

CALDERDALE SCHOOLS FORUM
19 October 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)
Brenda Monteith (Roman Catholic)
Gill Shirt (Secondary Governor Maintained)
Joanne Jones (Post 16 Representative)
Mungo Shepherd (Primary Maintained)
Adam McNichol (Primary Governors Maintained)
Dan Burns (Academy Primary)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Tinsley (AD Education and Inclusion)
Jane Davy (Finance Officer)
David Graham (QA and Complaints Consultant)
Steve Drake (Finance Officer)
Ian Hughes (Legal Officer)
Lisa Davies (Unions)
Victoria Coyle (Observing)
Amanda Farron (Observing)

APOLOGIES

Karl Veltman (Post 16 Representative)
Richard Morse (Senior Commissioning Officer – School Organisation and Planning)
Connie Beirne (Interim Service Manager for Early Years and School Strategy and Performance)
Martyn Sharples (Finance Officer)
Denise Gwizdak (Early Years Rep)
Andrea Dyson (Early Years Rep)

1. **Substitutes nominated for this meeting and apologies for absence. (To be notified in writing 24 hours in advance.)**

Joanne Jones for Karl Veltman at Calderdale College

2. **Members Interests** – Members are reminded of the need to declare any interest they might have in relation to the items of business on this agenda.

John Eccleston declared at interest in item 2

Tony reminded the forum he is expressing his views as the Head Teacher from Calder Learning Trust

Karen Morley reminded the forum she is a Governor and part of Together Learning Trust.

3. **Admission of the Public** - it is not recommended that the public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the items of business on this agenda.

Victoria Coyle from Calderdale Councils SEN Team observed.

Amanda Farron from Calderdale Councils Finance Team observed.

4. **Minutes of the Schools Forum held on 22nd June 2023**

Tony highlighted item 9 relating to the underspend of the High Needs Block and is seeking clarity on the underspend and deficit.

Tony raised point 9, the LA report which is to be brought to the next Schools Forum relating to capital planning and the hub model. David Graham has made progress taking this paper to elected members and following their agreement, the report will come to Schools Forum in January. This will also be presented at CASH and CPHA.

Tony raised part 11 relating to the update and changes to Early Years funding. Steve Drake advised he is not aware of this being finalised. Paul Tinsley informed members that there is an additional £55k for the rest of this financial year and Martyn Sharples advised there would be a more substantial sum for the next financial year. The new amount will be brought to the January Schools Forum.

Minutes agreed.

5. **Confirm if Debby Simpson is being allocated £2k (previously £1k) for Governor Support 23/24 due to increased workload.**

Paul presented the item. Debby felt this was a fair reflection of the work she is undertaking for schools forum. John Eccleston commended the work Debby does and supports the proposal.

Vote taken – approved unanimously.

6. School Forum Constitution 4 Academy Vacancies - a secondary headteacher, a secondary governor and 2 bursars, appoint another union representative.

Tony highlighted his term finished in January 2024 (13/01/24) along with Debbie Sweet (13/01/24) and Lisa Davies (28/01/24). There is scope to nominate another potential candidate for Lisa Davies. Ian Hughes will work with Debby Simpson on recruiting to Schools Forum.

Vote taken for Karen Morley and Jo Buckley to act as Vice Chairs until January 2024 – approved unanimously.

The forum will revisit the constitution for Chair and Vice Chair(s) in the January meeting as Karen noticed there are a lot of members of MATs Tony will have a conversation with Ian Hughes to look at the constitution and demographic of schools across Calderdale.

7. Job description and verbal update on SRP

Richard Morse was unable to attend. Paul Tinsley provided an update in his absence. Three posts have been created, one for Fair Access and two for Organisation and Asset Officers for SRP. Paul advised he can pass on the job descriptions which include the grading on to forum members for review. Tony gave permission for Schools Form to review the posts if the job descriptions displayed the costs involved These are to go to advert as soon as possible.

Q: Is anything needed from schools forum?

If schools forum can confirm the original amount set aside for the posts, please can be approved formally for the jobs to be advertised.

Tony advised this has been previously agreed. Paul will send the job descriptions to forum members. Any responses and comments are to be sent to Tony.

Q: Does the indicative amount match the actual?

Yes. Richard has reported the posts are £47k for the Fair Access post and £43k for the two Organisation and Asset Officers.

8. Growth Fund report

Jane calculated a surplus for the year 23-24 which is £23k and is proposing the amount be carried over to 24-25 which schools forum must vote on. If voted against, this funding will presumably go back to the schools block.

Q: The growth funding is not allocated to schools that become popular one year to the next? That is correct.

Q: Why was Brooksbank less last year?

The growth is paid on actuals, it was expected that Brooksbank would expand in 22/23. However, the numbers didn't materialise due to certain factors. It is expected, after speaking to the academy CFO that they will for 23/24.

Vote to carry forward to the 24-25 growth fund – approved unanimously.

9. Falling Rolls Fund report

In 24/25, for the first time, schools block will receive funding for falling rolls. However, it is expected that Calderdale will not qualify for funding. Jane advised the recommendation is to take from the 23-24 expenditure and ask schools forum to carry forward £73k. This will be allocated to the growth fund 24-25 and therefore, not take from schools block allocation.

Vote taken to carry forward £73k and allocate to the growth fund 24-25 –approved unanimously.

10. Proposed Schools Block Transfer report

Paul Tinsley thanked Jane Davy for the data she provided in the report. The ESFA require Local Authority to provide a rationale and a recovery plan to show how the local authority will stop overspending at the end of a three year period from this year. David Graham has been working on budget recovery report to show how over the next 3 years, the overspend will impact on the HNB. As part of the plans to reduce the current overspend, the local authority are therefore consulting on moving 0.5% from the Schools Block to HNB.

The first time in local authority history, there has been an overspend on the HNB for 22-23 which is £868k. It has been projected it will be a £5 million this year with a cumulative deficit of £6 million. Currently, the HNB overspend figure sits separate to the councils budgets but there has been a suggestion from DfE and ESFA that in 3 years time, the overspend will sit on councils balance sheet and be local authorities responsibility. Paul felt it was necessary to consult on the matter with schools forum and Jane has calculated the like financial impact on schools. Paul advised there is overspending on the early years budget by £500k and overspending in the Specialist Inclusion Team however, by reducing that service, there would be less support to schools. Jane has collated responses from schools to this proposal and included them in her report. If schools forum does not accept the transfer, the local authority could approach the Secretary of State to request the budget is transferred. Around 50% of local authorities have proceeded with this.

Q: If we reject the proposal, what are your other options?

In addition to going directly to the Secretary of State, we also need to seek to reduce overspend by other means and we intend to work with schools in this regard.

Q: Is there anywhere else the money could come from (in theory/legally)?

The local authority is required to have a DSG management plan as we are in deficit which needs to be consulted across stakeholders. Pupil level data and a narrative is required on where our HNB is spent. There is a huge demand on EHCP's which factor into the overspend. There has been an increase in pupils requiring specialist schools for SEMH and placement out of the local authority. The average plan costs £5k and for top up in local provision but for out of area placement this rises to £50k. Prior to the next schools forum the plan will be available to everyone, and a summary of progress will be brought to future schools forum meetings. The local authority is seeking to build more local capacity to reduce dependency on out of area placements. David advised the local authority have signed up for SEND Reform Change Partnership with Wakefield and Yorkshire and the Humber to make the SEND system sustainable.

Q: Do we have any hard facts of those being placed OOA?

The transport costs from the council budget is currently a £2 million overspend. There are 124 placements in independent and non-maintained schools currently which is an increase on last year. David will confirm these figures in the DSG Management Report.

Q: Reading the report there are gaps and information missing. What is the amount moving from the school block to HNB? Will this be £979k based on indicative funding?

The amount is indicative it is 0.5% of the total school block which currently based on indicative figures using Oct 22 data this would equate to £970k.

Q: Then are we only looking for 346k?

No, we are looking for 0.5% in total, after applying the NFF factors the indicative has £600k unallocated so the remaining £346k would have to come by reducing the NFF factors in the funding formula. If we didn't transfer, the £600k would go back into the funding formula and increase some of the NFF values.

Q: When looking at appendix 1 and the impact on schools figures for example, Abbey Park and Brighouse, it doesn't state in appendix 1 how much money schools are going to lose, is this correct?

It is difficult to say what schools would lose as some would not lose money due to already being below the minimum funding guarantee. Some wouldn't lose because they are protected on the minimum per pupil level. Some schools would lose more than others due to the characteristics of the pupil data e.g. FSM, attainment.

Q: Are schools going to be worse off? Will we be taking money from schools who really need it?

It can only go to a minimum amount. This would impact on those primary schools with falling rolls, but they do not get the same amount of funding. Another option would be to take from a lump sum, but this isn't included on the minimum funding guarantee. No one in the consultation had disagreed with this previously.

Phil Hannah suggested the feedback from CASH around the consultation process was flawed as many Head Teachers were not sent the communication directly. Head Teachers had concerns where the money would be taken from and how this would affect school leaders. This went to a vote resulting 4 in favour 8 against. Phil confirmed some of CPHA are included in the numbers who responded to the consultation form. Mungo advised CPHA painted a similar picture to CASH. Head Teachers can see there is a huge need for high needs money to not come from their own schools block but there is no contingency or strategy. Jo Buckley added that primary Heads were very unhappy as they don't feel that the money will fix the problem. The problem is felt to be a lack of a wider strategy. There is a real appetite for the Special School Cluster to have the responsibility for the restructure and running of the Specialist Inclusion Service. 60% of Head Teachers voted against on the consultation survey sent out.

Q: If this is only going to bring in £900K how are you going to find the rest of the overspend? This question was placed in the Teams chat and will be picked up by local authority officers via the DSG Management Plan.

Debbie Sweet feels this needs to sit in a wider strategy. Maintained schools are working for a fraction of the cost with challenging children. She feels that health does not feature enough

when having conversations around exclusions and she would like to know how this is monitored.

Q: Why isn't money coming from Health or Social Care when we are looking at additional funding for EHC Plans?

We get a contribution from health, for continuing health care with complex medical needs. Calderdale believes health should contribute more in terms of anxiety and CAMHs.

Tony advised it is difficult to agree to something when a long-term plan is unknown and asked for a breakdown of the spend for narrative for Head Teachers to make a decision. Jane felt the decision should not be based on a monetary amount but rather on principle. Tony highlighted feedback from school 23 in the consultation survey, who made a point around a legal position and that it is the local authorities responsibility to fund EHCP's not schools. Jane explained that children with SEN are funded from HNB and the local authority are following legal requirements. John Eccleston advised that schools forum have a right to vote on the 0.5% transfer to the HNB. It is unlikely heads will vote to lose money when there is still a £5 million deficit happening next year however the vote is decided. He agreed that funding for children with SEND is inadequate.

Vote taken in favour of recommendation 1 to move the 0.5 % - unapproved 9, Abstaining – 1

Tony proposed a recommendation for a local authority officer to meet with a representative from school's forum, CASH, CPHA and the school clusters to look at a long-term strategy. Paul will take this to council leaders.

Paul wanted to explore the comments made around the Specialist Inclusion Team and reminded Schools Forum members that the local authority had statutory responsibilities which were met by the SIT and that SPC had limited capacity in terms of any suggestion that SPC should take over resources currently allocated to SIT. In terms of long-term plan, there is a need to build more local capacity. There is a new room at Highbury School to help support and more SEN hubs have opened. Paul is mindful of DfE financial allocation and exclusions are constantly being on the rise.

11. Indicative School Funding 2024-25 report

School forum members agreed with the recommendations in the report. The local authority will follow national funding back to values based on vote of 0.5%. Jane will bring the figures to the meeting in January. The funding has now been revised to £194 million. MFG are going to keep it at 0.5% if possible. Jane ran the new figures resulting in 5 schools on MFG and 10 on minimum per pupil level.

Q: Is Ash Green school one of the schools for split site funding?

Yes, it is. The figures are available on the SFA website showing just over £80k for Ash Green with it being a split site.

12. 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.

13. Future Dates

25 January 2024

25 April 2024

27 June 2024

All meetings will start at 4pm

Venue: virtual Teams Meeting