

**EDUCATION SERVICE:
MEETING OF CARDIFF SCHOOLS' BUDGET FORUM**



Time: 8.30am – 10.30am
Date: 17th March 2021
Location: Microsoft Teams Invite

DRAFT AGENDA

Ref	Item	Category	Lead
1	Apologies & welcome to the SBF	Standing item	Chair
2	Minutes from previous meeting (24th February 2021) and matters arising:	Standing item (papers attached)	Chair
3	School Funding Formula 2021/22	Information and Discussion	Neil Hardee, Rob Green
4	Any Other Business	Standing item	Chair

Future meeting dates –

12th May 2021

7th July 2021

EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CARDIFF SCHOOLS' BUDGET FORUM



Time: 8.30am – 10.30am
Date: 17th March 2021
Location: Microsoft Teams
Present: Karen Dell'Armi - Chair (KD), Cllr Sarah Merry, Cllr Chris Weaver, Mel Godfrey (MG), Mike Tate (MT), Rob Green (RG), Neil Hardee (NH), Angela Jardine (AJ), Andrew Skinner (AS), Nic Naish (NN), John Hayes (JH), Marc Belli (MB), Ivor Gittins (IG), Suzanne Williams (SW), Ann Griffin (AG), Jane Setchfield (JS), Mari Phillips (MP), Adrian Dinsmore (AD), David Harris (DH), David Silver (DS), Kevin Hart (KH), Sarah Parry (SP), Catherine Power (CP), Wayne Murphy (WM), Louise Bloom – Clerk (LB)

Apologies: Ian Allwood (IA), Abigail Beacon (AB), Sara Allen (SA), Jane Marchesi (JM), Cllr Joel Williams (JW)

Ref	Conclusions/Actions	Who
1	Apologies and welcome	
1.1	The Chair welcomed members and apologies were accepted.	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising	
2.2	The minutes of the meeting held on 24 th February 2021 were agreed as a true record.	
2.3	<u>Matters arising</u> Minute 2.3: Surplus budgets, RG shared an anonymised breakdown of claims from the hardship fund, compared with school budgets. The paper will be circulated to forum members following the meeting. Minute 3.5: A letter was sent from the forum in response to the framework for evaluation on improvement and accountability WG consultation. AJ questioned how schools could be encouraged to make a claim from the hardship fund for pressures on schools such as covering PPE effectively and maintaining separate bubbles. RG confirmed, as a hardship fund the overriding principle and WG anticipate that costs should be absorbed where possible; schools should apply only if they are suffering financial hardship due to the pandemic. The hardship fund will continue into 2021. If individual schools are achieving savings, they should be used to offset costs. Where individual schools have not experienced savings, they can make hardship claims. In the new financial year schools will have refreshed budgets/balances and claims can be considered where needed. JS questioned additional costs schools would incur for exams and examination processes. Key stage four and five teachers may need to be	LB

	<p>released from other duties to support year 11 and 13 pupils. Additional workloads and demands would be placed on groups of teachers and admin support may be required, or costs to release teachers from other teaching commitments and buying in supply.</p> <p>JH drew attention to a heavy burden of moderation post Whitsun, requiring additional support and staff costs to release senior leaders, teachers and managers. SP added staff also will require training. MB noted £2,000 to £4,000 (dependant on size of school) would be allocated to individual schools as part of grants to support single person departments. Revised operation guidance potentially supports remote learning.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed pursuing funding support for extra invigilation costs. RG will raise with WG whether funding made available would be sufficient and claims from the Hardship Fund would be eligible.</p> <p>MT shared operational guidance for schools from 12th April and invited members to send their comments to him on issues requiring development, which may also be incorporated into the LA's guidance.</p> <p>MB noted the learning guidance, yet to be released is ambiguous on blended learning. His school had hoped to create space in the summer to provide onsite provision for keyworker children and identified vulnerable children with asynchronous materials and a focus on wellbeing, freeing up days for assessment and training opportunities with staff to reduce appeals.</p> <p>MT was pleased to note learning guidance focused on the well-being of pupils. Education officers will send communications on exams out after Easter, providing positive information on schools and teacher termly grades. Feedback from secondary headteachers would be welcomed to incorporate into the communications to alleviate pressure around examinations.</p>	RG
3	School Funding Formula 2021/22	
3.1	<p>NH drew attention to the school formula letter, circulated with schools delegated budgets and distributed to headteachers and Chairs of governance. Previously the forum had reflected on the overall budget context of the Council and net cash increase to schools of £6.632m, taking into account changing pupil numbers, demand arising from additional pupil needs and inflationary pressures connected to pay and pensions.</p> <p>He reminded the forum of the ongoing contributions from the school budget towards the 21st Century Schools Band B Programme, enhanced school asset renewal programme and the general efficiency savings. The Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant (MEAG) had increased overall across Wales from £10m to £11m with Cardiff funding remaining at the same level rather than declining. Post-16 grant funding in Cardiff schools increased by £1.381m.</p> <p><u>Pooled budgets</u></p> <p>A temporary pooled budget has been created this year from delegated school budgets by retaining money for the former delegated specialist teams and Educational Psychology service. The trading model will be reviewed over one to two years for implementation of a revised service delivery model,</p>	

	<p>alongside a new funding model.</p> <p>1.5% of the schools delegated budget has been retained in a pooled ICT budget for 2021/22; a similar separate element will be retained from the Post-16 grant.</p> <p>Schools were asked via LFM officers not to build in future pay awards into their budget planning, due to uncertainty as to whether or not a pay award will be implemented. The Council has included sums within its overall budget for pay inflation at a certain level and, if pay awards are agreed for 2021/22, the sums will be distributed to schools at the agreed level.</p> <p>Schools' governor-approved budgets are to be submitted to the LA by mid-May. If schools find themselves in a deficit position, they are asked to contact financial officers, by 30th April, who will arrange to work with the school to set their budget and develop a medium term financial plan.</p> <p>NH shared papers detailing distribution of budgets and the impact upon individual schools from 2020/21 to 2021/22, noting a total of £253,036,390 delegated in 2021/22 and £21,823,730 pooled.</p> <p>WG identified LA's could retain up to 3% of the DfES (post 16) grant in 2021/22. An in-year redistribution would take place later based on actual post 16 pupil numbers.</p>	
3.2	<p><u>Special Schools</u></p> <p>NH gave an overview of changes to 2021/22 funding in special schools and noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is based on place numbers and place categories (A to H). • Number of places will increase to 685.75 from 653.00. • AWPU and place category values have decreased through the years due to changes in pupil numbers/place numbers and 0.5% efficiency saving in 2020/21. • An additional £453,901 has been allocated for places • The SLA level has reduced due to full year effect of ICT core SLA upon special schools. • The Educational Psychologists SLA has been removed from the delegated budget. • 1% efficiency savings • Overall special schools will receive an additional £254,490 	
3.3	<p><u>Primary Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school pupil numbers in September 2020/21 are expected to reduce more than schools are currently anticipating. • Pupil numbers are used to allocate the majority of delegated budgets. • NH emailed primary headteachers on 1st February alerting them the projections they had made in aggregate were greater than expected. • Expected figures were built into the AWPU value of the allocated budget. • If numbers decline as anticipated, there would be a significant increase in the negative pupil number adjustment within 2022/23. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual schools would bear the cost of actual pupil numbers compared to projected pupil numbers. • £2.4m funding for specialist teams has been withheld centrally. • SLA Elements have reduced by £360k due to the full effect of ICT core • An efficiency value increase from 0.5% to 1%. • Overall cash reduced by £4,705,280 	
3.4	<p><u>Secondary Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil numbers in secondary schools continue to rise; the increase is expected to continue for two years. • £980,530 has been withheld centrally for the specialist teams. • Full ICT core SLA effect of -£60,000 • Efficiency savings of 1% • Overall cash increase of £1,955,680 	
3.5	<p><u>Grants</u></p> <p>NH outlined grants made available after distribution of school-delegated budgets.</p> <p>The educational minister recently announced an additional £72m of funding to schools. WG have allocated £33m of the additional funding in 2020/21 financial year. £30m is designated to augment recovery, recruit and refresh following the pandemic for years one to ten. Of the £30m, Cardiff schools will receive £3.6m before the end of the financial year. Figures were shared at the secondary headteachers conference on 11th March.</p> <p>WG had allocated an additional amount of £597,000 to Cardiff to support pupils in examination year groups, which was distributed to secondary schools.</p> <p>WG will also be allocating an additional £45m to assist schools in offsetting expenditure occurred in the 2020/21 financial year, for revenue repairs and maintenance, caretaking costs and cleaning costs that have not been funded by any other Welsh Government grant. Of the £45m, Cardiff schools will receive £1.5m. In total, last week schools were notified of an additional £9.3m of funding to be paid into the schools delegated budget before 31st March 2021.</p>	
3.6	<p><u>School balances</u></p> <p>School balances of circa £17.5m would be carried forward and used in 2021/22 and are the highest level seen. Conversations will be held with WG on flexibility afforded to schools to temporarily dis-apply thresholds, clawbacks and spending plans to enable schools to work out their financial plans for 2021/22.</p>	
3.7	<p>The Chair invited questions from the forum.</p> <p>WM noted the significant impact of the reduction in values for special schools. Discussions are required as a sector. He recommended more work on the formula to bring it to where it needs to be. NH acknowledged further discussions would be held, asking schools to contact officers to arrange a meeting if required. He recommended forming separate working groups for</p>	

	<p>primaries, secondaries and special schools to look at schools delegated budgets in late summer/early autumn, for input into the school budget strategy in 2022/23. RG and NH will contact members to form the working parties. How the efficiency savings have affected delegated budgets would be explored.</p> <p>KH recommended a review to mitigate future problems with cuts and school balance carryovers, pointing out grants are to provide additional support to children but would be used to balance budgets. Potentially additional support would not be provided to children when they most need it.</p> <p>NH confirmed clarity on thresholds would be sought from WG and confirmed to schools before 31st March.</p> <p>NN questioned what would happen to the centrally held amount if no pay award were forthcoming. RG responded that the amount would be returned to the Council as a whole for determination of another purpose, it may be held for future pay awards. If there were a pay award, it would automatically be distributed to schools. The Chair requested the amount remains within education. NN suggested putting the money towards specialist schools and provision to support the wider vision and level of support pupils need to achieve their best. Members were broadly in agreement.</p>	<p>RG/NH</p> <p>NH</p>
4	Any Other Business	
4.1	<p>NN drew attention to the EMTAS review of funding for pilot schools and asked how this would affect wider EMTAS funding. He questioned whether schools are aware of the changes to funding and how funding would be redistributed. NH explained Newport, Swansea, Cardiff and Wrexham regularly received £10m of funding as an additional grant. However, over the last decade, population has dispersed with more pupils moving into the country, resulting in greater distribution across the local authorities. Due to the changes, WG reviewed their formula and redistributed funding across all the Welsh authorities. A task group was formed and it was noted that in addition to more EMTAS pupils, the amount provided had not risen in years therefore more funding was requested to address the gap. Funding in the main is utilised to pay teachers, wages have risen over the years creating a larger gap and a cut in real terms.</p> <p>Following discussion with WG the grant was increased from £10m to £11m with Cardiff funding remaining at £4m rather than reducing. EMTAS population has also dispersed within Cardiff. Six/seven years previously, five pilot schools delegated funding to schools. Resources and responsibility were delegated from the grant to schools receiving staffing at the time. Since the pilot schools were put in place more schools have taken in children from EMTAS communities. A formula basis for funding was considered, if children were allocated points based on language acquisition the distribution of funding would vary significantly with pilot schools still receiving significant but reduced amounts.</p> <p>Discussions on a language acquisition based formula are ongoing. The reduction in pilot schools funding has been identified and would be spread over four financial years, commencing September 2021.</p> <p>A further meeting with the pilot schools is scheduled and an update shared in</p>	

	<p>the school budget forum on 12th May. NH explained of the £4m funding an amount provided for travellers is held, three quarters of the remaining funding is delegated and distributed to the ethnic minority achievement service with a quarter retained centrally. The pilot schools had asked what service the central team provided and whether the specialisms are required across the city. A review of the central team is being considered to release more delegated monies and redistribution of funding, bringing a changed management process. A needs analysis will be undertaken to ensure the right specialisms are in place.</p>	
5	Date of next meeting	
5.1	12 th May 2021.	