

Calderdale MBC
Children and Young People's Services
Notes of a Calderdale Fair Funding Framework Review meeting
Held on Monday 1 February 2010
Heath Training and Development Centre, Room F

Present: Mark Woolley (MW), Clem Rushworth (CR), Andrew Hardy (AH), Duncan Hetherington (DH), Lynda Finnerty (LF), Colin Meredith (CM), Julie Kendall (JK), Peter Flower (PF), Murray Trantor (MT)

Agenda Item No.	Note	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions General introductions were made and apologies were received from Helen Gaunt and Lachlan MacKinnon.</p>	
2.	<p>Review of Terms of Reference The Terms of Reference were discussed and generally agreed although it was recognised these may be amended as the review project progressed.</p>	All
3 and 4	<p>Discussion on Present Fair Funding Document</p> <p>CR thought that we should review the document section by section as a means of putting a project plan together.</p> <p>LF stated that the Schools Finance Regulations outlined the content of the Fair Funding Framework so large parts of it were already prescribed.</p> <p>PF said there were three main issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The respective responsibilities of the Authority and the Schools 2. How individual schools budgets were calculated, and 3. How money was spent and accounted for <p>CR and DH both had the view that schools desired more transparency on how their final budget was arrived at and the factors that made apparently similar schools have different budget allocations.</p> <p>CM said the document definitely needed updating for things like BACS payments and Credit Cards. Also more information on the distribution of Standards Funds was desired.</p> <p>JK expressed the need to encompass the modern IT systems tools that were available to schools and for electronic document transfer and processes.</p> <p>CM mentioned receiving unexpected funds towards the year end which left no time to spend the money prudently. Some protocols on how extra money was allocated and target timescales would help. JK added that Primary and Secondary Strategy money is often allocated late.</p> <p>AH suggested we could have two documents. One which contained the generally static information but with reference out to other documents containing more fluid data. AH wanted more information about Schools Forum and its decision making powers. CR suggested a document containing textual policies and another containing technical detail.</p> <p>JK mentioned we need to take account of the three year budget cycle which was introduced after the last review was done. LF mentioned that the last</p>	

full review of the Schools Financing Regulations had been in 2008 which introduced the concept of the three year funding cycle. The 2010 amendments, presently coming to the end of the consultation period, were largely to do with the introduction of the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) which had now been postponed until April 2011. LF mentioned that "Formal" indicative budgets had not been distributed to schools in the last two years because the budget was already known within certain bounds by virtue of the three year budgeting cycle. MW suggested we make mention in the document of the three year budgeting tool which most schools had purchased from LMS. AH suggested a compendium of useful tools be included and CM wanted pointers to other useful resources.

In response to a request for more detail assumptions implicit in final allocations, LF said these were included in the final allocation covering letter.

MW suggested more detail on how schools should plan and deal with a potential deficit situation.

LF thought we should include a section on Prudential Borrowing.

PF thought the whole area around SEN needed explanation e.g. The LA had statutory responsibilities for Statementing but there was no funding and schools did not receive any financial allocation for SENCOs. CM said schools should have more guidance on how to allocate their SEN money across their eligible children. DH floated the idea that we should give schools a SEN pot, along with suitable guidance, for them to decide how to spend, subject to appropriate accountability mechanisms. PF mentioned that some authorities were allocating money to schools in lieu of statementing pupils.

AH asked if there was any external assessment or audit recommendations available that we should include in the revised document.

Regarding schools contingency budgets, LF mentioned that DCSF had issued guidance as to what purposes these should be held against.

There was a long discussion around year end schools balances which culminated in a desire to have more guidance than the simple 5% and 8% and that the authority should adopt a supportive rather than a punitive approach. LF thought the existing guidance as written was unworkable because some of the raw data needed for the calculation was not obtainable.

CM said there was a lack of transparency on 16-19 year old funding from the LSC in particular. CR thought we should include funding for Academies in the document and DH wondered if we needed to add Trust and Federation (Hard and Soft) schools.

All posed the question of what we needed to say about Excellence Cluster Funding.

CM was eager to exercise more Community Powers activities and wanted more guidance on charging arrangements. There were also insurance issues around Extended Schools.

	<p>All agreed the desirability of achieving FMSiS standard but Lachlan was researching the issues around extending this to FMSiS plus. CM asked, as there were some similarities between the FFF and the FMSiS guidance, if these could be subsumed into the FFF document.</p> <p>All thought that the Best Value Statements needed review and MW outlined the DCSF's thinking on procurement in the form of the DCSFs sponsored OPEN website.</p> <p>DH asked about the proposed Carbon Trading scenario. MT gave a brief outline. LF to forward recent presentation to MT.</p> <p>A discussion was held about who should Chair future meeting and how the project ought to be tackled. MW and CR to discuss issues outside the meeting. It was agreed the document should be reviewed section by section and MT would circulate a suggested split.</p> <p>PF would attend and contribute as and when required on SEN issues.</p>	<p>LF</p> <p>MW/CR</p> <p>MT</p> <p>PF</p>
5	<p>AOB There was no further business. MW thanked everyone very much for their attendance.</p>	
6	<p>Future Meetings It was agreed to change the 4 May date to the 11 May and the 6 July to 5 July. At HG request we reviewed the 2 March date but no suitable alternative was found. MT to ask if her Business Manager could substitute on 2 March.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>MT</p>