



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
**MERTHYR TUDFUL**  
**MERTHYR TYDFIL**  
County Borough Council

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**SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022**  
**(Afon Taf High School)**

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**NOTES**

**PRESENT:**

Stuart James (Afon Taf High)  
Sarah Hopkins (Blessed Carlo Acutis)  
Owen Morgan (Cyfarthfa Park Primary)  
Laurence Matuszczyk (Edwardsville Primary)  
Rhiannon Stephens-Davies (Greenfield Special)  
Keith Maher (Pen Y Dre High)  
Mike O'Neill (Pen Y Dre High)  
Gwyndaf Jones (Ysgol Santes Tudful)  
David Anstee (Ysgol Y Graig Primary)  
Sue Walker (Director of Education)  
Steve Jones (Chief Officer Finance)  
Anthony Lewis (Head of School Planning & Improvement)  
Garhard Williams (Trade Union Representative)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Gary Winston (Clerk to the Forum)

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Simone Roden (Ynysowen Community Primary School)  
Sarah Townsin (Ysgol Coed Y Dderwen)  
Ryan Morgan (Taff Bargoed Learning Partnership)  
Councillor Michelle Jones (Portfolio Lead for Education)  
Joanna Lewis (LMS Manager)  
Ian Kent (School Accountant)

No	Discussion/Action
1.	<p><b><u>Election of Chairperson</u></b></p> <p>Nominations were sought for the position of Chairperson for the School Budget Forum for 2022-2023, one nomination was received - Keith Maher.</p> <p>It was agreed to elect Keith Maher as Chairperson.</p>
2.	<p><b><u>Election of Vice-Chairperson</u></b></p> <p>Nominations were sought for the position of Vice-Chairperson for the School Budget Forum for 2022-2023, one nomination was received - Ryan Morgan.</p> <p>It was agreed to elect Ryan Morgan as Vice-Chairperson.</p>
3.	<p><b><u>Terms of Reference for the School Budget Forum/Working Group</u></b></p> <p>The Terms of Reference, which were circulated in advance of the meeting, for the School Budget</p>

No	Discussion/Action
	Forum and the School Budget Forum Working Group were agreed.
4.	<p><b><u>School Budget Forum Working Group Membership</u></b> The membership of the SBF Working Group for 2022/2023 was agreed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ryan Morgan (Chair)</li> <li>• Owen Morgan</li> <li>• Gwyndaf Jones</li> <li>• David Anstee</li> <li>• Rhiannon Stephens-Davies</li> <li>• Sarah Hopkins</li> <li>• Stuart James</li> <li>• Anthony Lewis</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b><u>Minutes</u></b> The minutes of the School Forum Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022, were agreed as a true record.</p>
6.	<p><b><u>Matters arising from the minutes</u></b> No matters were arising.</p>
7.	<p><b><u>Work Programme</u></b> The work programme for 2022/2023 was discussed and agreed. It was also agreed that an additional School Budget Forum Meeting be held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 9:00am (on Teams) to consider feedback from the Chief Finance Officer following the Local Authority budget settlement announcement.</p>
8.	<p><b><u>S52 2022/2023 Analysis</u></b> Members noted the analysis of budgets across Wales for 2022/2023.</p> <p><b>LM: The Special Education tab - can you explain what these figures tell us?</b> AL: I would need to refer back to the Welsh Government booklet, but I will look into it.</p> <p><b>LM: The information seems very random, and it looks impossible to make comparisons - where is Merthyr staff it doesn't seem to make any sense?</b> AL: I can ask Ian Kent for clarity on what staff we have for each area of spend.</p> <p><b>LM: It does bring into question the value and delivery of these statement and make you wonder if anyone challenges them.</b> AL: They are good points, and it may be worth the LA raising these points with Welsh Government colleagues.</p>
9.	<p><b><u>School Balances 2021-2023</u></b> Members noted the above report which showed that as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, school balances were £6.3 million (actual) and £3.6 million (adjusted) which is 8.6% of formula funding. Adjusted figures take into account almost £2.7 million grant income from Welsh Government which was received too late in the financial year to spend by year end.</p>

No	Discussion/Action
10.	<p><b><u>LRB Funding</u></b></p> <p>AL explained that LRB funding has been discussed previously at the Forum. The funding queries had been investigated and found that there had been an error in the average teacher salary calculation and positive adjustments would need to be made to schools with LRB classes. The funding of LRB units will now be considered by the Working Group.</p>
11.	<p><b><u>Efficiency Savings 2023/2024-2024/2025</u></b></p> <p>Steve Jones explained that the rise in inflation had placed a lot of pressure on the current budget. It was likely that these pressures would continue to increase over the coming months. This will include general inflation, falling income and higher pay awards than had been estimated. For the current financial year, we now have a projected overspend of £3 million as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. We may be able to off-set some of this against our contingency fund, but you can only do that once.</p> <p>Based on our current indicative budget for 2023/2024 we will have a deficit of £5.5 million, if the new settlement does not take into account inflation increase, we would have a deficit of £11 million.</p> <p>Whatever the settlement, we anticipate significant cuts to our funding, and this has been discussed by Cabinet and at this stage we would like the Forum to consider three possible levels of efficiency savings: -£500k, -£1 million, -£1.5 million.</p> <p>Members discussed and explained that the School Forum had been asked to do this in previous discussions and had come to the conclusion that there were no further areas that could be ‘trimmed’ and the only option was to top-slice.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chief Finance Officer provide feedback following the budget settlement announcement and that further action be considered at that time.</p>
12.	<p><b><u>Dates of Future Meetings</u></b></p> <p>Date and agenda for next meetings</p> <p><b><u>Schools Budget Forum</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022      10.30am      TBC</li> <li>• 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023      10.00am      TBC</li> <li>• 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023      10.00am      TBC</li> <li>• 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023      10.00am      TBC</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Schools Budget Forum Working Group</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022      10.00am      TBC</li> <li>• 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022      10.00am      TBC</li> <li>• 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023      10.00am      TBC</li> <li>• 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023      10.00am      TBC</li> <li>• 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023      10.00am      TBC</li> </ul>