

School Budget Forum

Date	17/10/23
Time	9.30 to 11.30
Location	Microsoft Teams
Members	Claire Armistead (CA –Rhyl High), (Chair) Mark Hatch (MH) - Dinas Bran, Helen Vernon (HV) - Bodnant, , Nicola Griffiths (NG) – Pendref, Rhona O’Neill (RO) – Tir Morfa, Glen Williams – Denbigh High (AW), Geraint Davies (head of Education), Lindsay Davenport (LD) Vice Chair – Secondary School Governor rep, Cllr Gill German (GG) – Lead Member for Education, Bethan Fell (BF) – Gwernant, Sian Alwen (SA - Ysgol Glan Clwyd), Trefor Jones (Brynhyfryd), Rona Jones (RJ) - Emmanuel, Dafydd Davies (DD) – Twm or Nant, Leah Crimes (LC) – St Brigids, Teleri Llwyd (TL) - Borthyn
Non-members	Craig Joyce (CAJ) - School Funding Manager, Cathy Howatson (CH) (Notes), Steve Gadd (SGADD) - Head of Finance, Jamie Groves (JG) Corporate Director DLL
Apologies	Colette Owen – Diocese, Neil Foley – Prestatyn High, Bernadette Thomas - CTW

1. Welcome

CA welcomed the group.

15 members were present at the meeting to make it quorate.

2. Matters arising and actions of last meeting

No matters arising. The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed by forum.

3. Budget Update 2024/25 – Steve Gadd

SG attended the meeting. A presentation was shared which has also been discussed at cabinet, including pressures and where we are looking to reduce costs and overspend in key areas.

Staff have been asked for ideas to make savings, as well as members. Some reserves have been used reducing shortfall to £2.6m for 24/25. Schools are still to plan for 3%

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savings. WG have confirmed we will not receive additional funding for the teacher pay award.

There is a high demand on social services and also agreed pay increases and this is contributing to the shortfall. SG reported at the last meeting that inflation is high and costs are driven by this.

On 22nd November the UK will announce the budget and we as a local government should receive our indicative budget by 20th December. We have uncertainty regarding the budgets and we are currently predicting a large shortfall for 2024/25.

4. Pooled Scheme Proposal

At the last SBF the pooled schemes was reported as an overspend of £400k for 2022/23. It was agreed to have a working group to look at the costs of the sickness scheme. The working group met and a proposal paper has been shared with the forum.

RJ – Understands it is a costing exercise to save money but has concerns with cover for ALN pupils.

NG wants to speak to other cluster members.

TJ asked for clarity on the proposal. He asked if conversations had been had about the funding for schools and the support provisions in place. There are concerns non-statutory services will be reducing.

MH – as a member of the sub group it was difficult to come up with the proposals but its felt that if we trial it for 6 months we can see if it will be being any further savings.

LD – it is important that 1-2-1 support is covered from day 1 and this was recognised. The framework needs to be fair to all schools.

ACTION – CH to email forum members to go and discuss in their clusters. Votes for option 1, 2 or 3 to be sent back by 27th October with the preferred option for each cluster. This is not for all schools to vote; forum members will vote on behalf of the cluster.

6. Denbighshire Leisure Services

Jamie Groves attended the meeting and shared a PowerPoint regarding dual use agreement, JG will be meeting Secondary Heads on 14/11/23 and is happy to meet Heads on an individual basis. A request was also made for schools to provide timetables prior to the summer so the centres can allocate the pool sessions to DCC primaries for swimming to support the delivery of the curriculum.

ACTION - CH to forward a copy of the PowerPoint to the forum

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7. Building maintenance SLA

Andrew Ward attended the meeting. CH had shared a request from Andrew prior to the meeting regarding increasing the pot for Building maintenance. The increase will be £50k, as the service has not increased their costs to schools since its inception and the shortfall in costs is unsustainable into and beyond 2024/25.

The forum all voted and agreed to increase the funding in the SLA.

8. Cluster matters

NG asked if the insurance scheme can cover costs of Jury Service duty for teaching staff. CH has had a discussion with the cluster finance manager and courts do reimburse schools for staff but not the full costs.

It is felt that the insurance schemes cannot cover the costs as it does not fall under sickness absence.

CA asked if Schools in financial difficulty could be provided with training for school governors in 2024.

ACTION – CH to arrange training

9. AOB

None.

The meeting ended at 11.30am

Date of next scheduled meeting – 23/01/2024 on Teams