

CALDERDALE SCHOOLS FORUM
27 June 2024 – Virtual Meeting Via Teams

PRESENT:

Tony Guise (Secondary Maintained) – Chair
Karen Morley (Academy) – Co Vice Chair
Mungo Shepherd (Primary Maintained)
Lauren Watson (Primary Maintained)
Brenda Monteith (Roman Catholic)
Adam McNichol (Academy Bursar)
Kevin Rivett (Unions)
Louise Downing (Primary Governors Maintained)
John Eccleston (Academy Primary Governor)
Gill Shirt (Secondary Governor Maintained)
Lisa Davies (Unions)
Stephen Baines (Academy Secondary)
Stuart Hillary (Academy Secondary)
Ivan Kuzio (Academy Bursar)
Karl Veltman (Post 16 Representative)
Debbie Sweet (Special School)
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)
Richard Morse (Senior Commissioning Officer – School Organisation and Planning)
Victoria Coyle (SEN Manager)
Connie Beirne (Interim Service Manager for Early Years and School Strategy and Performance)
Amanda Farron (Senior Finance Officer - Observing)
Adele Lockwood (Youth Justice Service Officer - Observing)
Emma Ingham (SEND & Inclusion Service Manager - Observing)

APOLOGIES

Phil Hannah (Academy AP)
Cllr Wilkinson (Cabinet Member – Observing)
Andrea Dyson (Early Years Rep)
Denise Gwizdak (Early Years Rep)
Gareth Morris Ferney Lee (Primary Governors Maintained)
Ian Hughes (Legal Officer)
Richard Horsfield (Academy Secondary)
Alice Leadbitter (Primary Head Teacher Substitute)
Brian Robson (Academy Secondary)
Martyn Sharples (Finance Officer)

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

None

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 is a member of Schools Partnership Board.

Karen Morley is a trustee of Together Learning Trust and is an LA Governor for Christ Church Pellon. Her term of office at Scout Road has finished but there is a link with 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.

Amanda Farron – Senior Finance Officer

Adele Lockwood – Youth Justice Service Officer

Emma Ingham – SEND & Inclusion Service Manager

4. **Minutes of the Schools Forum held on 25 April 2024**

Item 5 – Jane Davy was not required to attend ESFA due to the change being internal. The de-delegation stays until the 1st January 2025.

Item 7 – The Chair Q: What was the amount of clawback for the last financial year? £400k

Item 8 – Karen Morley Q: What is the breakdown of £451,560 from the CSSB report and can job descriptions be circulated? Kirsty Davison to circulate.

The minutes were agreed by members of Schools Forum.

5. **Review of Schools Forum Constitution including:**

- **Proposal from Debby Simpson on Academy positions on Schools Forum**

Over the last year Debby Simpson has on numerous occasions tried to fill the Academy positions for you as agreed when Jeannine Houshmand was working for the LA. Although we have had a good response this time, there is still one position for an Academy Bursar left vacant. Adam McNichol who is a primary governor at Hebden Royd did want a position but there were no primary governors free.

Adam was previously on Schools Forum as a primary governor at a maintained school but as Hebden Royd is no longer maintained he can only apply for an academy category.

Debby Simpson therefore has asked that the Forum agree to accept the Academy Bursar position for a term of 3 years. After the 3 years the position will then be advertised back as an Academy Bursar vacancy.

Academy members vote:

7 approve

0 oppose

The Chair needs to review constitution with Ian Hughes in a separate meeting before the autumn term.

- **An update on the CMBC Schools Academic Year 24/25 (Maintained/Academy) -**
This item will be added to the workplan for the next school year and brought back to the Schools Forum meeting in November.

6. DSG Management Plan Report (Termly Review) / update on the High Needs Block Group

The most recent meeting with the ESFA was positive and they are comfortable with the processes the local authority putting in place to make ourselves accountable. They accept the financial situation will undoubtedly become worse before it improves. Calderdale does not meet the criteria for the 'Safety Valve Programme' and this has now been closed to new agreements. The ESFA will advise the local authority on the deficit plan and this will update the action plan. The local authority deficit next year could be as high as £12 million. The ESFA advised if the local authority require another transfer, this should be actioned in September to allow for decision making to be made early. The Chair suggested this be drafted into the work plan for the future meeting and was pleased there is adequate Schools Forum representation at the HNB Deficit Reference Groups. Debbie Sweet is unable to fulfil her role at the group meaning there is a need for Special School representation. The Chair and Debbie are happy for David Graham to approach the Special School Cluster to broker representation.

7. Capital Projects and Expansion of Special Schools

Following on from the cabinet meeting in January, the local authority have been pursuing strategic interventions around an additional resource provision which is to commence from January 2025 for 2 years. After discussions with Ravenscliffe governors and their management, Ravenscliffe felt unable to support the local authority in relation to the building of a new campus in North Halifax. The proposal will go back to cabinet to establish an academy free school as an expansion route. There is a full classroom build happening at Ravenscliffe, a proposed building programme for Woodbank and expansion at Highbury. There is also a focus on process and capital commitment at establishing the new free school, subject to cabinet approval. The Capital budget is £23 million and this will be spent over the next year with a hope that special school planning will receive extra funding going forward.

Unfortunately, there is a limited resource. The majority of spending will be to build the new special school at North Halifax. Local authority officers are also continuing to explore possibilities for the expansion of Highbury school.

John Eccleston is concerned given the challenges schools are experiencing. They are trying to bridge the gap between special provision and maintained school provision. He understands there is a very serious need for a new special school.

Paul Tinsley advised proposals in terms of direction and priorities are taken to the Calderdale Strategic Partnership for SEND Board. The AP free school is a free provision offered to us from the DfE and the local authority only have to provide the commissioning of places. There are also plans to make it a through school. Updates from the board can be provided to forum.

The Chair Q: Why is the new AP Free School in partnership with Delta and not locally? Does this mean applications will be in conjunction with the external provider?

Paul advised the local authority were invited by DfE to bid for the free school. After visiting one of the AP Free Schools in Doncaster, he felt it was a strong model and would benefit Calderdale. Paul confirmed the local authority would like to have a local provider for the new SEN Provision.

Richard Morse informed forum that part of the process is presenting a business case to the DfE and it is treated as a competition against other local authorities. He feels there is no reason as to why the school could not be managed locally. The local authority will build the school and DfE will decide who manages it. Overall, it will be a 12-month process to find out who we would be working with. A desktop exercise has been completed to determine how much space we will need to accommodate for the provision.

Adam McNichol Q: Why wasn't there an open procurement process?

Richard advised the local authority wanted to work with Ravenscliffe but there was no agreement finalised due to the new provider. This would have seen a new building on the site and on a split site arrangement. The DfE arranged for the competition of the school to be run nationally.

The Chair Q: I assume this will not be coming out of the £23 million budget?

Richard confirmed the £23 million is available to support more specialist places and most of this will be used to fund the new special school in North Halifax. Anything left will fund ARPs and expansion of Highbury and Woodbank for example. It costs about £100k per pupil place to build a new special school.

David added that in terms of appointing a partner to run the school, he has been involved in the process with another authority. There is a shortlisting exercise which he felt collegiate with this and hopes it will be the same for Calderdale.

8. Update on Schools Rebuilding Programme Report

Castle Hill is part of the SRP. The planning application is now submitted for the new build and all information can be accessed on the planning portal. There have been some challenges with the temporary site of the modular school however, the DfE are pleased with the way colleagues have worked together. Richard received an email thanking local authorities contribution which he can share with Schools Forum. The local authority are working with DfE colleagues for the next round of schools in April 2025 and school visits completed. A case was made around the conditions of some schools to allow them to be brought forward in the programme which was well received by DfE due to the health and safety concerns.

The Chair wanted to give a special mention to Mungo and the new Ash Green site opening on 10th July, the first new carbon neutral school in Calderdale. From Monday morning, KS2 will be in their new classrooms. Mungo is looking forward to pupils returning and wanted to commend the support from local officers, especially Richard Morse, Rob Fox and Paul Tinsley. Mungo invited forum members to come view the new school if they wish.

9. Additional Funding allocation to School Clusters June 2024

The key points are that the money benefits all children in Calderdale, for colleagues to work together for the benefit of children, the sharing of good practice, to offer support and monitor the challenges. It is important the funding helps the smaller and more vulnerable schools such as those in the Calder Valley cluster. If there is an approval of the £73k, there would only be a shortfall of 25k compared to the funding provided last year.

The Chair Q: If Schools Forum do not allocate the money to the clusters, will there be a deficit?

Connie confirmed if the additional funding is approved, the shortfall wouldn't have as much of an affect.

The Chair: Could the £73k be ring fenced for potential emergencies and if so, what would be the process for how schools access it?

Jane advised that she cannot provide an answer for this and felt this is a forum decision for the Chair to agree on how they local authority use the money.

Mungo Shepherd Q: I thought the £73k was going to be split between the clusters to pay off the losses for each cluster?

Connie confirmed there are two lots of £73k, one for school clusters and one for potential emergencies.

The Chair Q: Would it be better to hold on to 146k money until the next academic year to support the falling rolls fund rather than emergencies?

Jane advised the funding for falling rolls comes from a separate block of money.

Vote to approve £73k for clusters and hold the remaining £73k to allocate for a specific project:

Approve 14

Oppose 0

The remaining £73k to be ring fenced and voted on at the November meeting.

10. Issues of Schools Forum voting on clawback of significant school balances

Jane advised this is covered in the report for item 11.

11. School Balances as at 31 March 2024 & Future Budget Plans

Jane Davy Q: Would Schools Forum want to suspend the balance control mechanism for clawback that was introduced in 2011?

Mungo felt everyone would prefer that the clawback mechanism be kept in place due to the uncertainty around financial costs and budgets in schools.

John expressed his concern around the effect the shortage of money is having on children's education.

Vote for maintained school representatives on continuing the balance control mechanism for another year:

Approve 5

Oppose 0

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

14 November 2024

16 January 2025

24 April 2025

3 July 2025

All meetings will start at 4pm

Venue: virtual Teams Meeting