**Minutes of a Meeting of the Ceredigion Schools Budget Forum held at**

**Ystafell Aeron Fach, Campws Felinfach on Tuesday, 4 November, 2015.**

**Present**: Councillor Hag Harris (Chairman).

**Non-schools members**: Mr Eifion Evans (Deputy Chief Executive), Barry Rees (Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships) and Councillor Rowland Rees Evans (Chair of Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

**Schools members**:

Primary Schools Representatives: Lodwick Lloyd (Governor).

3-16, 3-19 and Secondary Schools Representatives: Matthew Brown (Head Teacher) and Chris Evans (Governor).

**Officers in attendance**: Chris Macey (Head of Educational Finance & Resources), Kay Davies (Democratic Services).

7.00pm – 8.30pm

**1 Procedure**

The Chairman welcomed and congratulated Mr. Barry Rees, Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships to his first meeting in his new post. He also congratulated Mr. Eifion Evans on his new post as Deputy Chief Executive. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that he is now a member of the Forum in his new role, replacing the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources; this role on the Forum will be shared with Stephen Johnson, Head of Financial Services.

**2 Apologies**

Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn, Stephen Johnson, Peter Wellington, Jane Wyn, Jack Evershed, Alwyn Ward and Dianne Evans apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

**3** **Disclosures of Personal Interest**

There were no disclosures of personal interest.

**4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **AGREED** to confirm as a true record the minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2015 subject to the addition of the name of Councillor Rowland Rees Evans to those in attendance at the meeting.

**5** **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

4.7 Electronic Money Collection – An update is to be presented to Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was noted that the scheme is likely to be rolled out once the pilot is complete. The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships to send further information to Chris Evans.

7. Budget for Learning Services - The Deputy Chief Executive informed the meeting that the funding settlement from WG will not be known until next month which is later than usual. The settlement has been delayed due to a spending review in the UK Government and that the final settlement will not be known until March 2016. Therefore, it has not been possible for the service to draft a budget. He noted that the indicative budget may be close to what is expected.

**5** **Learning Services Draft Financial Performance Quarter 2**

Chris Macey, Head of Educational Finance & Resources, presented the Learning Services Draft Financial Performance for Quarter 2 and noted that little had change since September. The Service anticipates that it will operate within its budget resources by the end of the financial year apart from three target savings applied to Learning Services where it is anticipated that the Transport Savings may be achieved but unlikely that full savings will be reached in 16+ Education and Catering Services.

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

**6** **National School Reserves at 31 March 2015**

Barry Rees, Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships, informed the meeting that Ceredigion schools reserves stand at £110 per pupil which is under the average for schools in Wales. Some schools in Ceredigion have positive reserves while others are negative. Learning Services work closely with schools that are in deficit.

A comparative graph in the National Statistics statistical release on Reserves Held by Schools in Wales as at 31 March 2015 shows that Ceredigion use their school reserves with a -0.9 percentage point change from the previous year. The Strategic Director for Learning and Partnerships noted that according to statute, WG is able to demand the return of unused reserves and schools are challenged when they do not use reserves.

It was noted that the School Challenge Cymru programme of a £40m investment in schools facing challenges in their circumstances and stage of development has resulted in only a 2% increase in performance.

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

**7** **School Working Budgets for 2015-16**

It was noted that some schools have over-spent and that the Service is working closely with school to help them get back on track by the end of their financial year. Human Resources work with schools on several levels which includes examining fixed spend and staff rationalisation. It was noted that although funding is decreasing from WG, expectations remain at the same level.

The format of funding16+ Education has led to a decrease which has resulted in 6th forms being subsidised in order to meet statutory requirements.

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

**8 Changes to School Formulae for 2015-16**

It was noted that the School Formulae has not been looked at for many years and it would be currently be appropriate to look at some aspects and to adapt the formula to reflect the present situation. Changes have taken place over time and anomalies have been identified e.g. there are no longer schools of 20 pupils or less in the county. Further information will be presented to the next meeting. Three areas will be looked at, namely, how to fund the secondary sector whilst meeting the requirements of the Measure, safeguarding smaller schools to ensure that they are able to provide the curriculum and head teachers teaching in classrooms. These are to be to be looked at to enable fairness to small and large schools.

A report will be presented to the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was **AGREED** to approve that the work on School Formulae is to be undertaken.

**9** **2015-16 Budget Update**

The Deputy Chief Executive provided an update on the budget. Almost £11m of savings are to be found by the Council during this financial year. £10m savings have been identified with a further £750k to be found corporately. It is anticipated that £8-12m will need to be found in the next financial year. He noted that a third of the budget is spent on Education. Savings will be sought from Learning Services, e.g. catering in schools and homes; Hyfforddiant Ceredigion will be also be looked at as it is not a statutory service. PwC are currently working on new profiles for each service with pioneering proposals coming forward.

**10 Any other business**

Date of next meeting – 7:00pm, 17th May 2016, Ystafell Aeron Fach Room, Campws Felinfach.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Forum held on 17 May, 2016.**

**Chairman**