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**SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM**  
**Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025**  
**(Microsoft Teams)**

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**NOTES**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	<p>Abby Sharpe (Abercanaid Community)</p> <p>Stuart James (Afon Taf High)</p> <p>Sarah Hopkins (Blessed Carlo Acutis)</p> <p>Jeff Beard (Cyfarthfa High)</p> <p>Owen Morgan (Cyfarthfa Park Primary)</p> <p>James Voros (Gellifaelog Primary)</p> <p>Rhiannon Stephen Davies (Greenfield Special)</p> <p>Anna Morris (Heolgerrig Community)</p> <p>Keith Maher (Pen-Y-Dre High)</p> <p>Mike O'Neill (Pen-Y-Dre High)</p> <p>Paul Phillips (Pen-Y-Dre High)</p> <p>Simone Roden (Ynysowen Primary)</p> <p>Alwen Bowen (Ysgol Rhyd Y Grug)</p> <p>Sarah Townsin (Ysgol Coed Y Dderwen)</p> <p>Sue Walker (Director of Education)</p> <p>Craig Flynn (Director of Finance)</p> <p>Garhard Williams (Union Representative)</p> <p>Councillor Gareth Lewis (Cabinet Portfolio for Education)</p> <p>Anthony Lewis (Head of School Planning, Support &amp; Resources)</p>
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	<p>Joanna Lewis (LMS Manager)</p> <p>Emma France (Clerk to the Forum)</p> <p>Louise Ballinger (Accountancy)</p>

No	Discussion/Action
1.	<p><b><u>Apologies</u></b></p> <p>Apologies received from Cllr Anna Williams Price (observer) accepted.</p> <p>SW opened meeting and thanked all for their attendance.</p>
2.	<p><b><u>Budget Settlement</u></b></p> <p>Presented by Craig Flynn and Cllr Gareth Lewis.</p> <p><u>Presentation summaries:</u></p> <p><u>Craig Flynn</u></p> <p><u>Revenue settlement 2025/2026</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1% increase 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in Wales.</li> </ul>

No	Discussion/Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Former specific grants transferred into settlement £3.091 million in total for MTCBC.</li> <li>No new responsibilities.</li> <li>No indicative settlement 2026/2027.</li> <li>Changes to key data sets.</li> </ul> <p><u>Budget 2025/2026</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised deficit budget of £5.983 million deficit.</li> <li>Current under review projection for future revenue settlement to inform MTFP and development of transformational strategy.</li> </ul> <p><u>Key dates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8<sup>th</sup> January 2025 - Schools Forum.</li> <li>21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 - Headteachers / Governors Forum.</li> <li>Spring 2025 - Council Workshop, Cabinet, Council, Combined Governance and Audit Committee / Joint Scrutiny.</li> <li>26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 (Provisional) - Cabinet recommended Budget and Council Tax.</li> <li>26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 (Provisional) - Council approve Budget and Council Tax.</li> <li>11<sup>th</sup> March 2025 - Statutory Date for Budget Setting.</li> </ul> <p><u>Cllr Gareth Lewis</u></p> <p><u>Previous years</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2023/2024 £1.5 million removed from school budgets.</li> <li>2024/2025 £2.1 million removed from school budgets.</li> </ul> <p><u>Impact</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in number of schools in PLD.</li> <li>15 of 24 schools predicting PLD over MTFP.</li> <li>Reduced staff impact on curriculum delivery, teaching and learning.</li> </ul> <p><u>Council Budget 2025/2026</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welsh Government funding increase 5.1%.</li> <li>Adjusted from £126.70 million to £133.148 million.</li> <li>Revised budget deficit of £5,983,000.</li> </ul> <p><u>School Budget for 2025/26</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No contribution form school budget to reduce the Council's financial deficit in 2025/2026.</li> </ul> <p><u>Questions / Comments</u></p> <p><b>PP: Cuts from previous two years still applied but no further cuts in 2025/2026?</b>  <b>GL:</b> Yes, that is correct, administration understands the very difficult decisions schools and governing bodies have taken over the last two years and will continue to make.</p> <p><b>PP: What will the timeline be for schools getting their formula allocations for 2025/2026?</b>  <b>JL:</b> They are currently being worked on and will be out to schools towards the middle of the Spring term. They will be circulated as soon as they are ready.</p>

No	Discussion/Action
	<p>SW: We will update further regarding when the Formulas will be available during the Chairs and Vice Chair meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January.</p> <p>JB: <b>Thanks to Craig and Gareth for the information, we have been requested the school budgets be ringfenced and protected for some time. Will we at any point see the previous cuts reversed? I wrote to you to express my concerns Gareth, thank you for the formal response.</b></p> <p>GL: Yes, we are able to protect school budgets from further cuts, not in the position to reverse the cuts placed on schools, this will be under review. It was important for us as an administration to take into account the views fo the School Forum, Headteachers and Unions. I also received communication from the NAHT when the information provided today is made public, I will be responding to the NAHT.</p> <p>The Chair closed the meeting and thanked all for their attendance.</p>