



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM
Special Meeting
Friday, 16th December 2022
(Microsoft Teams)

NOTES

PRESENT:

Keith Maher (Pen Y Dre High) - Chair
Sarah Hopkins (Blessed Carlo Acutis)
Owen Morgan (Cyfarthfa Park Primary)
Laurence Matuszczyk (Edwardsville Primary/Troedyrhiw Community)
Rhiannon Stephens-Davies (Greenfield Special)
Ryan Morgan (Taff Bargoed Learning Partnership)
Simone Roden (Ynysowen Community Primary School)
Sarah Townsin (Ysgol Coed Y Dderwen)
Alwen Bowen (Ysgol Rhyd Y Grug)
David Anstee (Ysgol Y Graig Primary)
Steve Jones (Chief Officer Finance)
Ian Kent (School Accountant)
Sue Walker (Director of Education)
Anthony Lewis (Head of School Planning & Improvement)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Joanna Lewis (LMS Manager)
Gary Winston (Clerk to the Forum)

No	Discussion/Action
1.	<u>Welcome</u> The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance.
2.	<u>Revenue Settlement 2023/2024</u> Mr S Jones provided details of the draft Revenue Settlement for 2023/2024 and the following key details: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Merthyr Tydfil increase is 7.0%. The All-Wales average increase is 7.9% and Merthyr Tydfil is the 18th highest in Wales.The indicative increase had been 3.5% so there has been an increase, however it was below the 17.5% needed to meet our needs.The indicative settlement for 2024/2025 is 3.1% (up from the previous estimate of 2.4%).Capital - there has been an increase of £536,000 to £3.168 million in 2023/2024. <u>Budget Implications 2023/2024</u> The estimated deficit for the Council has now been recalculated and is £11.5 million. Council has agreed that schools should be asked to find £2.5 million savings from their budgets.

No	Discussion/Action
	<p>It has been agreed that the higher than estimated pay awards for teaching and non-teaching staff in 2022/2023 would be centrally funded.</p> <p>The formula allocation for 2023/2024 reduction would be applied after increasing the budget base for pay awards, changes to pupil numbers, increased energy costs and inflation.</p> <p>AL: We are working on the formula funding at the moment to reflect the additional pupil numbers and we hope to share indicative information in the first week of next term. We have modelled what the impact of cuts to the school budget could look like and we will share these at the working Group Meeting in January. We will need to consult all governing bodies on the changes.</p> <p>RM: Has Welsh Government made any decisions on grants? SW: They are likely to stay at the same level but there are on-going discussions on how they are distributed.</p> <p>KM: It was interesting to see that areas of highest deprivation in Wales received the lowest levels of increased funding. I guess the formula is complex. SJ: Yes, it's very technical and is based on the Standard Spending Assessment. When increases are higher, it tends to favour areas with the higher tax bands.</p> <p>KM: Is there any recourse to engage further with Welsh Government as these are indicative figures? SJ: We are in a consultation period, but it is very unlikely that the current position will change.</p> <p>KM: If we had a flat rate 5% cut this will cut between tens and hundreds of thousands from a school's budget, can this be spread over a number of years or does it all need to be found in 2023/2024? SJ: It will all need to be found in 23/24</p> <p>SR: In view of the size of these cuts, shouldn't we all go into deficit and send a message that it can't be managed? KM: It's an interesting thought and we will need to see how the Professional Associations respond.</p> <p>DA: There is likely to be an impact on staffing levels, will the LA be offering a voluntary redundancy scheme? SJ: Unfortunately, there will be job losses and we will be offering voluntary early retirement, but the details of this are still to be discussed.</p> <p>SW: It was mentioned that RCT offer guaranteed interviews to staff made redundant, this is something we could discuss with the trade unions.</p> <p>As there were no further questions, the Chair closed the meeting and thanked them for their valuable contribution.</p>