

EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CARDIFF SCHOOLS' BUDGET FORUM



Time: 8.30am – 10.30am
Date: 25.9.2024
Location: Microsoft Teams
Present: Chair - Andrew Skinner (AS), Cllr Sarah Merry (SM), Melanie Godfrey (MG), Helen Williams (HW), Ian Allwood (IA), Eifion Austin (EA), Angela Jardine (AJ), Jennie Hughes (JH), Tim Adams (TA), Nicola Price (NP), Nick Naish (NN), Sarah Parry (SP), Paul Tucker (PT), Carys Prytherch (CP), Will Howlett (WH), Education Management Clerk, Natalie Stork (NS), Gareth Rein (GR), Stuart Davies (SD), Sara Allen (SA), David Silver (DS), Ann Griffin (AG), Emma Richards (ER), Abigale Cuthbert (AC), Nick Alexander (NA), Suzanne Scarlett (SS), Marc Belli (MB), Wayne Murphy (WM), Saffron Herbert (SH)

Apologies: Cllr Chris Weaver (CW), Richard Portas (RP), Alison Poole (AP), Carly Davies (CD), Phillip Andrews (PA), Matthew Evans (ME), Diane Gill (DG), Brett Andrewartha (BA), Ivor Gittins (IG), Alison Powell (AP), Catherine Power (CP), Cllr Joel Williams (JW), Suzanne Williams (SW), Iwan Pritchard (IP), Mari Phillips (MP), Geraldine Foley (GF), Patrick Brunnock (PB)

Ref	Conclusions/Actions	Who
1.0	Apologies and welcome	
1.1	The Chair welcomed members and accepted apologies.	
2.0	Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record, subject to a small amendment (David Silver was present).	
2.1	Matters arising/actions from the previous meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2.2 An update on discussions on clarity on 2024/25 FRM allocation at Efficiency Boards – MG noted criteria methodology is being developed and will be shared with the Efficiency Boards and SBF (discussed in item 5.1).• 3.1 Timetable of notifications of SLA charges to schools to be improved, to feed into SBF earlier, and SLA Calculations to be understood to inform next year's charges (2025/26). - This will be discussed as a November Agenda item Action; work has been undertaken with services for an update. Conversations are being held with Chairs of conferences in the meantime.• 5.1 WM recommended more work undertaken by efficiency boards on the different needs of pupils across special schools, considering how special schools reduce/support OOC placements, to maximise impact at the workshop and efficiency boards. An update is provided later in item 5.1 (minutes 25th September).	Clerk

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA had noted a member was stressed around flexibility of role in relation to redundancy and redeployment. Many headteachers were not reading the redeployment policy. IA fed back the issue to HR, including need to ensure total and full engagement of all parties (HR and employees). Action: IA will check with ZSB that there were no further lingering issues, TUs are asked to raise any other concerns on this to ZSB. • MG had contacted WG regarding nonfunctioning of supply teacher booking, no response received yet. Action: MG will follow up again after the meeting. • SBF work going forward – no further suggestions received. 	<p>IA</p> <p>MG</p>
3.0	School Budget Forum Workshop Feedback	
3.1	<p>EA shared a paper following a workshop on 8th July, circulated previously.</p> <p>MB asked whether a model exercise was undertaken for various sizes of primary and secondary school to consider what this looks like. EA confirmed financial modelling was and continues to be undertaken to understand impact of formula changes. Financial modelling of six representative primary schools and two representative secondaries will be presented in November SBF.</p> <p>AC questioned the meaning of cash flat; EA noted the overall envelope/amount would remain the same for modelling purposes.</p> <p>MB queried whether the funding review of ALN would also be based on a “cash flat” basis – applying similar principle to AWPU. EA questioned appetite for proposal 2, fixing floor at max decrease of 5% and max increase of 10%, likely leading to increased funding in ALN and decreased AWPU (funding redistribution within their funding streams).</p> <p>MB expressed clear interpretation is needed on what universal provision (in primary school) looks like. The entire system could lose money. Many have different universal provisions in primary schools, transferring to secondary school with the same expectations results in the other school requiring more funding. Schools would either be underfunded or unclear on prioritisation.</p> <p>EA noted shift would be for funding to be based on deprivation factor rather than pupils, the funding envelope would remain the same. AS noted transfer of funding between year 6 and 7.</p> <p>WM questioned next steps with special work streams and challenges being faced. EA confirmed these would be considered by the special schools’ efficiency board. Understanding is needed before proposals are put forward, considering what can be achieved and SBF time restraints.</p> <p>AS welcomed the point made, to remember colleagues in the special school sector.</p> <p>NA asked whether funding was moving away from provision based on need to provision based on postcode. EA explained some certainty on funding would be required, not purely based on postcode, the rationale of predictors of need have been tested for a pragmatic solution. NA questioned reality versus predicted model – anomalies and pupil needs and asked was there sufficient money to meet pupils needs. The money might not be in the right place at the right time for the right people.</p>	

AS invited thoughts on how to achieve. NA noted it was difficult to see without the detail, schools must be responsive and agile. Need is growing across the city. If a portion of money is given elsewhere it is removed from areas where it might be needed. AS noted need and funding were not growing at the same rate, considering best use of money but perhaps not meeting the needs of pupils.

IA highlighted cost per place/amount per place for special schools, a previous proposal was not agreed as it impacted on the overall amount to be allocated across the formula. Some scenarios will be tested with special schools first. The formula does need to tie in with issues reflecting reality seen by colleagues. Feedback recommending that clearer guidance was required was helpful.

NN referred to secondary and primary schools, colleagues are encouraged to talk collectively as a city and asked why they have separate funding models. There would be gains and losses in all alterations of the funding formula. He suggested they be modelled by school scenario to see changes in reality (in postcodes) to discuss impact of proposed changes – a tangible formula providing a reality check for typical schools.

EA welcomed the feedback. Intention is to address formula clarity, streamlining, for conversations in the next financial year. The two sectors were separated currently, a more fundamental review would follow confirmation of WG intentions following their cross Wales formula review. NN pointed out the need to deal with the current situation and future. Discussions were needed promptly to mitigate later issues, with formula to support.

AC raised an issue regarding ordinarily accessible provision, with many receiving a provision outside of this. When making accessible now where does funding come from, when they cannot manage in a mainstream school, for the provision being built?

EA explained special school provision is built into the overall budget. Resource we have and how to bridge the gap is being considered, along with resource required to carry out services.

IA sought to manage expectations on the WG funding review, expected to share practice found, led by seconded LA officers. WG had stated the review would not give mandates. The LA could make changes, if compelling, before the WG review is received. NN welcomed that Cardiff would make their own decisions, with budget reflecting needs.

EA drew attention to the formula aspect not being responsive and agile but an annual occurrence. **Action:** He will model a couple of scenarios with changes for the November SBF with a dynamic spreadsheet on several schools. IA noted an agile and reactive response to ALN could be arranged but would likely lead to excessive claims and clawbacks, as seen historically. Moving money around reactively undermines plans.

MB held the view until clarity is provided, guidance is required from the LA with guidance from schools. With reduced funding, there are concerns that ALN is only linked to FSM children. Provision must be right, there are too many variables, consistency is needed that would impact on all phases.

EA

4.0	School Funding Formula Work Streams Update	
4.1	<p>EA presented a paper previously circulated.</p> <p>MB held the view proposal 3, single model would be unlikely to give equity across the system.</p> <p>EA noted extra for each pupil led funding regarding non-teaching support staff, looked to be streamlined to ensure more comparable going forward.</p> <p>GR noted figures reflecting key principles, the first step in direction needed. A lot of funding is linked to deprivation. Size of budget can impact on schools. Modelling is needed for clarity, to understand the impact on schools, there is responsibility to all Cardiff schools in all sectors, to make reasonable adjustments for fairness and equity, sustaining schools in Cardiff.</p> <p>IA echoed that eligible FSM and PLASC data was conflicted. PLASC was rising, whilst eligible FSM was decreasing. This impacts on the PDG, driven by eligible FSMs. Pupils missed that should receive PDG, and distribution were issues to be resolved.</p> <p>GR queried flat rates, was this shifting to the AWPU pot from other pots or pooled for other needs. EA confirmed pooled for needs. Views were sought from the forum on decreasing one area to move to another (the ALN pot).</p> <p>GR asked if reducing formula from all schools was to give money to particular schools in the South or East of the city? EA confirmed that it would.</p> <p>MB drew attention to the principle around exams and funding, ensuring no schools are underfunded for exams, referring to cost of exams and meeting needs of ALN.</p> <p>EA suggested the proposal remains as a workstream for stepped implementation in 2025/26 and 2026/27. In depth analysis is required, considering distribution of qualifications and understanding best way of funding moving forward.</p> <p>MB pointed out costs for vocational exams and greater proportion but fewer qualifications than other schools (netting off). The entire system being underfunded in an area. Action: EA will consider and bring back to the November forum.</p> <p>SP recommended input from the forum members on exams and nuances. Full course Welsh is provided in years 10 and 11 (300 children per year group), costs are thousands for the NEA speaking and listening aspect, as children are taken from timetables and cover for Welsh teachers. Nuances include entry cost and how to deliver the qualifications. SP offered to contribute to input. EA welcomed the offer.</p> <p>DS echoed the points made and held the view the number of GCSEs being taken were too low. He highlighted the need to have flexibility to mitigate cost increases in exams when considering proposals (WJEC had increased prices recently, schools have no say). Action: EA will undertake information gathering on cost increases historically and compare to inflation to identify trends.</p> <p>NN noted schools have many statutory duties, with higher costs locally (i.e. asbestos training – double the cost of national online training and cleaning) that the</p>	<p>EA</p> <p>EA</p>

	<p>school must pay. Changes to the Formula must address need, not what we think we need. Secondary heads were suggested to also provide input to EA.</p> <p>AS thanked finance for their work undertaken and contributions from colleagues today, noting one global pot, for all the young people across the city and the need to ensure funding is allocated where required for pupil need. Further work to come.</p>	
5.0	Education Update - Mel Godfrey	
5.1	<p>MG gave the following update:</p> <p><u>Reviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of reviews are underway looking, linked to efficiency arrangements in the LA. • APSE was appointed to undertake a review of catering services. This consists of three phases, the first two on costings of service and possible efficiencies. The third phase will look at options for the future of the service. • Edge consultancy was appointed by transport to undertake a review on home to school transport. The initial phase is looking at running costs and efficiencies. A policy for home to school transport is being considered in the latter phase, unions, governing bodies, headteachers and the SBF will be consulted. • Jo-Anne Daniels is leading school improvement for the Middle Tier Review. Heads were asked to look at arrangements. Work is being reported ahead of a conference on 2nd October, a key date to engage with headteachers and governing bodies on how to shape the school improvement service going forward. Work will be undertaken following this to operationalise, to deliver efficiencies for 1st April 2025 and new school improvement arrangements for the next academic year. • ALN is an area deemed to be a priority as part of overall reviews for the LA, with corporate support. Scope and phasing are being considered, including consistency of universal provision/tiered provision and global funding for the whole system, over and above formulaic allocation discussed earlier. JAD has agreed to Chair and lead work on ALN. • Following these, a review of EOTAS provision, EHE and alternative pathways will be undertaken. • Feedback will be sought from headteachers when appropriate. • Other ancillary services, primarily LA business support services, will be reviewed at a later date and considered with headteachers, Chairs of governors and SBF if required. <p><u>Efficiency Boards</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency board arrangements had focused on LA spend and transparency on money retained for the LA. • Next steps will focus on how schools could work together on a collaborative basis. • Primary efficiency boards are considering priorities (anticipated to be soon agreed) and how to work together to achieve better efficiencies and spend. EA (Action) will update primary efficiency board on benchmarking to inform decisions. • It is hoped FRM budget resources would be utilised to begin delivery of key priorities. 	EA

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The secondary efficiency board needs more work and discussion on priorities of work. • Further discussion is required, with clear understanding on how heads can engage with reviews underway with the LA. • Initially an overarching efficiency board was being considered with representatives from primary, secondary and special schools. It was decided the SBF would have an overview of the three efficiency boards and that they will report to the SBF, for clear advice and recommendations to Cllr Merry, Cabinet members and the LA. 	
6.0	Any Other Business	
6.1	<p>TA asked if teachers would receive the pay settlement. EA estimated teachers would receive the increase in December. TA asked if this could be made in November (expected in another LA).</p> <p>AJ noted the unexpected generous pay award and asked whether there was a gap and burden that would be pushed onto school budgets.</p> <p>EA noted 5.5% agreed by WG. ADEW have not confirmed funding the difference, no update at present. Action: Finance will update SBF and schools when clear information on teachers' pay and pensions is known.</p> <p>NN reiterated the increase was likely to be received in December as it would take time to process. Pensions are not yet resolved, are hoped to be resolved sooner rather than later.</p> <p>Action: EA will cascade information when known.</p> <p>The next SBF will be held on Wednesday, 13th November, NN, the deputy Chair will Chair.</p>	<p>EA/IA</p> <p>EA</p>

Acronym Reference

SBF	School Budget Forum
SB	School Balance
BSR	Budget Strategy Report
DSB	Delegated School Budget
CC	Cardiff Council
WG	Welsh Government
LG	Local Government
LA	Local Authority
TU	Trade Union
HR	Human Resources
NI	National Insurance
FY	Financial Year
CT	Council Tax
Q_	Quarter_ (number relating to)
FP	Financial Plan
FS	Financial Services
PA	Pay Award
RWL	Real Living Wage

FSM	Free School Meals
MTFM	Medium Term Financial Management
MTFP	Medium Term Financial Plan
MTBS	Medium Term Budget Strategy
MTFB	Medium Term Financial Budgets
LFMO	Local Financial Management Officer
CCHF/HF	Cardiff Council Hardship Fund/ Hardship Fund
LGHF	Local Government Hardship Fund
MSF	Mutual Supply Fund
CNE	Complex Needs Enhancement
ALN	Additional Learning Needs
SOP	School Organisation Programme
PDG	Pupil Deprivation Grant
SEN	Special Education Needs
ALP	Additional Learning Programme
LAS	Local Authority Settlement
EOTAS	Education Other Than at School
MEAG	Minority Ethnic & Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Learners