

## CALDERDALE SCHOOLS FORUM

27<sup>th</sup> April 2009

**PRESENT:** Ms H Gaunt (Chair)

Ms A Craven  
Mr A Hardy  
Mr D Hetherington  
Mrs J Ingham  
Mr M Imeson  
Ms H Lennie  
Ms L Lynch  
Mr J Procter  
Mr C Rushworth  
Ms K Sanderson  
Ms J Shaw  
Mr P Townend  
Mr D Warbrick

### **Other Members of the Forum who were unable to attend**

Councillor Collins (apologies submitted)  
Councillor Whittaker (apologies submitted)  
Mr W Carpenter (apologies submitted)  
Mr A Evans (apologies submitted)  
Mr T Nunn

#### **1 MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC**

**IT WAS AGREED** that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be not excluded from the meeting for the items of business on the agenda.

#### **2 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2009**

**IT WAS AGREED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2009 be approved as a correct record.

#### **3 MATTERS ARISING**

In relation to Minute Number 5 (Senior Management Review) – The Forum was informed that the job descriptions had now been published. The consultation process, which had commenced on 16<sup>th</sup> March, had now finished, and the assimilation process was imminent.

#### **4 EQUAL PAY**

Further to the discussions which had taken place at the last meeting, a report was submitted reminding Members that in January 2009 a number of schools had expressed concern about the process that had been undertaken in relation to equal pay and asked that this was discussed at this Forum. The Chair agreed to this request and a report was prepared by officers for consideration. The Forum felt that a process of consultation should be undertaken to agree a way forward for resolution of the equal pay issue. The process to recover unsettled invoices was to be suspended until the consultation had been completed. The report submitted to this meeting formed the consultation document that was agreed to go to CASH and CPHA.

The DCSF proposed route was described in detail, the local context was outlined with the actions taken locally and options for recovery of the costs. Also, as requested at the last meeting, eight other local authorities had been consulted as to the position they had taken on this issue. The Forum was advised of the processes undertaken in those local authorities all of whom had used funding from the DSG. None had funded it from the local authority's base budget.

James Procter wished to make it clear at the meeting that the options set out in paragraphs 8.3.2.2 and 8.3.2.3 of the report were not proposals on behalf of the CPHA, and asked that the report be amended accordingly.

The point was made that it would be beneficial to note the average amount per person who had settled (as referred to in paragraph 8.3.2.3). Officers advised that they would need to consult the Head of Human Resources and Change to ascertain if these figures could be provided.

Discussions took place as to which groups should be consulted in addition to CASH and CPHA. It was mentioned that at the last meeting a suggestion was made that the consultation should be undertaken through the respective groups on this Forum, and it was generally agreed that this was the best way forward.

**IT WAS AGREED** that officers be requested to report back to this Forum on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009 with comments received from the consultation process.

## **5 EARLY YEARS SINGLE FUNDING FORMULA REVIEW**

A report was submitted for the information of the Forum which provided a briefing note on the progress being made on the early years single funding formula to enable Members to brief their respective groups, and to inform other key stakeholder groups. The next step in the project plan was to continue with modelling iterations and impact assessment so that a draft report on conclusions could be made available in July. A consultation draft for the wider community would be circulated in September for a three month consultation period. A final report was expected to be tabled for the January 2010 Cabinet meeting, allowing implementation to proceed before the target date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010.

**IT WAS AGREED** that the report be noted.

## **6 CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES FOR SCHOOLS**

A report was submitted seeking the Forum's views on the increase to the limits within the Contract Procedure Rules for Schools, to bring them in line with the Council's main Contract Procedure Rules. The Council's Standards Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2009 had agreed to obtain this Forum's views on the proposed amendments, and any comments from this Forum would be reported back to the Standards Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2009 before a final decision was made.

The point was made at the meeting that it was believed that the provisions, as set out in paragraph 24.5, did not apply to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Officers advised that this issue could be addressed if necessary as

part of the detailed review of the Contract Procedure Rules for Schools which was to be undertaken in due course.

**IT WAS AGREED** that

- (a) this Forum is in agreement to the proposed increases in the limits;
- (b) officers be requested to prepare a summary of the amendments to assist governors; and
- (c) the point raised at this meeting that it is believed that the provisions, as set out in paragraph 24.5, do not apply to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, be addressed as part of the detailed review which is to be undertaken.

**7 FAIR FUNDING FRAMEWORK – REQUEST FOR A WORKING GROUP**

Officers circulated at the meeting the index in relation to the Scheme for the Fair Funding Framework. This Scheme was dated 2001 and officers considered that there was a need for it to be reviewed. To assist in this process it was proposed to establish a Working Group and the Forum was asked to consider representation on this Working Group. It was envisaged that there would be four or five meetings which would commence from September. The intention was to report back to this Forum in January 2010.

**IT WAS AGREED** that the Working Group should consist of representatives from CASH, CPHA, Governors and a school business bursar.

(Mr Hetherington agreed to represent CPHA, Mr Hardy agreed to represent the Governors and Ms Sanderson agreed to raise this issue with CASH.)

**8 SEN JOB EVALUATION**

A report was submitted to enable the Forum to consider the impact of job evaluation on the costs of supporting children with Statements. In recent months schools had been provided with an indication of the impact of job evaluation. This would have a significant effect on employee costs in schools. Calderdale schools would need to manage this cost from their school budgets. Funding for a child's Statement was based on a number of hours support, agreed through the statutory SEN assessment process. Those hours were paid at the hourly rate based on a mid point scale 1/2 support assistant (APT&C Terms and Conditions). The hourly rate was inflated each year in accordance with the Council's agreed inflation rate. No change had been made to the hourly rate to reflect what might happen on job evaluation. A number of schools had asked the Authority to consider increasing the hourly rate attached to Statements to reflect the potential impact of job evaluation. This was on the basis that payments to staff supporting children with Statements would increase.

As part of the distribution of DSG, the Authority retained specific contingencies to assist schools during the year around certain events; exception increases in pupil numbers, funding formula errors, emergencies and unforeseen circumstances, rates, Statements and vandalism. The call on these contingencies was now reducing year on year because of the tight management of these funds. A planned reduction of £200,000 had been

assumed in setting school budgets for 2010/11. Therefore it may be possible to release up to £250 in 2009/10 as one off support for Statements. Any ongoing considerations could be considered as part of the budget setting for 2010/11.

Concerns were raised at the meeting that the contingency of £250,000 did not go far enough and there was a need to find a way to fund this increase properly. It was considered important that account should be taken of special schools in any decisions reached.

**IT WAS AGREED** that

(a) £200,000 be released from contingencies for mainstream schools and £50,000 be released from contingencies for special schools as a one off item in 2009/2010 to support the cost of Statements. This funding be distributed on actual stated hours;

(b) work be undertaken during the summer term 2009 to look at some of the issues associated with how funding is distributed and how it is used; and

(c) funding be distributed in the Autumn term when we will be assured the contingency will not be needed, and when we will have more guidance on the use of funding.

**9 ANTI-BULLYING POST**

A report was submitted advising of a proposal to appoint a Calderdale Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator for a fixed term of three years (with the potential to extend the tenure of the post). The primary role and responsibilities of this post were set out in the report. In terms of funding, in 2009/10 the funding would be obtained from CAMHS Grant (£50,000) and Connexions Grant (£10,000). In 2010/11 and 2011/12 it was proposed that the funding would come from Children's Fund Grant (£30,000 in each year) and DSG (£30,000 in each year). The Forum was asked to give a view on the proposed contribution from the DSG to the funding package for this post for 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Concerns were raised at the meeting that DSG should not be used to fund this post.

**IT WAS AGREED** that this Forum agrees in principle to the establishment of this post but does not support the proposed contribution from the DSG for 2010/11 and 2011/12.

**10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Forum was provided with details of Calderdale Schools 2009/2010 6<sup>th</sup> Form allocations showing provisional allocations (January 2009) and final allocations (April 2009). These figures showed a total reduction in funding of £535,542. Ms Craven referred to a letter which was today being sent to schools advising of additional money to target people who otherwise would be NEET. This amount was expected to be at least £400,000.

**11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009.