

CALDERDALE SCHOOLS FORUM
22 June 2023 – Virtual Meeting Via Teams

PRESENT:

Tony Guise (Secondary Maintained) – Chair
John Eccleston (Academy)
Karen Morley (Academy) – Co Vice Chair
Phil Hannah (PRU)
Jo Buckley (Primary Maintained) – Co Vice Chair
Debbie Sweet (Special School)
Karl Veltman (Post 16 Representative)
Richard Horsfield (Secondary Academy)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Tinsley (AD Education and Inclusion)
Richard Morse (Senior Commissioning Officer – School Organisation and Planning)
Jane Davy (Finance Officer)
Connie Beirne (Interim Service Manager for Early Years and School Strategy and Performance)
Martyn Sharples (Finance Officer)
David Graham (QA and Complaints Consultant)
Steve Drake (Finance Officer)
Ian Hughes (Legal Officer)
Gill Poole (Unions)

APOLOGIES

Brenda Monteith (Roman Catholic)
Brian Robson (Brighouse High School)
Adam McNichol (Primary Governors Maintained)
Gill Shirt (Secondary Governor Maintained)
Dan Burns (Academy Primary)
Desmond Deehan (Academy)
Mungo Shepherd (Primary Maintained)
Julie Kendall (Academy)

1. Substitutes nominated for this meeting and apologies for absence.

None.

2. Members Interests

John Eccleston declared an interest as he sits on the Partnership Board and is part of the Calderdale Governors Association.

Tony declared an interest in item 7 and item 9 as the Chair of Schools Forum and the Head Teacher of Calder Learning Trust.

3. Admission of the Public

None.

4. Minutes of the Schools Forum held on 23rd February 2023

Tony raised item 9 Allocation of the 2023/24 High Needs Block, regarding the Hub Model. Concern has been raised by Chris Lingard at Ravenscliffe and the plans around SEN hubs. A discussion has taken place between the Local Authority and her school but the offer for the whole model has not been progressed. Calder Learning Trust could create a hub but this will be capital investment.

Paul raised item 5 Admissions and School Rebuilding Programme. The posts have been discussed with a recommendation to look at costing. Richard is currently working on this and will come back to Schools Forum with more details.

John Q: is there an accurate report on concrete relating to school conditions?

Richard surveyed all maintained schools 2-3 years ago and no issues were highlighted.

5. Allocation of Funding to School Improvement Clusters (mid-term updates)

The allocation of funding no longer sits with the board but instead, the funding is allocated to school clusters for a more quality assurance approach. This is to help reduce inequalities and focus on children's emotional health and wellbeing. The clusters are grateful for the funding from Schools Forum to help them achieve valuable work and conduct training for good practice.

Tony Q: The Partnership Board is in deficit. What is being done to monitor this at cluster level? The end of year report is submitted to the Partnership Board including the March reports to monitor the spending. These showed that some clusters had surplus funding. Connie is meeting with clusters finance officers 4 times a year to identify priorities. Connie also liaises with Jane on how the money is being spent.

Phil Q: Is the cluster funding and the money distributed subject to a separate audit? We do not audit this. It is allocated to cluster officers and Head Teachers. The Partnership Framework will guide them in terms of procurement and audits.

6. Scheme for Financing Schools and National Funding Formula

There is no direct change, and the Local Authority will not be updating the scheme this financial year.

7. Final Balances and 3-year Budget Plans report

The overall level of balances in Calderdale's 52 maintained schools is £10.15 million which includes the cluster funding increase from the previous year. Two primary schools are currently in deficit and five schools are holding less than £40k. The Local Authority can hold schools to account for excessive balances for the year however, many schools hold this money for projects and recruitment. Appendix A shows closing balances at March 2023 and perspective at March 2024.

John expressed concern around the Local Authority and schools not being able to provide enough places for SEND children and the money is not being used for the children's benefit.

Jane advised that Head Teachers have put recruitment on hold as it is unknown if the pay award will increase from last September. Schools are not accounting for an increase and may have put a stop on building works. Currently 31 schools are projected to be in deficit by the end of year 3 / 4.

Tony highlighted that whilst the Calder Learning Trust has significant amount of surplus, all maintained schools had a condition survey which was subject to a School Rebuilding Programme. The funds are being maintained for worst case scenarios and Tony is challenging the DfE on salary increases for context.

8. Claw Back Report

A report can be provided if balances increase.

9. LA initial report on proposal to move 0.5% from schools block to High Needs Block report

Tony shared the questions provided by Debbie with members. The report is to be brought to the Schools Forum in the autumn term as it is required to consult with schools. Paul is attending CPHA and CASH to discuss this further and a formal consultation is needed. Feedback will be gathered in a report for autumn term. Schools Forum members will vote on this and if the outcome is not voted in favour, there is a further opportunity to take to the Secretary of State. Previously, there was an underspend of the High Needs Block but the report shows where the pressures are as of today. Jane and Steve discussed that out of authority placements are causing an overspend and even though Early Years and the Specialist Inclusion team are heavily resourced, overspending is still occurring which highlights the level of demand.

When comparing the High Needs Block in other authorities, they are overspending as high as £30/40 million. The Local Authority will need to send a return to ESFA to show a balanced book in terms of the High Needs Block. Steve is leading on submission of the balanced book and LA Officers are to agree a recovery plan before the transfer of funds. Paul will pick this up with Steve as members could put forward they would prefer the

Local Authority to overspend on the High Needs Block. Jane and Steve will consult on this over the summer break.

Q: Do we receive contributions or can the Health and Care budget go towards the cost of places? Yes, we are working closely with Social Care. The care elements are paid for from their budgets.

Q Tony: Can we increase those contributions? The Local Authority currently has few children in residential placements, David will collate the numbers and provide figures. Going forward he wants to work alongside health and focus on their contribution to continuing health care concentrating on budgets and placements.

Q John: Should the consultation be put to Governors so that they remain in the loop? Paul agreed that it would be important to consult with Governors and anyone else affected. Steve will be meeting with David and Alex to bring together the finance for the DSG recovery plan to be able to start consulting in early July.

Q: If the consultation is to take place from early July, are you taking into account the school holidays because it doesn't seem fair to speak to governing bodies first and schools to be consulted after? The formal consultation starts in September with feedback to be brought to the Autumn meeting. Discussions around this can start today rather than at the formal consultation.

Debbie submitted her questions to the Chair relating to Item 9. These are to be shared with Local Authority Officers.

1. Para 2a) What was the increased spending on the specialist inclusion team and why was there an increase? What impact measures are in place for the services provided by this team- i.e how can we prove value added?
2. Para 2c) what is the cost of suspended pupils Vs permanently excluded pupils? How effective is the provision being made given the significant increase in the number of suspended pupils from 2019/20- 2022/23? Is there a strategic plan to address this and therefore reduce the costs?
3. Para 2e) (i) The number stated for increase in places at Highbury for September 2023 are nowhere near correct. Why are only the increase in reception places stated, there are increases across most year groups and there is an expansion of the satellite provisions attached to Highbury at KS1 and 2 creating an additional 20 places? What confidence does this give forum that there is accurate data being recorded and acted upon? LA officers to ensure schools are consulted what actual numbers are and SF have a clear idea for consultation
4. Para 2d) The increased funding to support children in the early years; how effective is this given that it is not impacting on the number of requests for early years places, in fact they are continuing to rise? Martin to look at the Early Years funding.
5. Para 2e) How many out of authority places are there in total and what is the gap in need that they are addressing? Are the places ever reviewed? Is there clear

success and exit criteria? There is the issue around the absence of alternative provision and lack of support and resources for secondary schools. More options are needed due to not being enough places.

6. How is this proposal linked to the planned review of funding to mainstream schools, especially where numbers of children with EHCP's is significantly above the average?

David has responded to Debbie to work with her on the questions in regard to SEND. David will be formulating the budget for next year and the increase in demand across the board. He is currently looking at Calderdale's Local Offer with Paul. He highlighted that the projects for this year and next are to be as robust as possible. The independent maintained placements have a duty of care for children in these provisions. David will come back with further details of proposals.

Debbie agrees that services are feeling a pressure and that there is the need to evolve. The issues around funding needs to be analysed and a systemic change to be implemented. It would be beneficial to link up with other services and health colleagues.

Paul agreed with a whole education systemic review as there is a need for change around how we support schools and how to work as a community in terms of SEND. School staff being trained must be addressed with a look to upskilling staff in mainstream schools resulting in all staff being at similar level in terms of challenges. There is currently a high number of permanent exclusions, some schools higher than others which Paul is taking to CPHA and CASH conference. Paul needs to speak to schools before commissioning new places at the Alternative Provision and the Local Authority needs to support with intervention and engagement places to help reduce the number of Permanent Exclusions.

Q Tony: What support is there for schools who have vulnerable children other than the TWAPA? Evidently, there needs to be a broader conversation around this. The Hub Model is there to help support staff currently.

Debbie raised the point of there being too much pressure on SENCo's and for there to be specialist teachers in school. The DfE approved a proposal from Highbury Special School to support schools to create a specialist teacher role.

Phil confirmed the support around prevention placements has been agreed with Paul for potentially the whole year. His KS2 will be locating to another site to help support Primary pupils. Paul is looking at commissioning a nurture provision for those pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. Karl has drafted a reconnect offer to support those disengaging pupils and to help them transition back into school. There is the Princes Trust Team at college to help deliver with ASD element and Karl will share this at the CASH conference.

David discussed the Early Years initiative and Dingley's promise to upscale their workforce. It will be a whole system support, looking at additional capacity through the Hub Model with a nurture hub as an additional provision for ASD pupils. It is the first time this year that a forecast for a specialist resource provision has been through the SCAP

return. By next Schools Forum, he will have the planning document to address capital planning. To ensure effectiveness there needs to be a system wide approach.

Paul feels there is a need to invest up front now to make savings later to help provide more capacity in the Local Authority, which can help save money on placing pupils elsewhere. Pressures on High Needs Block feels right to do to be able to invest in the most vulnerable young people and for a cultural change.

Tony as Chair thanked Local Authority officers for the reports submitted for this meeting and being concise and to the point.

10. Forum Constitution and Terms of Office

Ian made sure this is valid and fit for purpose. He will check we have a balance between Head Teacher and School Forum members. Tony as Chair thanked members for being prepared and challenging issues where needed.

11. Self-Assessment Feedback

Another may be coming up at the end of this year.

12. Changes to Early Years Funding in 23/24 and future provision report

Martyn discussed the purpose of the report is to inform members of the government's announcement of the Spring budget, but no update has been provided beyond this.

There are planned changes for hourly funding rates being paid to Local Authorities and schools from September 2023. There will be more information and a consultation for future funding of new entitlements by the end of Summer. The DfE are proposing to provide local authorities with additional funds and grant early years a supplementary grant. There are no formal requirements to consult on the hourly rate however, we can anticipate in the memorandum, Local Authorities' will be directed to pass on the increase in funding to providers.

Ultimately there will be more work for local authorities to complete checks on children to confirm their eligibility and to ensure payments are appropriate. Martyn is hoping to recruit to oversee this role for the marketing as requesting from the fully retained funding is no longer the case. It is now requested from this year's DSG as advised from DfE.

Q Karen: Is the recommendation no longer the case?

Yes, it is confirmed that this is no longer the case. It is anticipated that we would centrally retain additional funds to build capacity to administrate the new entitlements from April 2024. This funding is intended for existing entitlements not the new entitlements and the proposed additional capacity is for future entitlements. The grant memorandum is expected to restrict the grant to be exclusively used to increase the hourly rate of existing entitlements.

13. Addendum to the Admissions and Schools Rebuilding Programme; outlining what each new role will cost

Richard discussed how the School Rebuilding Programme is evolving. Some school sites in the programme are not suitable for a rebuild but other sites are to be secured. There is a skill set outlined for a staff member to support the change as they will need to be able to write cabinet papers, consultations and responses as appropriate. Richard will update Schools Forum with a job description. He also commented that the Fair Access Panels are going well with support from the new Officer.

We will need to build a temporary school while some sites are re-developed and a modular will need to be retained in order to be focused on schools that are more in need. 12 schools are named in the program but there is possibility to bring in other schools to be part of consolidation to maximise on what to get out of the programme. Ward members are to be consulted before this is taken forward.

Q John: Will primary and secondary head teachers be made aware that this is taken on board in terms of conclusions? We have to have local consultation. The formal consultation will start with ward members and schools will be part of proposals.

14. National Funding Formula and falling rolls – initial feedback and verbal update

Jane discussed the consultation outcome in April and the national funding formula with local elements. The ESFA will confirm funding in July. Jane has written to the five schools regarding the impact of the split site funding. For growth funding, the minimum is a basic entitlement of £2k for primary and £3k for secondary however, Calderdale fund above this. The Local Authority will have to wait for the guidance to determine if this has any impact on funding. Falling rolls is changing to target all schools. Jane will have to use the SCAT data to determine eligibility for the funding and she will feedback the effects of the consultation at the next Schools Forum.

15. Any Other Business

Questions to be submitted a **minimum** 3 days prior to the meeting in writing to: CalderdaleSchoolsForum@calderdale.gov.uk

Questions will only be permitted if relevant to the business of the Forum and at the discretion of the Forum Chair.

16. Future Dates

19 October 2023

11 January 2024

25 April 2024

All meetings will start at 4pm

Venue: virtual Teams Meeting