

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Ceredigion Schools Budget Forum held at
Ystafell Aeron Fach, Campws Felinfach on Tuesday, 19 May, 2015.**

Present: Councillor Hag Harris (Chairman).

Non-schools members: Mr Eifion Evans (Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships).

Schools members:

Primary Schools Representatives: Lodwick Lloyd and Peter Wellington (Governors).

3-16, 3-19 and Secondary Schools Representatives: Jane Wyn (Head) and Chris Evans (Governor).

Officers in attendance: Gwyn Jones, Chris Macey (Head of Financial Services), Kay Davies (Democratic Services).

7.00 pm – 8.15 pm

1 Apologies

Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn, Derrick Jones, Alwyn Ward, Donna Hanly, Ann Elonwy Renolf, Stephen Cooper and Meinir Lewis apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosures of Personal Interest

There were no disclosures of personal interest.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was **AGREED** to confirm as a true record the minutes of the meeting held on 21st October, 2014 subject to the addition of Councillor Rowland Rees-Evans to the list of attendees.

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes

7. Electronic Money Collection

The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships informed the meeting that the outcome of the pilot of electronic cards appears positive. It is anticipated that the cards, which will ultimately allow pupils to pay for their lunch and also gain access to services such as libraries and swimming pools etc., will be issued to all secondary school pupils in the autumn/winter.

5 Draft Financial Performance for Learning Services for 2014-15

The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships presented the Learning Services Draft Financial Performance for 2014 – 15 which currently shows an overspend of £60k. Savings have been achieved within the School Improvement budget due to vacant posts not being immediately filled when staff members leave. It was noted that financial pressures include the rise in school transport costs, HCT overspend and the decision not to close Dihewyd Primary School. He noted that Post 16 Education would be reviewed to ensure no further overspend.

It was **AGREED** to note the report.

6 Draft School Reserves at 31 March 2015

The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships noted that it was heartening to note that most schools had stayed within budget during a difficult year for schools. He noted that a number of posts have gone in the primary and secondary sector. The situation at Penglais School remains challenging – pupil numbers have increased in years 12 and 13 with pupils attending from Machynlleth and Dolgellau areas but numbers are low in the lower years. A restructuring scheme over 2 years is being undertaken at Penglais School.

Pupil numbers continue to decrease across the county. Although a number of pupils from across the border attend schools in this county, there remains number of vacancies in schools.

A new formula for funding, devised by Chis Macey, Head of Financial Services, has been adopted by WG.

It was **AGREED** to note the information provided.

7 2015-16 Budget for Learning Services

Chris Macey, Head of Finance, presented the 2015-16 Budget for Learning Services report. He noted that three budgetary cuts had affected Learning Services, namely, Post 16 Education (£0.5 million), Catering Services and transport to schools service. A working group is currently undertaking a Catering Review on all catering services in the county. The Service is working closely with the transport section in order to achieve savings of £350k. All 6th form pupils will be requested to state if they need a seat on school buses for a fee. The number and size of school buses will be rationalised according to the number of seats required. The use and routes of school taxis will also be reviewed.

It was **AGREED** to note the information provided.

8 School Formula Budgets 2015-16

It was noted that due to strategies in place, the budget share per pupil has improved significantly and provides more balance in provision across schools. However, 2016 will bring about further major changes.

It was noted that the colour system to signify the level of support needed by schools, devised by Barry Rees, Head of Learning Services, has been developed for use nationally. Officers have collaborated to simplify the formula used.

It was **AGREED** to note the information provided.

9 School Working Budgets 2015-16

The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships stated that schools are to submit their budgets by 1st June. Learning Services are working closely with those schools in deficit and helping them through processes which include restructuring and the reduction of posts. Both Henry Richard School and Cardigan Secondary

Schools have expressed their appreciation of the support they have received from the budget service level agreement.

10 Educational Improvement Grant 2015-16

The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships informed the meeting of the changes to grant funding from the WG. He stated that WG have rationalised individual grants to form the Educational Improvement Grant which includes the Foundation Phase. Terms and conditions of the grant focus on pupils' outcomes rather than audit as had occurred previously. However, further discussions will take place to relax some of the terms and conditions. Schools have received their allocations for this year.

11 Ysgol Bro Teifi

The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships provided an update on Ysgol Bro Teifi. The new Ysgol BroTeifi and the new school at Drefach are included in the 21st Century Schools band A project for which WG provide 50% of the funding. The remainder of the finance is found through prudential borrowing, the sale of assets (disused schools) and capital from the Council. Extra sums for further work at Tregaron School have also been identified. WG have since invited Ceredigion to re-profile. The Bro Teifi Project Board, along with Gwyn Jones, Strategic Director for Corporate Resources and Eifion Evans, Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships follow the Prince II Management system and robustly scrutinise expenditure of the project. A Members' workshop has also been held to provide information to Members. The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships stated that the project is the only one in Wales supported by the WG which is ahead of schedule and under budget. WG are using the project as a case study on financial management to promote good practice across the country. The WG has invited the County to apply for further funds as there is underspend available from other areas.

The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships stated that stringent processes are in place to oversee the project and the WG Gateway reviews ensure auditing during the process.

It was **AGREED** to note the information provided.

12 Any other business

- i. A letter and response in relation to Penglais School were distributed for information.
- ii. Gwyn Jones, Strategic Director for Corporate Resources was wished well in his forthcoming retirement. He was thanked for all his work and support over the years.
- iii. The date of the next meeting will be circulated shortly.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Forum held on xxxxxx, 2015.

Chairman