

**SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM**  
**Working Group**  
**Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025**  
**(Civic Centre)**

**NOTES**

**PRESENT:**

Stuart James (Afon Taf)  
Owen Morgan (Cyfarthfa Park Primary)  
Rhiannon Stephens-Davies (Greenfield Special)  
Simone Roden (Ynysowen Community Primary) - Chair  
Alwen Bowen (Ysgol Rhyd Y Grug)  
Anthony Lewis (Head of School Planning, Support & Resources)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Louise Ballinger (Education Accountant)  
Joanna Lewis (LMS Manager)  
Emma France (Clerk to the Forum)

No	Discussion/Action
1.	<p><b><u>Apologies</u></b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from James Voros and Sarah Hopkins.</p>
2.	<p><b><u>Property Services SLA / R&amp;M</u></b></p> <p>AL provided members with a paper outlining school / LA responsibility relating to queries previously raised, a copy of the minutes outlining the mutual fund review from 2015 and Appendix 4 of the fair funding scheme outlining school responsibility.</p> <p>AL outlined the current inconsistencies within the documentation with proposed recommendations:</p> <p><b>A. <u>Legionella</u></b></p> <p>The Responsibilities / CIPFA document states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Risk assessments charged to LA and tank servicing charged to schools which is happening correctly.</li> <li>b. No mention is made regarding monthly testing or tank cleans, but these are included in the SLA document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tank cleans - LA (these are correctly charged to LA).</li> <li>- Monthly testing - Schools (these were previously charged to schools but since 2015/16 have been charged to LA. Annual cost circa £6,000 per annum).</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Works arising from Legionella risk assessments are currently a mixed bag. Some are charged to schools and some to the LA (like Tank cleans).</li> </ul> <p>Chris is reviewing the reasons for coding between LA and school as may be on a case-by-case basis why some work is picked up by the LA, depending on the nature of the works</p>

No	Discussion/Action
	<p>required.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responsibility/CIPFA doc to be updated to include that tank cleans are an LA responsibility.</li> <li>2. Responsibility doc and SLA to be updated to reflect that monthly testing is an LA responsibility.</li> <li>3. Include confirmed position re works arising from Legionella risk assessments and detail in the CIPFA doc as required.</li> </ol> <p><b>B. <u>Air handling units rooftop</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Responsibilities/CIPFA document states that the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LA is responsible for servicing and inspection of air handling rooftop units</li> <li>- School is responsible for air conditioning servicing and inspection</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. However, the SLA document states schools for both</li> <li>c. The scheme of delegation states schools are 'responsible for repair, replacement of mechanical ventilation units and also provision of local units'.</li> <li>d. Schools have consistently been charged for both elements and charging schools is consistent with the Mutual Fund review recommendations from 2015-16.</li> </ol> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responsibility/CIPFA doc to be updated to reflect that air handling rooftop units are a school responsibility.</li> </ol> <p><b>C. <u>Thermostatic Mixer Valves (TMVs)</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. TMVs seem to have always been charged to schools but CIPFA doc and SLA both state LA. (annual cost circa £4,000 per year).</li> <li>b. Property Services advise there is no apparent reason for this and that as this is servicing, schools should be charged.</li> </ol> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responsibility/CIPFA doc and SLA to be updated to reflect that TMVs are a school responsibility.</li> </ol> <p><b>D. <u>Fire Alarms</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Old Responsibility / CIPFA doc states LA responsible for monitoring, inspection &amp; service – no reference at all is made in the current Responsibility / CIPFA doc.</li> <li>b. SLA states schools responsible.</li> <li>c. Scheme of delegation states LA responsible for 'provision of' but schools for R&amp;M.</li> <li>d. Costs have been charged to a mix of school / MF until 2015, the schools from 2015 onwards.</li> </ol> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Add line back into Responsibility / CIPFA doc stating school responsible for fire alarm servicing/inspection.</li> </ol>

No	Discussion/Action
	<p><b>E. <u>Lightening Conductors</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Old Responsibility / CIPFA doc states LA responsible for lightening conductor inspection &amp; testing, current Responsibility / CIPFA doc states school are responsible.</li> <li>b. School have always been charged for servicing, and this is also in line with MF review.</li> <li>c. Scheme of delegation doesn't make specific reference, but servicing is considered essential maintenance, falling under R&amp;M.</li> <li>d. However, advised by Property Services that LA are responsible for replacement.</li> </ul> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responsibility / CIPFA doc to be changed to reflect Lightening Conductor replacements are LA and servicing/inspection is schools, rather than showing all costs as schools.</li> </ul> <p><b>F. <u>Other considerations</u></b></p> <p>The Responsibility/CIPFA document requires a further review to ensure it reflects new technologies and is simplified so that it is less ambiguous.</p> <p>The funding formula provided to schools for servicing contracts within its R&amp;M allocation also requires review to ensure a fair distribution of funds that reflect different levels of servicing requirements and costs for new technologies for different buildings.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The above to be reviewed further for changes to potentially be implemented from April 2026.</li> </ul> <p>AL highlighted the overall recommendations.</p> <p><b><u>Overall Recommendations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responsibility/CIPFA doc to be updated to include that tank cleans are an LA responsibility.</li> <li>2. Responsibility/CIPFA doc and SLA to be updated to reflect that monthly testing is an LA responsibility.</li> <li>3. Include confirmed position re works arising from Legionella risk assessments and detail in the Responsibility/CIPFA doc as required.</li> <li>4. Responsibility/CIPFA doc to be updated to reflect that air handling rooftop units are a school responsibility.</li> <li>5. Responsibility/CIPFA doc and SLA to be updated to reflect that TMVs are a school responsibility.</li> <li>6. Add line back into Responsibility / CIPFA doc stating school responsible for fire alarm servicing/inspection.</li> <li>7. Responsibility / CIPFA doc to be changed to reflect Lightening Conductor replacements LA / servicing Schools rather than showing all costs as schools.</li> <li>8. A review of the Responsibility/CIPFA document to reflect new technologies and a review of the formula funding for R&amp;M to reflect servicing costs/new technologies required in different buildings, to be carried out for implementation from April 2026.</li> </ul> <p><u>Questions / Comments</u></p> <p><b>SR: What are the statutory responsibilities? Through this document I see several points not LA statutory responsibility. Where can we access a list of the LA statutory</b></p>

No	Discussion/Action
	<p><b>responsibilities? We are consistently told it is not an LA statutory responsibility what is? We want a clear document that outlines the LA statutory responsibilities.</b></p> <p>AL: CJ would need to answer that.</p> <p><b>SR: There is no clear list of LA Statutory responsibility?</b></p> <p>AL: No, not that I am aware of from discussions with Chris. The scheme of delegation outlines the school responsibilities to maintain and repair the premises. Should we be aware of a school going into disrepair we could enforce the required remedial works and charge the school.</p> <p><b>SR: Is there anything the school is not responsible for?</b></p> <p>AL: The five-year electrical testing and Legionella risk assessments as these budgets have always been retained by the local authority.</p> <p><b>SR: What in terms of the budget has been delegated to the school but is a LA responsibility?</b></p> <p>AL: The scheme of delegation allows the LA to delegate responsibilities to the school the details of what is a school or LA responsibility are detailed in Appendix 4 of the scheme. This was used as the basis for the current responsibilities document.</p> <p>A copy of Appendix 4 was circulated to members.</p> <p>SJ outlined concerns for example around his sprinkler system and its servicing.</p> <p>AL: We have discussed this with Chris and will need to consider the full costs and how often servicing is required for different systems and can consider if the LA should retain some of the servicing centrally and that schools are appropriately funded for the remaining servicing costs.</p> <p>AL: We need a new baseline.</p> <p><b>AL: Are we happy to proceed to take the recommendations in paper to full School Forum on 18<sup>th</sup> March?</b></p> <p>SR: Still concerned around some of the ambiguity, is it the same in other LA.</p> <p>AL: It is mixed across Wales, in RCT they do not delegate to similar level and retain budget centrally.</p> <p>SR: I am not against that, as one of the recommendations we put forward to School Forum.</p> <p>AL: That can be one of the models we consider as an option in the ongoing work to update the responsibilities document for new technologies and review the delegated / funding model for April 2026.</p> <p>Discussion around the payment of works before works carried out to school satisfaction, the poor quality of some of the work and subcontractors, and school not receiving quotes for works or being told what costs are being charged to school.</p>

No	Discussion/Action
	<p>Schools required a mechanism to be able to hold the contractors to account.</p> <p>Discussion around Customer service satisfaction survey and noted that these are being sent out for planned work but not responsive repairs, and it is the responsive repair element where there are concerns.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>Members agreed to propose acceptance of recommendations 1-8 to the School Forum to address inconsistencies in current documents and agree workstream for wider piece of work for April 2026.</p> <p>Members request CJ to attend next School Forum meeting to outline the progress of the changes agreed in SLA discussions and queries raised in December meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample checks – 10% of works checked, what has the outcome of checks? Response to the queries raised in December meeting.</li> <li>• Pilot of two schools checking invoices pre-payment.</li> <li>• Customer service satisfaction survey. Simplifying and making available online.</li> </ul>
3.	<p><b><u>Additional Support – Funding</u></b></p> <p>AL presented the working group with a draft paper outlining a proposed funding model from the ALN working group.</p> <p>A draft delegation model has been considered that provides schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A baseline allocation for 3 years included in the formula funding, adjusted annually for changes to pupils with assessed need on roll.</li> <li>• The baseline assessment of need will allocate a RAY (Red, Amber, Yellow) category to identified pupils and be used to aggregate overall need for Additional Support funding.</li> <li>• This will include an allocation for pre-nursery starters expected in Jan/Apr and their known needs.</li> <li>• Recourse to additional funding in year for nursey pupils that haven't been considered in allocation via panel.</li> <li>• The RAY categorisation will be used to allocate in year panel applications for nursery pupils</li> <li>• An additional % included in allocation upfront to manage other in year demands.</li> <li>• The RAY categorisation will be used to allocate funding for other pupil demands being managed in-year, to the following years allocation.</li> <li>• A revised baseline assessment of pupils needs every three years, rather than annually. Details regarding the process for this to be considered further.</li> <li>• Each school to have a review during the 3-year cycle regarding additional support provision to consider effective use of resources and consider good practice etc. Good practice identified to be shared across the system. Further consideration required regarding this.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Timeline / process for delegation April 2025-April 2028</u></b></p> <p><u>April 2025</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The baseline September 2024 allocations have been updated to reflect the in-year allocations (Blue) being redesignated RAY (Red, Amber, Yellow).</li> </ul>

No	Discussion/Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This forms the basis for the proposed delegated allocations from April 2025.</li> <li>Each school will be allocated an amount of money in the formula based on the RAY categorisation of pupils and the rate of a LSA Level 3.</li> </ul> <p><u>April 2026</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In November 2025 the pupil list is updated to reflect the current pupils on roll and known needs for January 2026/April 2026 pre-nursery starters based on allocated places.</li> <li>This doesn't reassess needs but reflects pupils currently on roll in AY 2025/2026.</li> <li>The pupils on roll that the April 2026 allocation is based on are finalised using PLASC data (January 2026) and current info regarding April 2026 starters.</li> </ul> <p><u>April 2027</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In November 2025 the pupil list is updated to reflect the current pupils on roll and known needs for January 2026/April 2026 pre-nursery starters based on allocated places.</li> <li>This doesn't reassess needs but reflects pupils currently on roll in AY 2025/2026.</li> <li>The pupils on roll that the April 2026 allocation is based on are finalised using PLASC data (January 2026) and current info regarding April 2026 starters.</li> </ul> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <p><b>What about new pre-nursery/nursery pupils?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Year 1 (April 2025-March 2026) additional needs for pre-nursery/nursery pupils can be brought to panel for consideration of an additional allocation as currently.</li> <li>In Year 2 (April 2026-March 2027) allocations will be built in from the start for known needs of nursery starters January 2026/April 2026.</li> <li>Additional allocations can be made in year for nursery pupils with need not factored in and new starters in September 2026 and January 2027.</li> <li>All in year allocations will be based on the RAY criteria.</li> </ul> <p><b>What about other new pupils in year?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An additional % will be added to each school's allocation to manage demand in year. This % is being modelled.</li> <li>Schools would be expected to manage in year demands (with the exception of nursery pupils) from this allocation.</li> <li>These additional pupil demands would be assessed by ALN in liaison with the school in November to inform an appropriate RAY allocation to be included in the adjusted allocation in April 2026.</li> <li>This adjustment for new pupils on roll, would be made in the following years allocation (Year 2) based on January 2026 PLASC.</li> <li>The school's updated allocation for April 2026 (Year 2) would again include an additional % on top.</li> </ul> <p><b>What about pupils with a LA IDP that receive support?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The LA would retain this budget (£1.4 Million) but allocate money to schools as currently based on the current assessed need.</li> <li>Each school would then have two allocations from the LA each April; one for pupils with LA IDP (LA Budget allocated to schools as income) and one for pupils with School IDP/no IDP</li> </ul>

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	<p>(delegated budget allocated to schools in formula funding).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For pupils with an LA IDP, changing needs in year can be brought to panel.</li> <li>All panel allocations will be based on the RAY criteria.</li> <li>These needs will be reviewed on a three yearly cycle as for other pupils.</li> </ul> <p><b>SR: Can we have some clarification around the percentage added?</b></p> <p><b>AL:</b> The proposed figure is 8.3% or circa £200,0000. JL has looked at the in year demand over the three-year period and 8.3% has been the highest over the period.</p> <p><b>SR: Can this figure be included in the paper?</b></p> <p><b>AL:</b> Yes, we will amend to reflect the figures. This allocation is additional to the core budget for 25/26 and Gavin Metherringham has reviewed options to fund this from ALN grant monies prior to this being included within the baseline allocation for 26/27 if approved.</p> <p><b>SR: Will the RAY criteria/allocations be transparent?</b></p> <p><b>AL:</b> Yes, it will need to be for this to work as a delegated model.</p> <p><b>SR: There will be a mechanism to go to panel for unknown pupils?</b></p> <p><b>AL:</b> Yes, there will be a panel for pupils who require an LA IDP and nursery children who were not included those pupils would then be included in the base for the following year.</p> <p><b>SR: Why three-year cycle?</b></p> <p><b>OM: There is very little change why not for the life of school?</b></p> <p><b>AL:</b> This system will allow to build into base and review pupils needs. By building in for three years we can give the system some stability for school and allow the funding allocation to be in FA and release funding allocation earlier and in line with budget setting.</p> <p><b>SJ:</b> We did consider different time periods, but 3 years gives an opportunity for review.</p> <p><b>SR: What if a pupil is in the base but their need changes?</b></p> <p><b>AL:</b> This could be considered when the base is updated to reflect in house demands that the school have managed in year.</p> <p><b>SR: What if pupils have a school IDP but require a LA IDP during the year?</b></p> <p><b>AL:</b> If there are changes to a pupil and the pupil requires an LA IDP in year that can be brought to panel. The following year these pupils would be removed from delegated allocation and held centrally as for other LA IDP pupils.</p> <p><b>SJ: What changes would be made to the three-year allocations?</b></p> <p><b>AL:</b> Pupil movements in and out of school, and any changes to the RAY allocation due to additional demand managed in house by the school.</p> <p><b>SR: What rate will the support be based on?</b></p> <p><b>AL:</b> Grade 3.</p> <p><b>SR: We need to consider that some pupils do not access pre-nursery, or the support required in pre-nursery can be different to the support required in a mainstream school.</b></p>

No	Discussion/Action
	<p>AL: We can add that in.</p> <p><b>SR: If there is a robust annual process, to ensure all pupils are allocated the correct RAY, there should not be much change in the three-year review?</b></p> <p>AL: The detailed processes need to be considered further but the annual adjustments will only review RAY allocations for additional demands the school has had to manage in-year including new pupils, rather than for all pupils.</p> <p>SJ: The 3-year review will provide a new baseline for the next period.</p> <p><b>SR: Can we review the 8.3% to ensure it is accurate?</b></p> <p>AL: Yes, we can review this over the first three-year period.</p> <p><b>AL: Do you think the system will work?</b></p> <p>RSD/OM: Agreed that the system seems the fairest, reduces bureaucracy and is still based on pupil need.</p> <p><b>OM: When will schools know their base allocation?</b></p> <p>AL: This will need to go to full forum for approval then a consultation and then to Cabinet. We will be able to give a draft figure by end of March but need to consider further with Accountancy the technicalities for including in the formula funding in 25/26. In 2026/2027 and following years it will be in the FA and included when these drafts are shared usually by end of February.</p> <p>All parties agree to recommend the proposed model to the full budget forum for consideration.</p>