

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Ceredigion Schools Budget Forum held at  
Ystafell Ystwyth, Penmorfa, Aberaeron on Wednesday, 30 January 2019.**

**Present:** Councillor Catrin Miles (Chairman).

**Non-schools members:** Meinir Ebbsworth, Corporate Lead Officer for Schools; Steve Johnson (Corporate Lead Officer for Finance and Procurement), Councillor Odwyn Davies (Chair Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee), Endaf Edwards (Vice Chair Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

**Schools members:**

Headteachers: Mair Hughes (Penglais), Dorian Pugh (Henry Richard), Alwyn Ward (T Llew Jones).

Governors: Gary Davies (Ciliau Parc), Chris Evans (Aberteifi Uwchradd).

**Officers in attendance:** Eifion Evans, Chief Executive; Chris Macey, Service Accountant – CLO Support; Kay Davies, Democratic Services Officer.

5.00pm –6.05pm

**1 Procedure**

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

**2 Apologies**

Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn, Barry Rees (Corporate Director), Catrin Lawrence, Lodwick Lloyd and Peter Wellington apologised for being unable to attend the meeting.

**3 Disclosures of Personal Interest**

There were no disclosures of personal interest.

**4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **AGREED** to confirm as a true record the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2017.

**5 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

5.9 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century School funding – it was noted that this is going ahead in Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi.

9. Learning Service Budget 2017 – 18 – It was noted that, as there had been insufficient match funding to apply for the sports grant, this had not been pursued.

**6 School Funding in Wales – National Assembly for Wales**

The Corporate Lead Officer for Schools informed the meeting of the consultation into school funding in Wales<sup>1</sup>. She highlighted the response from Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Association of Directors of Education in Wales which collects responses from the 22 authorities.

The over reliance on grants to prop up core funding was noted.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=324&RPID=1514308580&cp=yes>

It was noted that the Children, Young People & Education Committee of the National Assembly for Wales is to visit the Children and Young People Committee at Aberaeron Comprehensive School on February 7th, 2019 in order to better understand how school funding processes work in practice and their impact. It will be an opportunity for the school to convey their views on the impact of budgetary cuts.

It was **AGREED** to note the information provided.

## **7 School Reserves**

The School Reserves document was considered. It was noted that it is likely that the figures will reduce significantly by the end of the financial year.

Concerns were raised in relation to grant funding being received at the end of year and ideally it should be included in schools' funding at the beginning of the year.

The Corporate Lead Officer for Schools informed the meeting that grants administered by ERW would be distributed differently in future. Distribution has been inconsistent in the past but a new management structure is now in place and, in future, the formula is to be used consistently.

It was **AGREED** to note the information.

## **8 2019-2020 Corporate Budget**

The Corporate Lead Officer for Schools informed the meeting that the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee had, earlier in the day, met to consider the budget proposal in relation to schools. The Committee agreed the proposals. The budget report is to be presented to Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> February to be followed for final approval by Council on 21 February 2019. It was noted that £6m savings need to be found across the Council's services for the year 2019-20.

She noted that challenge to fund the shortfall of £2.1m in the school budget due to the recent teachers' pay award. There is also an increase in cost to the employer.

The Government have agreed to cover 55% of the true cost of the pay rise but no funds are available in Wales to cover the remainder plus associated pension costs. Lobbying for funding to be provided is ongoing.

In the meantime, the proposal to raise Council Tax to 7%, as opposed to 5%, would raise funds to cover the shortfall in schools. The proposal was proposed and agreed at the recent Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee where they considered the budget for 2019-20.

The Chief Executive stated that should any further funding be forthcoming from central Government and providing that the Council agree to the 7% increase in Council Tax, any extra funds received would not then be allocated to schools. It was also noted that funding from the extra increase in Council Tax would safeguard the deficit for many years.

The Corporate Lead Officer for Schools stated that draft budgets would be distributed to schools on February 4<sup>th</sup> based on the £2.1m shortfall. The budgets would be amended if Council agree to the 7% increase in Council Tax.

It was also noted that the Welsh Government's consultation on Curriculum and Assessment Reform would be considered in due course.

It was **AGREED** to note the information provided.

**9 2019-20 Formula Funding**

The main points were considered during minute 8

It was **AGREED** to note the information provided.

**10 Proposed Review of Formula Funding**

The Service Accountant – CLO Support stated that the review is now being undertaken following being postponed previously. The review will examine how school funding is shared.

Concerns were raised in relation to retaining teachers when pupil numbers fall. It was noted that staff terms and conditions could be structured to help manage situations such as this.

It was proposed that pre admissions are taken into account when structuring the formula.

It was noted that a response would be formulated to the new formula proposal.

Members **AGREED** to note the information provided.

**11 Schools Financial Benchmarking**

A project set up in the south east where similar schools can compare and share good practice is now a national project. Schools may benefit from its availability and may contact the Service Accountant – CLO Support for further information.

**12 Any other urgent matter**

There were no other urgent matters to discuss.

**13 Date of the next meeting: To be arranged.**

**Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_