittaker (Special Schools), S. Hustler (Business Managers), A. Richards (Secondary Governors), J. Gray (Early Years PVI), T. Mahon (Saint Bernard's – voting intentions passed on), Councillor C. Beaumont (Children and Education Services), H. McLaughlin (Saint Pius – representative attending), J. Henderson (Brinsworth – representative attending).

### **83. TRAINING SESSION.**

The Principal Schools' Accountant delivered a presentation that provided members of the Rotherham Schools' Forum with background and details on Funding Reforms, including the DSG for 2015/2016.

- 2012/2016 Dedicated Schools' Grant: -
  - Guaranteed Unit of Funding per pupil;
  - The Total Budget - £209million;
  - Comparison between Rotherham and statistical neighbours;
  - Section 251 – 2012/2013.
- How Section 251 expenditure had been mapped into the three Blocks;
- Amounts allocated to each Block in 2013/2014;
- 2013/2014 DSG allocations for statistical neighbours in the Schools' and Early Years' Guaranteed Unit of Funding;

- 2013/2014 High Needs' Block allocations amongst statistical neighbours;
- Fairer Funding in Schools, 2015/2016: -
  - Rotherham's Guaranteed Unit of Funding would remain unchanged.
- 2015/2016 provisional Block values: -
  - Schools' Block comparison to 2014/2015;
  - 2014/2015 primary, secondary and academy budgets make-up;
  - De-delegated budgets – maintained schools only – 2013/2014, 2014/2015 and 2015/2016;
  - Historical commitments;
  - Pupil Growth Fund and National Copyright licences;
  - Servicing of Schools' Forum.
- **Operational guidance for Local Authorities in 2015/2016: -**
  - **The LA will need to make strategic decision on how funding is distributed between the schools, early years and high needs blocks taking into account demographic and other pressures;**
  - **LAs are able to move funding between the blocks provided they comply with the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) and have agreement of Schools' Forum on any increase in centrally held budgets.**

#### **84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Susan Brooke, Teaching Trade Unions' Representative, declared an interest as the funding for her post was received through the Schools' Block.

David Ashmore, Teaching Schools' Representative, declared an interest in decisions relating to the Schools' Block due to his representation of Learners First.

#### **85. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 28TH NOVEMBER, 2014.**

The minutes and meeting digest of the previous meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2014, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes be agreed as an accurate record.

#### **86. DEVOLVED CENTRAL BUDGET.**

The Interim Director for Schools and Lifelong Learning reported that the

centrally-held funding in relation to Learners First had been sent to all eligible Schools following a meeting with the Interim Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services Directorate. A communication had been sent out to Schools, along with further information for those schools that operated a bank account.

The Wingfield Learning Community Representative asked why there had been a delay. The Interim Director explained the reasons, including the significant changes within the Directorate Leadership Team of Children and Young People's Services Directorate and the use of delegated powers through the Interim Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services Directorate.

The Chair of the Rotherham Schools' Forum had emphasised the need for a quick resolution and was pleased that this had been actioned.

Further discussion ensued on the requirement for some schools above the thresholds of Standing Orders to obtain quotations. It was noted that this requirement would be exempted centrally by the Local Authority.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.

#### **87. CENTRALLY RETAINED SERVICES.**

The Chair of the Rotherham Schools' Forum introduced this item; at the time of the meeting the Local Authority did not have a comprehensive offer to present relating to buy-back models for the services currently funded through centrally-retained resources.

Discussion followed on the principles and practicalities surround this issue: -

- It was very clear how some services could operate on a buy-back model, whereas others were not so clear. Could this represent a disadvantage to those services and service-users?;
- Voting principles – should this be considered on principle as a block, or on a service-by-service basis based on the value of each Service?;
- The role of the recent budget saving decision that had been applied to the City Learning Centres and how this might influence Representatives' decisions to vote;
- If some of the smaller contributions were devolved to Schools they would not add very much to Schools' budgets; what could Schools do with this?;
- Opportunity for Central Services – if they were well regarded and offered value for money, Schools were likely to passport the funds straight back;
- Potential redundancy situations;
- The Interim Director for Schools and Lifelong Learning described how the structure of the Children and Young People's Services

Directorate would be altering from two Directorates into four, meaning that some services would be located in different areas with different line management. She referred to hearsay that funding would be differently structured in the future and existing centrally-held funds would become protected and unable to be devolved to Schools. She had taken DfE advice on this and there were no plans to do this in the future. A General Election was due, potentially leading to a different policy direction;

- Any votes taken were to become effective on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015. This could lead to significant risks for the Local Authority, including significant redundancy costs;
- There was support amongst attendees that where there were highly regarded services, Schools would continue to buy them back. There were many examples of great Services that the Local Authority should be proud of, along with the shared vision between the Local Authority and Rotherham's Schools;
- The City Learning Centre Service had been working towards a stand-alone position for some time but was not yet ready to take this. Would assurances be available if Services' funding remained centrally held that no further savings would be taken?;
- The PRU Representative commented on his discomfort at being able to vote on matters within the Schools' Block given that PRUs were funded through the High Needs' Block. The Chair of the Rotherham Schools' Forum pointed out that PRUs did use the Services being discussed and were stakeholders;
- Members of the Rotherham Schools' Forum undertook the vote on a positive note and felt that any decision to stop holding funds centrally would be an opportunity.

The Rotherham Schools' Forum voted on the proposal to delegate the funds within Table Three to eligible Schools with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015.

Resolved: - (1) The proposal to delegate the funds within Table Three to eligible Schools with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015, was supported on a majority basis with one abstention and no votes against.

(2) That the pro-forma return to the DfE due on 20<sup>th</sup> January, reflect this vote.

#### **88. UPDATE ON CENTRALLY HELD FUNDS.**

The Chair of the Rotherham Schools' Forum referred to the decisions required relating to Tables Four and Five.

##### **Table Four: -**

The items within this Table could be centrally-retained and could be increased from the 2014/2015 allocations.

It was known that the charge for Copyright Licensing Agency, Education Recording Agency and Music Publishers' Association would increase by two thirds in 2015/2016. It was not possible to opt out of this and the cost was top-sliced by the Department for Education.

It was proposed that the 2015/2016 allocation to the Pupil Growth Fund be increased to £500k, an increase from £400k in the previous year, due to increasing pupil numbers within the Borough. It was requested that regular updates be provided by the Service Lead on the use of the Pupil Growth Funding.

**Table Five: -**

This amount related to the servicing of the Schools' Forum but there could be no increase in the allocation from 2014/2015.

Resolved: - (1) That the 2015/2-16 budget allocation to the Copyright Licensing Agency, Education Recording Agency and Music Publishers' Association increase by two thirds in 2015/2016 based on the 2014/2015 allocation be approved.

(2) That the 2015/2016 allocation to the Pupil Growth be centrally-retained and be £500k (an increase on the 2014/2015 allocation).

(3) That regular updates be provided by the Service Lead for School Planning, Admissions and Appeals on the use of the Pupil Growth Fund.

(4) That the 2015/2016 allocation to the servicing of the Rotherham Schools' Forum be centrally retained and be £3k (same as the 2014/2015 allocation).

**89. CLASSROOM START-UP FUNDING FOR NEW SCHOOLS.**

Further to Minute No. 80 (Eastwood Village Primary School – pre-opening funding allocation) of the previous meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum held on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2014, further information had been circulated relating to the start-up costs for Foundation Stage One and the Key Stages One and Two Classrooms for the new central primary school.

The Service Lead for School Planning, Admissions and Appeals had recommended that the start-up costs for the new central primary school be increased to £4k. This was an increase on the amount budgeted in the expansion formula of £3k.

It was reported that the amounts relating to the Foundation Stage One Classrooms should not be agreed at this meeting as further conversations had been requested by the Early Years and Childcare Service.

The Rotherham Schools' Forum voted on the proposal to allocate £3k for the Key Stage One and Two Classroom start-up costs to the new Central

Primary School, based on the detailed list of costings submitted.

Resolved: - (1) It was unanimously supported that the £3k allocation for the Key Stages One and Two Classrooms for the new Central Primary School, in-line with the school expansion formula, be approved.

(2) That a decision in relation to the Foundation Stage One Classroom/s be deferred to allow further conversations to take place.

#### **90. EDUCATED OTHER THAN AT SCHOOL (EOTAS) AND DE-DELEGATED BUDGETS.**

Consideration was given to this item relating to de-delegated funding and the report submitted by the Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children and the Strategic Lead for Vulnerable Pupils.

The report noted the remit of the Educated Other Than At School team to inform the Rotherham Schools' Forum of the volume and nature of work that the team was involved in.

This included: -

- Managed Moves;
- Exclusions;
- Fixed Exclusion Occurrences;
- Fixed Exclusions;
- Permanent Exclusions;
- PRU numbers.

Consideration had been given to the development of a traded-model and it was felt that the EOTAS agenda did not support a traded model approach. This was supported by the Directorate Leadership Team of the Children and Young People's Services Directorate.

The Rotherham Schools' Forum noted this report, and also noted the decision made at the agenda items relating to centrally retained services, which had implications for the EOTAS Service funding structure.

The Wickersley Learning Community Representative asked why maintained schools were paying more when academy schools were buying back the Service?

In relation to all of the de-delegated budgets under consideration, Schools in Financial Difficulty, Behaviour Support (EOTAS), Free School Meal eligibility and Trade Union, discussion was held on the principles involved:

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- The outcomes of consultation with maintained schools;
- Would the Schools in Financial Difficulty budget operate as a buy-back model? Would schools be willing to buy into this?;

- The constitution and voting rights of the Rotherham Schools' Forum – the vote would need to be taken separately between primary and secondary representatives of maintained schools only;
  - Potential need to reconstitute the Rotherham Schools' Forum.
- A decreasing number of maintained schools were taking on a greater share and this was an uncomfortable scenario for representatives. However, it was noted that these budgets could be reduced.

The options for voting were discussed.

Secondary Schools – maintained only – were asked whether to remove funding from maintained school budgets in respect of Behaviour Support (EOTAS), Free School Meal eligibility and Trade Union activity 2015/2016 financial year. (Schools in Financial Difficulty did not apply).

Primary Schools – maintained only – were asked whether to remove funding from maintained school budgets in respect of Schools in Financial Difficulty, Behaviour Support (EOTAS), Free School Meal eligibility and Trade Union activity 2015/2016 financial year. Primary School Representatives also voted on the amount of the allocation to Schools in Financial Difficulty.

Resolved: - (1) The Secondary School Representatives – maintained only – voted on a unanimous basis to return funding to maintained school budgets in 2015/2016 in respect of Behaviour Support (EOTAS), Free School Meal eligibility and Trade Union activity.

(2) The Primary School Representatives – maintained only – voted on a unanimous basis to return funding to maintained school budgets in 2015/2016 in respect of Behaviour Support (EOTAS), Free School Meal eligibility and Trade Union activity.

(3) The Primary School Representatives – maintained only – voted on a majority basis (one against) for Schools in Financial Difficulty to continue to be de-delegated in 2015/2016, with a decreased budget allocation of £75k for the year.

(4) That a report be presented to the April meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum on how the Schools in Financial Difficulty funding was spent.

## **91. HIGH NEEDS UPDATE.**

Consideration was given to the report tabled by the SEND Consultant that outlined the initial considerations that had taken place regarding SEND provision in Rotherham.

It was explained that the paper was still in an early draft form. Further

information was awaited from Further Education establishments and a data check was required on all other information presented.

The document covered: -

- Demographic changes in the Borough – a projected 10% overall increase in pupil numbers was expected, which would lead to an increase of 10% of children and young people with SEND. This was forecast due to the number of additional houses that would be built in the Borough over the next twenty years;
- There had been a 10% increase in Rotherham pupil numbers between 2009-2016;
- Specialist provision: -
  - The local context;
  - Current provision – specialist places in Rotherham's 6 Special Schools and 6 Mainstream units and Enhanced Resources;
  - Quality of provision.

The document outlined a proposal to consult widely upon strategic change, including the establishment of an enhanced role for special schools, including responsibility for satellite provision in mainstream schools. The report outlined the numbers of places that would be available across Rotherham.

Discussion on the issues raised followed and the following questions were asked: -

- Abbey School had been included in the plan but was currently under consultation to close. How had their places been included in the planning document? - Abbey had been included in the document which would be altered as necessary following the end of consultation period and the decision made on Abbey School;
- Would there be enough places if Abbey School closed? - The review was considering how many specialist places were needed and where in Rotherham;
- The High Needs' Block was already over-spent. Where would additional funding be received from in the case of additional places that were currently under consultation? - These would create additional pressures, but, overall, the system would be moving to a closer correlation between what the budget was and the outturn position;
- It had been hard for some stakeholders to understand what the causes of the over-spend had been – the SEND Consultant outlined the top-up funding and per-place funding;
- The number and type of external placements would be analysed. This could necessitate further local provision.

The Chair of the Rotherham Schools' Forum asked members to take the information tabled away from the meeting and absorb the content.

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

(2) That the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum receive an update on High Needs work.

## **92. BUDGET MONITORING UPDATE.**

Consideration was given to the report presented by the CYPS and Schools' Finance Manager that provided a budget monitoring report on the Total Schools budget for 2014/2015 based on expenditure to 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.

The current projected outturn was an over-spend of £1.268million, which represented an increase of 0.86% against the total budget.

The Total Schools' budget was calculated based on confirmation of the DSG allocation, the EFA post-16 SEN funding for 2014/2015 and the DSG carry-forward from 2013/2014. The total amount available was £145.764m, after deductions for Academy recoupment.

The submitted report outlined revisions to the Total Schools' Budget following academy recoupment.

Budget virements had taken place in the Schools' Block – the School Effectiveness Service and contingencies, High Needs' Block – Special Educational Needs (top-up funding) and the Early Years' Block (primary delegated budget).

The report outlined the main variances against the budget allocations leading to under-spends and over-spends for each service division.

Questions were asked for further information on: -

- Academy recoupment – clarification was requested on the figures recouped and the process;
- Schools of concern allocation and the partnership with Learners First and school-to-school support;
- Early Education places not being accessed.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and the revised Total Schools' Budget allocation for 2014/2015 be noted.

(2) That the current projected outturn position for 2014/2015 based on expenditure to the end of November, 2014, of an over-spend position of £1.258m be noted.

## **93. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS: -**

Resolved: - (1) That the next meeting of the Rotherham Schools' Forum

take place on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2015, to start at 8.30 a.m. at the Rockingham Professional Development Centre.

(2) That future meetings take place on: -

- Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 – annual meeting for the Election of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson;
- Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2015.

Both to start at 8.30 a.m. at the Rockingham Professional Development Centre.