

School Budget Forum

Date	17/01/2023
Time	10.00 to 11.30
Location	Microsoft Teams
Members	Claire Armistead (CA –Rhyl High, (Chair) Mark Hatch (MH) - Dinas Bran, Helen Vernon (HV) - Bodnant, Colette Owen (CO) – Diocese, Neil Foley (NF) – Prestatyn High, Nicola Griffiths (NG) – Pendref, Rona Jones (RJ) – Emmanuel, Rhona O’Neill (RO) – Tir Morfa, Glen Williams – Denbigh High (AW), Dafydd Davies (DD) - Ysgol Twm or Nant, Shannon Gage (SG)– Primary Governor, Lindsey Davenport (LD) Vice Chair – Secondary School Governor rep, Leah Crimes (LC) - St Brigids, Cllr Gill German (GG) – Lead Member for Education, Teleri Llwyd – Borthyn, Bethan Fell (BF) – Gwernant, Rona Jones (RJ) – Emmanuel, Geraint Davies (GD) – Head of Education, Geraint Parry (GP) - Brynhyfryd
Non-members	Craig Joyce (CAJ) - School Funding Manager, Cathy Howatson (CH) (Notes), Chris Speed (CS) – Assurance Finance Manager, Steve Gadd (SGADD) - Head of Finance
Apologies	None

1. Welcome

Claire Armistead (Chair) welcomed the group. The group welcomed new Headteachers Glen Williams, Denbigh High and Sian Alwen Ysgol Glan Clwyd.

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

2. Matters arising and actions of last meeting 10/2022

Denbighshire Leisure Partnership – Heads reported that they have not been contacted By Jamie groves to meet regarding LPA sites. **ACTION - CAJ to contact him.**
 No other matters arising. The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed by forum.

3. Budget Update 2023/24 – Steve Gadd

We have received information that our settlement will be better than expected from WG.

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Additional financing has been given to local authorities and we have received an 8.2% increase.

DCC were predicting a short fall of £4.8m previously and were going to use cash to bridge the gap, but this is no longer needed. There will not be further saving targets for this year.

Council tax increase will remain at 3.8%

All members of cabinet will receive a budget report for cabinet meeting today.

Schools – 1% efficiency savings will still be included in the budgets.

Energy Costs – there is in all likelihood going to be a financial support scheme for non-domestic users. DCC will look at this in detail once more details have been released. In year financial support may be provided at this point.

Potential pay increases will be monitored during the year. The outcome is very much unknown because of all the strikes currently taking place.

4. Pooled Schemes

CH - Currently we are looking at a £174k overspend by the end of March. This is up to and including December. The remainder of the year is based on Jan – Mar in the previous financial year. There is a high probability the overspend will increase as there are numerous coronaviruses at the moment and sickness is expected to be high.

5. Pooled Finance Schemes Criteria and Indicative Charges

The forum is aware we made changes to the pooled scheme just prior to Covid.

A discussion took place around the positives and negatives to being charged for any overspend to the scheme at year end.

CAJ asked the forum if they would like to increase the overall pot which would then decrease the chances of schools being charged at year end and increase the chances of receiving a credit instead.

GP would prefer to have a credit end of year than a charge. CA agreed.

ACTION – Discussion to be had at the next forum meeting around increasing the overall pot for 2023/24.

6. Low value procurement rules for schools

CAJ circulated a paper he had prepared with the group. Agreement from the forum is required to agree the increase in value for one quote. The paper suggests increasing from the current £10k to £20k for one quote.

ACTION – The forum all agreed with the new costing levels.

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7. Support & Traded Services

All schools have now agreed if they are opting in/out for the next 12 months. Charges will go through early in the new financial year. No major changes to the SLAs that were sent out.

8. SIFD and School Balances Update

Schools 3 year balances have been collated. Schools carried £12.5m into 2022/23, but this is now predicted to reduce to circa £6m by the end of the financial year, reducing again to zero by the end of 2023/24 and to a (£6m) deficit by the end of 2024/25.

Schools have also reported on surplus balances if carrying over 5%. Internal meeting to take place with Steve Gadd, Geraint Davies, Craig Joyce, Cathy Howatson.

CA mentioned that in Rhyl High schools' recent inspection, questions were raised around the surplus balances the school was carrying.

9. ICT update – Craig Joyce

CAJ and CH met with ICT to discuss their SLA. It has been agreed that the SLA will be brought in line with all of the others and sent to schools around October time in 2023.

10. Matters arising from clusters

None

11. AOB

RJ asked if there is an indication on how the PDG grant will be calculated around free school meal issue now that all pupils are eligible for a free meal?

GS - no update as yet have been received but it has been raised. It will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 10.52am

Date of next scheduled meeting – 18th April 2023 on Microsoft Teams.