

SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM
14th October 2019
Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin

Attendees:

MEMBERS:

Mari Gaskell (MG)
 Rona Jones (RJ)
 Mark Hatch (MH)
 Shannon Gage (SG)
 Rona O'Neill (RON)
 Geraint Parry (GP)
 Claire Armistead (CA)
 Helen Vernon (HV)
 Bethan Jones (BJ)
 Sue Dick (SD)
 Amanda Preston (AP)
 Gwyn Tudur (GT)
 Darren Booth Taylor (DBT)
 Lindsey Davenport (LD)
 Huw Hilditch Roberts (HHR)
 Teleri Llwyd (TLL)

Ysgol Llywelyn
 St Brigid's
 Ysgol Dinas Bran
 Primary School Governor Rep (Vice Chair)
 Tir Morfa
 Ysgol Brynhyfryd (Chair)
 Rhyl High School
 Bodnant
 Gwernant
 Bodfari
 Christ the Word
 Ysgol Glan Clwyd
 Twm o'r Nant
 Teachers Union Representative
 Lead Member for Education
 Borthyn

NON-MEMBERS:

Cathy Howatson (Minutes)
 Geraint Davies (GD)
 Vicki Cotgreave (VC)
 Paul Senior (PS)
 Laura Poole (LP)
 Honora Jones (HJ)
 Sharon Frobisher (SF)
 Jamie Groves (JG)
 Steve Gadd (SG)
 Joanne Moore (JM)
 Ian Land (IL)

School Funding Officer
 Principal Education Manager
 Ysgol Y Castell
 Principal Finance & Assurance Officer
 Business & Finance Managers Rep
 Business & Finance Manager – CTW
 COG - Clawdd Offa
 Managing Director Denbighshire Leisure
 Section 151 officer / Head of Finance
 Performance and Business Manager
 Planning and Resources Manager

Welcome

Geraint Parry (Chair) welcomed group.

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

1. Apologies

Karen Evans – Head of education & Children's Services
 Liz McClean – Teachers Union Representative
 Craig Joyce - School Funding Manager
 Neil Foley – Prestatyn High School
 Paul Evans – Denbigh High

2. Minutes from 03/06/19 agreed by forum

School Balances – No update as yet. Rosemary Jones has been looking at this and is meeting Karen Evans to go through her findings. Update at next meeting.

MG swimming – Misinterpretation on page 3 under Swimming allocations.

3. Terms of Reference

The group went through the current terms of reference overview and housekeeping.
RJ raised that St Brigids are down twice as members - It was agreed that Amanda Preston will be representative for Faith and Rona Jones as Middle School rep.
LD asked for confirmation if you miss 3 meetings are you then will not be able to attend the forum – This was confirmed.

ACTION – CH to update terms of reference with above amendments.

4. Budget Process

Steve Gadd attended the meeting and gave a presentation that has also been shared with SLT and cabinet. There are pressures of £8.5 million. These include Inflation pressures, energy demography and 2% savings included for schools.

We should know the draft settlement by Nov 26th and the final settlement mid Feb 2020. We are working on the worst case scenario. The information sent out in December will be dependent on grants.

HH – worried there will be a challenge on grants. Mark Dafydd at WG has been asked for more information. VC asked had the pay awards for teachers been confirmed.

MG – Yes - 2.75% for all teachers except NQT's which was 5%.

SG – The 2021 figures for schools include inflation for pensions

SG – In December we will confirm calculations and give the saving target.

HH - We are in a positive position but need to be prudent with budgeting. KE is also now the Director of ADEW.

MG asked when we will know the final settlement. SG has not received anything as yet.

5. Funding Formula Refresher

This will be moved to the agenda of next meeting in January.

6. Leisure Partnership Agreement

Jamie Groves attended the meeting on the request of the secondary Heads following the previous SBF after a discussion was held around Dual Use. The group were presented with copies of Dual Use partnership agreement, figures, charging/absorption basis and Centre improvements.

CA – The questions raised by the Secondary Heads came up. Heads were under the impression the funding was in and out but an increase annually - why is the increase of 1% not coming to forum.

JG – Dual Use works 18 months in arrears working on last year's actuals.

CA very grateful that he attended meeting and nobody is questioning that it's the top slice off the budget and the 1% increase why doesn't come to the SBF. Schools are looking at every line in their budgets

GP asked if the pot is less than it should be, does this happen nationally.

CA – it is not agreed annually at the SBF to top slice.

JG has no objections to attend the SBF. The terminology is not the same as other traded services SLAs. Clear process, unit costs were provided.

GP thanked Jamie for attending.

JG process map new process for company. KE needs to agree dual use sites agree what used

GT – Can meetings be one to one with Heads

JG – We have an effective PE Programme in Secondary's and Swimming in primaries. The pool times go to Primaries for first choice then the Secondary schools.

ACTION – Forum agreed the JG to attend the forum in September

7. ALN Funding allocation

Jo Moore – The sub group for the ALN funding has met to discuss ALN distribution. The budget is £1.8 million and it was agreed to keep this the same.

JM has consulted with chairs of clusters and received positive feedback.

MG felt as part of the task and finish group she supports the proposal to allocate on a 3 year average, as it will reduce staff time involved for the preparation of the current moderation panel process. There will be some winners and there will be some losers when we move to a 3 year average like with all formulas. RJ is also part of the working group and feels this is a logical way to share the funding.

MG – The allocation is a 3 year average but a review annually should be carried out to see if the funding is a fair way of distribution.

VC – Agreed a review with JM and the need of moderation process maps used for budget allocation.

ACTION – The proposal was agreed by all for both the Primary & Secondary sectors.

Home Tuition

JM - A paper had been circulated to the SBF prior to the meeting proposing to allocate funding for Home tuition back to schools and top slice for the overspend.

The forum were asked to agree whether they would prefer to top slice the primary and secondary delegated ALN budget, using a primary/secondary % split based on the last 3 year averages of funding to manage the increased costs of the Home Tuition provision.

RJ asked what the legal requirements are for registration of these pupils is it school or LA? - JM confirmed the registration of pupils is with schools.

RJ is concerned to receive a bill to the school for home tuition as it is meant to be a short term thing but she has long term cases over 12 months and the costs would be significant to her school for one pupil.

SGage felt it would work for short term but not in the long-term.

RJ asked if it could be capped.

RJ - Some pupils have to be educated at home for health reasons and not all ALN needs.

LD - It should be distributed to who needs it.

DBT – felt it should be kept centrally as it currently is.

MG – asked where would top slice come from?

CA – Can we challenge health for costs?

GP – In summary the top slice would be circa £60k.

RJ asked why the schools should be asked to pay the overspend?

DTB – It seems the budget is running a deficit and the forum are being asked to cover it.

JM suggested reporting to the SBF on a regular basis regarding spend.

ACTION – All agreed to keep the funding centrally

Fixed Penalty Notice

JM circulated a paper requesting the forum to approve the appointment of an additional 0.6 FTE centrally employed administrator at a cost of £11,967 (approx. £200/school). This would be top sliced from the delegated budget from April 2020. Costs for the remainder of this financial year would be met by the LA.

Schools would stop the practice of sending single emails with bulk referrals and a time limit for processing referrals will be implemented, where if it is not sent through within 2 weeks of the hitting a trigger, the referral will not be progressed and the school will be informed accordingly.

JM reported there seemed to be no negative feedback from the cluster meetings.

VC did not agree. The Rhyl cluster said they would take it back to cluster.

MG confirmed Rhyl were against the proposal. Training needs to be given to target and try not to stock pile.

GP asked the clusters for their thoughts.

Rhyl, Llangollen & Denbigh clusters voted “no”.

Ruthin cluster - TLL asked on behalf of the cluster where does the £60 penalty does goes now. JM replied to Revenue and Benefits.

Glan Ciwyd Cluster had not yet discussed the proposal.

Sgage felt with uncertainty of the budgets being mentioned today at the forum we need to try other steps.

ACTION – The forum did not agree to this proposal. They suggested the current process needs to be revisited.

8. Sustainability

MH handed out a business case for Ysgol Dinas Bran regarding transport funding. It was agreed last financial year and the costs came in under the £220k that was agreed. The surplus was divided out to schools by CAJ.

IL gave a brief overview to the forum of the current agreement in place. A sub group has been set up to review the formula process. There are also changes to the transport legislation.

As the school have already had their open evening it was felt the 2020/21 allocation should be agreed. The school received £220k for 2019/20. If this is underspent the surplus will again be divided out to schools. The business case will come back to will come back to the forum in March 2020.

ACTION – The forum agreed.

IL to share the legislation document with all schools and Peter Daniels to be invited to the Heads day to go over the changes in legislation.

9. Traded Services

CH has sent out the 2020/21 Traded Services SLA's and they are with service managers. It has been requested they return them by Friday 15th October.

Due to unforeseen circumstances there will a delay in sending them onto Schools. CH asked the group if any of the schools are considering pulling out of any specific SLA's to please let County know asap. If possible we will look to have them with schools W/C 4th November 2019.

10. Pooled Schemes

PS reported the Sickness pooled scheme is predicted to be over by £391k to date. At the last SBF KE was going to speak to HR re the highest triggers of the sickness. Miscoding is also an issue.

PS was asked if he can send figures and sickness codes out to individual schools.

LP – In the Secondary schools the Finance manager gets a copy of the cover but the Primary do not do it.

GP asked is it possible for Heads to be sent examples and ensure checks are in place to see if system working properly.

LP – If New Directions are used for supply the Finance Manager does not receive information on who is covering to check if the info is correct.

MG suggested select random samples of schools to quality assure it. This was agreed.

ACTION – PS to send out transaction reports.

11. Matters Arising from Clusters

No other matters arising

12. AOB

None

Meeting closed 4.45pm

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 28th January 2020, Conference Room 1a, County Hall