

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Ceredigion Schools Budget Forum held at
Ystafell Aeron Fach, Canolfan Felinfach on Monday 13 January 2014**

Present: Councillor Hag Harris (Chairman).

Non-schools members: Councillors Ellen ap Gwynn and Paul Hinge, Mr Eifion Evans.

Schools members:

Primary Schools Representatives: Robert Jenkins (Head Teachers), Stephen Cooper, Lodwick Lloyd and Peter Wellington (Governors)

Secondary Schools Representatives: Gwenallt Llwyd Ifan (Head Teacher), Chris Evans (Governor).

Officers in attendance: Chris Macey (DECS – Head of Financial Services), Kay Davies (Democratic Services).

7.00 pm – 8.40 pm

1 Apologies

Messrs Gwyn Jones, Steff Jenkins, Alwyn Ward and Anna Williams apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosures of Personal Interest

There were no disclosures of personal interests.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was **AGREED** to confirm as a true record the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2013.

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes (25.06.13)

(5) Transformation of the Council's way of working and Budgetary Matters.
It was noted that, since the last meeting, the Spending Review has been announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the figure of savings needed over the next three years has changed from £12.5m as reported at the last meeting to £20m.

(7) School Reserves as at March 2013

An update will be available at the end of the financial year and it was noted that it is unlikely that any schools will have overspent their budget.

5 Learning Services Financial Performance 2013-14

The Learning Services Budget Forecast Report September 2013 had been circulated previously. It was noted that it will operate within its budget resources by the end of March 2014.

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

6 Council Budget 2014-15

The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships informed the meeting of the gravity of the financial situation which faces the County for at least the next three years. He noted that, following transformation of the Council's way of working, a far more strategic approach had been taken in identifying savings. He noted that several meetings have taken place to identify the savings to be made to save at least £20m over the next three years which consequently will have a substantial effect on the education budget. A corporate and team effort has been undertaken to produce a balanced budget within the reduced allocated resources.

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

7 Developing Education - update

The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships informed the meeting that changes are inevitable in order to ensure the future success of education in Ceredigion. Changing the pupil teacher ratio (PTR) to 17:1 will achieve savings but will inevitably mean staff redundancies. He also noted that many schools have large reserve funds and that this situation will no longer be acceptable and that funds from reserves of over 5% are to be repaid to the Council if schools do not have plans in place for spending the money. Plans for primary school closures are ongoing and the secondary sector will also be reviewed in order to safeguard secondary education in the six market towns. He noted that changes will have to be made in order to achieve this as the present situation can no longer continue. He informed the meeting that funding for new Area Schools is no longer available and that it was unlikely that one will be built in the Aeron Valley in the foreseeable future.

8 Schools Delegated Budget 2014-15

It was noted that a new line is to be added to the budget in order to include the new unit at Aberaeron.

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

9 Post-16 Education Grant 2014-15

The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships informed the meeting that the funding formula from the Welsh Government is to change from April onwards and will have an unfavourable effect on Ceredigion. Formerly, PLASC figures were used but, from April, hypothetical estimates of age 16+ school numbers will be used for a period of three years with no acknowledgement of the Welsh Baccalaureate. New regulations state that there will be no funding for transport costs to new courses. He noted that long term strategies will be put in place as soon as possible as the current situation is not sustainable.

The Leader of the Council, Ellen ap Gwynn noted that she, along with the Leader of Powys County Council, have contacted the Education and Skills Minister, Huw Lewis, in relation to challenging the Welsh Government about this situation.

It was proposed that correspondence to challenge the funding formula is to be sent from each Governing body.

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

10 **School Effectiveness Grant**

The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships informed the meeting that matters had progressed since the previous meeting. Funding has decreased by 20% compared to last year's funding. Funds will be allocated regionally with Pembrokeshire administering on behalf of the region and shared to those schools who border schools that have good or excellent performance results within school clusters. He noted that less funding will be available to schools that underperform and that new methods will be used to help these schools by considering which particular matters need attention and help in each school.

A School Effectiveness Grant Conference will be held for Head Teachers on the 27th January in order to provide further information.

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

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Forum held on May19, 2014.

Chairman