



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM
Monday, 27th March 2023
(Afon Taf High School)

NOTES

PRESENT:	Keith Maher (Pen Y Dre High) - Chair Stuart James (Afon Taf) Sarah Hopkins (Blessed Carlo Acutis) Owen Morgan (Cyfarthfa Park Primary) Laurence Matuszczyk (Edwardsville Primary) Rhiannon Stephens-Davies (Greenfield Special) Paul Phillips (Gwaunfarren Primary) Mike O'Neill (Pen Y Dre High) Ryan Morgan (Taff Bargoed Learning Partnership) Simone Roden (Ynysowen Community Primary) David Anstee (Ysgol Y Graig Primary) Sue Walker (Director of Education) Councillor Andrew Barry (Cabinet Portfolio for Governance and Resources) Steve Jones (Chief Officer Finance) Anthony Lewis (Head of School Planning, Support & Resources)
IN ATTENDANCE:	Joanna Lewis (LMS Manager) Gary Winston (Clerk to the Forum)
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:	Sarah Townsin (Ysgol Coed Y Dderwen) Ian Kent (Education Accountant)

No	Discussion/Action
1.	<u>Welcome</u> The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked Afon Taf for hosting the meeting.
2.	<u>Minutes</u> The minutes of the following meetings were agreed as a true record: <ul style="list-style-type: none">School Forum Meeting - 18th January 2023School Forum Meeting - 2nd February 2023
3.	<u>Matters arising from the minutes</u> The Chair explained that he had received a letter from the Labour Group of Merthyr Council in which they disagree with the comments made by Councillor Barry at the meeting held on 2 nd February, regarding consultation with the Labour Group in relation to the cuts to school budgets and that they wished to point out that they did not and do not support the cuts.

No	Discussion/Action
	<p>SW: The comments are disappointing as this is not a political forum. AB: I agree, we can note the comments, but we should move on.</p> <p>PP: I don't know how this arose, but we don't want this group to become a political forum.</p>
4.	<p><u>LRB Funding Update</u> Anthony Lewis presented a paper which outlined the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding currently provided in the primary LRBs. • Feedback from Headteachers on the areas to be considered for funding. • Appropriateness of current primary funding model. • Additional considerations. • Funding currently provided in the secondary LRB. • Feedback from Afon Taf on areas to be considered for funding. • Appropriateness of current secondary funding model. • Additional considerations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed way forward - • Fund Actual teacher salary costs from Sep 23 • Continue to fund LSAs using current model in April 23 as no schools have lower funding from this current model. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALN Steering Group / LRB T&F Group to review the following and report outcomes to Schools Budget Forum for implementation from April 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current funding levels for resources and supply cover. ○ Whether new funding allocations are required for Repairs to FF&E, car allowances, additional DRAs and other items if appropriate. ○ Current funding level for ALNCo. Time in Secondary LRB and new funding allocation for ALNCo. Time in Primary LRBs. ○ Number of LSAs / HLTAs required to be funded through the Formula for each class. ○ Pupil capacity for each class. ○ Level of AWPU funding provided for Secondary LRB pupils when in mainstream. ○ Number of secondary LRB classes to be funded. <p>The views of members were sought:</p> <p>SR: In the secondary model they get £10,000 for management time but there is nothing for this in the primary model? AL: Yes, it arose following particular discussions and we used the piloting arrangements to address.</p> <p>SR: Surely the same issues affect primary schools? AL: Yes, and this has been brought up during the consultation.</p> <p>SL: There needs to be greater equality between the models.</p>

No	Discussion/Action
	<p>LM: In the spreadsheet which shows the impact of changes, it seems SBLD classes lose out financially, is there any reason?</p> <p>JL: It is due to funding an actual salary and having teachers on lower pay than the average.</p> <p>LM: I would have thought that SBLD classes have a greater need than a LRB class and should that be taken into account?</p> <p>KM: Im not aware of any differential in the teachers pay and conditions document.</p> <p>RSD: In my school, all teaching staff get an SEN allowance, which is in their terms and conditions.</p> <p>LM: You can get two levels of SEN Allowances - SEN1 and SEN2, how does the LA determine what it given?</p> <p>AL: Currently we pay what the school has given through the average salary calculation.</p> <p>OM: It doesn't seem fair that staff in different LRB classes can be paid at different levels.</p> <p>AL: This is something the LRB task and finish group can consider.</p> <p>KM: Can I ask that this is something to be looked into, currently the governing body of each school agreed the TLR and allowance's structure.</p> <p>A vote was held, and it was agreed that LRB class teachers be funded on actual salary basis from September 2023 and that the LRB T&F group review ongoing funding arrangements for April 2024 onwards as set out in the proposed way forward.</p>
5.	<p><u>SLA Evaluations</u></p> <p>Joanna Lewis explained that the Working Group had considered alternative options for evaluating the Service Level Agreements that schools have with the Local Authority.</p> <p>Four options were presented, and the Working Group's preference was for Option 3 (only includes an overall score for the SLA - no judgements for individual criteria just comments). But the YES/NO question in Option 4 were also liked so we have now added an option which combines these features and has been added as Option 5.</p> <p>SR: I think they are a waste of time as usually we don't have anything to say.</p> <p>LM: I don't understand why we get services with high scores and yet people complain about them. Perhaps we need to have a re-think and do something like a negative brain-storming exercise. I've done them before, and they can throw up some interesting things.</p> <p>JL: Can I just clarify that Option 3 is overall score and comments whilst Option 5 is overall score plus a further level of questions.</p> <p>RM: On both models it asks what areas need development, we could have 23 responses to that question so I don't know what we would do with that.</p> <p>JL: We usually send evaluations out at the start of the summer term and share with services as well as reporting back to the School Forum. It is then decided which services require further discussion based on the responses.</p>

No	Discussion/Action
	<p>PP: What were the views of the Working Group? SJ: The main concern was the time it took to complete them.</p> <p>AB: Do we need a business analysis to compare alternative ways of providing these services? AL: This has been done previously and we intend to do a similar exercise in the next few years.</p> <p>AB: It is important that we have the best business model, and this process seems cumbersome, but I accept your point.</p> <p>SR: The system works for collecting information as we get 100% return, but the impact of the exercise is small as it has little impact in service improvement. Sometimes we get a phone call to ask us about our comments, but it never leads to overall improvement.</p> <p>AL: We ask service managers to discuss concerns with headteachers and for priority service areas they also meet representatives from this group to discuss improvements. We have been undertaking this annual evaluation for a number of years and it's recognised as good practice. There is a need for services to continue to improve and the evidence from year-on-year measures supports that in most cases this works well. It doesn't mean we can be complacent, and we'll continue to try to improve the system and address issues.</p> <p>KM: If there are no further questions, can we take a vote on whether we wish to adopt Option 3?</p> <p>It was agreed to adopt Option 3 as the method for evaluating Service Level Agreements.</p> <p>AL: Schools will be contacted again to follow-up on issues raised previously. It seems that most concerns have been addressed but there are a small number of issues outstanding and we aim to follow those up. Regarding Property Services, I met with Chris Jones last week and he will now contact headteachers further to discuss some of the long-standing issues.</p>
6.	<p><u>Any other business</u></p> <p>6.01 <u>Procurement</u> AB stated that members of the Procurement Team had previously met this group and I wanted to report that they have completed their analysis of school spending and would like to arrange a workshop to discuss their findings.</p> <p>AL: We can consider this further at the Working Group.</p> <p>6.02 <u>Education Budget</u> LM: In these challenging financial times for schools, could we look at the overall education budget. Including the CSC costs, at a future meeting? AL: Yes, we can bring information to the July meeting.</p>