



Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

SCHOOLS FINANCE FORUM

Date and Time

2.00 pm, MONDAY, 2ND MARCH, 2020

Location

Ystafell Dwyryd, Canolfan gyswilt y Cyngor, Penrhyndeudraeth

Contact Point

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(DISTRIBUTED 26/02/2020)

SCHOOLS FINANCE FORUM MEMBERSHIP

CABINET MEMBERS

Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams (Education)
Councillor Ioan Thomas (Finance)

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Mr Dilwyn Williams

HEAD OF FINANCE

Dafydd Edwards

SECONDARY HEAD TEACHERS

Mr Dylan Davies – Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen Mr Dylan Minnice - Ysgol Botwnnog
Mr Dewi Lake – Ysgol y Moelwyn Mr Arwyn Williams – Ysgol Tryfan

PRIMARY HEAD TEACHERS

Mrs Iona Jones - Ysgol Edmwnd Prys/Bro Cynfal Mr Richard Derwyn Jones – Ysgol
Garndolbenmaen
Mrs Menna Wynne Pugh – Ysgol Penybryn Mr Llion Williams – Ysgol y Garnedd
Mr Alan Wynn Jones – Ysgol Nefyn Mrs Eleri Morgan Davies – Ysgol
y Gorlan

TEACHERS' UNIONS

Mr Neil Foden – Ysgol Friars

GOVERNORS

Arfon

Mr Godfrey Northam - Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen
Mr Edward Bleddyn Jones – Ysgol Tregarth

Meirionnydd

Awaiting Nominations – Primary Schools' Governor
Awaiting Nomination – Secondary Schools' Governor

Dwyfor

Mr Gwilym Jones, Ysgol Borthygest,
Awaiting Nomination - Secondary Schools' Governor

DIOCESE

Anest Gray Frazer

CHURCH SCHOOLS

Mr Elfed Morgan Morris – Ysgol Llandygai

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Mrs Donna Roberts - Ysgol Hafod Lon

Observers:

Mr Garem Jackson, Head of Education Service
Mr Owen Owens, Senior Education Resources' Manager
Mr Hefin Owen, Finance Manager Development Directorate
Ms Gwenan Davies Jones Primary Head Teachers Federation Chair
Ms Ellen Williams - Secondary Head Teachers Federation Chair

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

3. URGENT MATTERS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chair for consideration

4. MINUTES

4 - 8

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 January 2020.

(English copy to follow)

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

To discuss any matters arising from the minutes.

The 'Statistical First Release' – Wales's School Balances has been sent to the Forum members.

6. INTEGRATION ALLOCATION

9

Report by Hefin Owen.

7. SCHOOLS DIGITAL STRATEGY

10 - 12

Presentation by Huw Ynyr

8. ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND INCLUSION SERVICE

Presentation by the Service

9. SCHOOL GRANTS 2020/21 - UPDATE

Update by Hefin Owen

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates for the next meeting will be circulated.

SCHOOLS' BUDGET FORUM
Minutes of a meeting held at Ystafell Dwryd, Penrhyndeudraeth,
on 23 January from 14.00 until 15.50

Present:

Mr Godfrey Northam - Chairman

Cabinet Members: Councillor Ioan Thomas (Finance)

Head of Finance Department: Dafydd Edwards

School Headteachers: Secondary: Dylan Davies (Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen), Dylan Minnice (Ysgol Botwnnog), Dewi Lake (Ysgol y Moelwyn) and Arwyn Williams (Ysgol Tryfan).

Primary: Iona Jones (Ysgol Edmwnd Prys/Bro Cynfal), Richard Jones (Ysgol Garndolbenmaen), Menna Wynne Pugh (Ysgol Penybryn), Llion Williams (Ysgol y Garnedd), Alan Jones (Ysgol Nefyn) and Eleri Morgan Davies (Ysgol y Gorlan).

Church School: Elfed Morris (Ysgol Llandygai)

Teachers' Unions: Neil Foden (Ysgol Friars)

Governors: Gwilym Jones (Ysgol Borth y Gest)

Officers: Owen Owens (Senior Manager Education Resources Services), Hefin Owen (Development Group Accountant), Annes Siôn (Member Support Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Cemlyn Williams, Elen Williams (Ysgol Brynrefail) and Annet Gray Frazer (Diocese). New members to the Forum were welcomed to their first meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Budget Forum that took place on 24 June as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

In terms of the national statistics of school balances, it was stated that Gwynedd was not the highest, and Swansea had reached the top. It was noted that Gwynedd was on 4.5% and on average was lower than the required 5%. It was added that when looking at secondary school balances 12 of the 22 authorities in Wales were in minus.

5. SCHOOL BALANCES 31/03/2020 OVER £50,000 (PRIMARY) OR £100,00 (SECONDARY)

Attention was drawn to the minute of the previous meeting where it was noted that a questionnaire would be sent out to schools with balances of over £50,000 (primary) or £100,000 (secondary).

It was noted that 20 schools fell into this category and the questionnaires had been received and noted what the schools would do with the money. It was necessary to go back to three schools to get more details on what they had presented in their original questionnaires.

It was further reported that:

- Financial planning at the schools was appropriate based on the forecasts available to the schools at when they completed the questionnaire. Therefore, the Authority would not refer the schools to any specific expenditure.
- A number of schools noted the need to use the balances to set a budget for this year or following years.
- A minority of schools noted a specific one-off expenditure. This was fine as long as the expenditure was undertaken.
- It was noted that it was necessary to confirm the legal position in terms of the status of an all-through school. Does an all-through school count as a primary school (entitled to balances of >£50k) or as a secondary school (entitled to balances of >£100k)?
- The need to question the whole education system, immediately when the final school balances were available (i.e May/June) was identified, if a school should invest in a specific matter to improve the school.

Resolved:

To accept the oral report.

6. SCHOOL FORECASTS 2019/20, 2021/22 AND 2022/23

It was explained that this year was unique as the Budget Forum had not been held in October as the Welsh Government's settlement was late. It was highlighted that the Council had requested all departments to find savings of up to £2 million across the Council. In order to discuss and scrutinise these savings, it was explained that discussions had taken place to look at the savings of all departments. It was explained that the Education Department had highlighted various cuts to schools as one of the options to find their savings target, however, the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee had refused this option. Following the receipt of the draft settlement, it was

highlighted that the Cabinet had resolved not to implement the cuts this year.

In terms of the Digital Strategy, it was noted that there was nothing to note and this cut would not now be implemented. It was expressed that there were no financial commitments to schools in 2020/21. It was added that some had thought that Cynnal finance would be available for the digital strategy but it was stated that it was additional finance. It was emphasised that further discussions were required and to forward plan for the next year. It was therefore noted that the Head of Information Technology would attend the next meeting.

It was stated that Governors had received the forecasts for this year and the adjustments seen were explained. It was expressed that 'Other Integration' would be moved to the centre in case there will be more need for statement integration. The department will consult on the options regarding what to do with the money. In terms of permanent expenditure, it was noted that the responses would be received back by 2 March and then there would be a discussion at the Cabinet. It was added, that this year the £392,000 at the centre and the spring term had not yet been calculated. It was stated that a letter would be sent to explain the situation.

The new line in the forecasts for ALN was highlighted as a result of the developments that are occurring. However, it was emphasised that it was necessary to see it before its meaning could be made clear.

Observations arising from the discussion

It was stated that it was necessary to send the forecast letter to Schools earlier, as it had arrived on the afternoon before the strategic meeting, therefore receiving it earlier would enable a higher standard of discussion.

ALN were discussed and it was noted that some Headteachers received more information than others as some were randomly invited to meetings. The importance that everyone received the information in plenty of time was stressed.

It was asked if the department intended to discuss ALN with all the headteachers and Forum Members as children were highlighted in the statement but funding was being taken from schools for 1:1. It was noted that a joint presentation with finance and area leaders would be given to give an understanding and input on how the money will be used.

Resolved:

To accept the report and a further report was requested with a paper analysis to give a wider picture of ALN work.

7. SCHOOL GRANTS 2020/21

It was noted that in terms of the Sixth Form Grant, the forecasts indicated there would be an increase of 8-9% to cope with the increase in costs. However, it was highlighted that more would be required to deal with costs in 2020/21. It was added that the accountants' report would be published on 5 February and the department was confident that money would be available.

Regarding the Education Improvement Grant, it was noted that there was no threat to the grant but the department had not received any formal information.

It was noted that the ALN Additional Grant was £280,000.

Regarding the Professional Development Grant, it was expressed that the money was received centrally by GwE. It was added that GwE will note how to use the money dependent on the Government's expectations.

8. DRAFT SETTLEMENT - GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020/21

The Cabinet Member emphasised that the decision on the Council's Budget would be made by the full Council, not Cabinet Members.

The Head of the Finance Department noted that during last summer they had projected that £2 million savings would be required across the Council. The main points were outlined, such as that a high sum of over a 2% increase was in inflation. It was noted that there was pressure and the demand was high in the care field.

Despite this, it was stated that the budget was fairly positive as a result of a higher than expected settlement, however, the Government grant settlement did not address the additional demand on care services. Of the £2 million savings it was noted that £1m of them would be efficiency savings, to be harvested, but the other £1m would have an impact on the people of Gwynedd, and should be avoided. Consequently the remaining gap of £3m would be addressed by raising Council tax by 3.9%. It was stressed that discussions were continuing regarding the budget.

It was explained that a transport bid had been made by the department to fund the current expenditure level. The Government settlement grant was better than the Council had expected, and met with inflation, if not with the growth in the demand for services and consequently the Cabinet had determined not to harvest the general savings plan for Schools. Therefore, these savings will not impair the pupil: teacher ratio in the allocation formula between 2019/20 and 2020/21.

It was explained that the situation for 2020/21 was not clear yet, and the decision of the full Council on the 2020/21 Budget would be sought on 5 March 2020.

Observations arising from the discussion

Regarding teachers pension contributions, it was explained that there was an increase from September 2019 onwards and no further change was expected from September 2020.

In terms of savings plans for schools, it was noted that the Cabinet would not harvest the plan for Teaching Staff Resources. It was added that Members had supported the viewpoint of schools and the latest financial position had enabled the Council to avoid undertaking these savings.

9. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

The Forum was guided through the tables of the proposals for the next three years. It was noted that a consultation had taken place and the adjustments between the new versions and the old agreements were highlighted. It was expressed that the report requested a seal of approval to the agreements.

Observations arising from the discussion

It was highlighted that there was a different spreadsheet in the Authority /Schools Responsibilities in the Property agreement. It was stated that this was because it was different in Primary and Secondary Schools.

Resolved

A seal of approval was given to the Service Level Agreements proposal in appendices to this report to schools.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting will take place on 2nd March, and it was added that the agenda would include the following:

1. Digital Strategy
2. ALN Service
3. Integration Allocation

The meeting commenced at 2.00pm and concluded at 3.50pm.

CHAIR

Agenda Item 6

ITEM X

MEETING	SCHOOLS' BUDGET FORUM
DATE	02 March 2020
TITLE	Integration Allocation
PURPOSE	For information
RECOMMENDATION	Accept the information
AUTHOR	Hefin Owen – Development Group Accountant
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION	Y Cyngorydd Cemlyn Rees Williams

By request of the Forum's meeting on 23 January 2020, here is a breakdown of the Integration Budget since establishing the current financing regime in 2015/16 –

		allocation division	
		Statements/IDP	Other
Integration Allocation 2015/16	£5,753,945	£3,823,551	£1,930,394
Inflation over 5 years	£964,905		
Ysgol Hafod Lon – increased numbers	-£566,790		
Savings Transformation of Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service	-£595,370		
Integration Allocation 2020/21 - <i>estimate</i>	£5,556,690	£5,268,241	£288,449

Inflation over the period is an average of 3.35% annually.

The business case for establishing the 'new' Ysgol Hafod Lon foresaw an increase in pupil numbers for the school, pupils with a statement of individual development plan (IDP) who previously attended mainstream schools.

Savings of nearly £600k were identified in transforming the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service.

There has been an increase of £1.445million in the cost of Statements/IDP for pupils in mainstream schools over the last 5 years.

Recommendation - to accept the information

Agenda Item 7

Hwb In-Schools Infrastructure Grant Scheme Background

In July 2019, the Minister for Education announced a National programme of grant funding to transform Digital Learning in Welsh schools. The £50million initiative will introduce a new national 'ICT catalogue' as a means to help Local Authorities to buy the appropriate Equipment needed on behalf of their schools.

The funding is available in order to ensure:

- That schools have new IT Equipment that is fit for purpose
- A better understanding, knowledge and use of the Hwb digital infrastructure
- That every school is working towards the National Digital Learning Standards, published on Hwb
- Lay the foundations for a sustainable digital learning infrastructure
- Reduce the bureaucracy for schools, freeing up more time for Heads and Teachers
- Learners will be able to take advantage of better and consistent learning experiences.

In line with the grant conditions, the local authorities will be the lead strategic partner for the programme. The funding must be used to ensure that each school is upgraded to meet the national digital standards. Every local authority, including Gwynedd have committed to this role and have agreed to the core principles of standardisation, consistency, and most importantly, sustainability.

Network

Gwynedd Council are responsible for providing and maintaining school networks currently. The grant enables us to renew the network in order to reach the National Standard. We will be upgrading Wi-Fi Networks, some Network Cabinets and re-cabling where needed.

We have placed the order for the hardware to upgrade the network, and the work of fitting this hardware will happen over the next two terms.

Sustainability

The Council has committed to sustain the schools' network for the future, therefore there will be no cost obligation on schools when the Equipment is due to be renewed.

Almost £1.4m of the grant funding has been spent on the upgrade of the Network.

Devices

An assessment of numbers and condition of devices across Gwynedd schools has been completed. It shows that there is a wide range of devices in our schools. However many of them are outdated resulting in a negative effect on some teachers and pupils' learning. These factors also put significant pressure on supporting these devices.

The Education Department's Digital Learning Strategy has set an ambition regarding the ratio of devices to pupils; 1:4 in the foundation phase, and 1:1 in KS2, KS3 and KS4. In addition the strategy has highlighted the need to ensure a device each for teachers and to many support staff.

Not providing a ratio of 1:1 in the secondary sector would mean keeping elements of the old system and would result in substantial increase in supporting these devices. We estimate that we will need around **13,676** devices.

The National ICT Catalogue was published late on 26/02/2020, with the costs from the catalogue referenced below against current school population numbers:

Foundation Phase (128GB Apple iPad): £332.50,

Key Stage 2 (Chromebook and Windows Laptop): £177.91

Key Stage 3&4 (Windows Laptop): £157.67

Teaching Staff (Windows Laptop): £389.27 (an additional £183.77 would be required for Docking Station, 24" Monitor, Keyboard & Mouse)

In order to buy the devices therefore, we would need to invest **£2,908,205.02**

The grant allows us to buy these devices.

Sustainability

Based on a renewing cycle of 5 years, 20% of the cost of renewal must be found every year for the next 5 years. At the end of the 5 years, a new set of devices will be introduced.

	Number of pupils	Number of devices (based on ratio)	Cost (based on ratio)		Refresh contribution	Cost per pupil
FP	3,530	883	£ 293,431.25		£58,686.00	£16.62
KS2	5,150	5,150	£ 916,242.16		£183,248.43	£35.58
KS3 a 4	6,455	6,455	£ 1,017,759.85		£203,551.97	£31.53
Total	15,135	12,488	£ 2,227,433.26		£ 445,486.65	£29.43

Teachers						
	Number of teachers	Number of devices (based on ratio)	Cost (based on ratio)		Refresh contribution	
Every school*	1,188	1,188	£ 462,452.76		£92,490.55	

* Additional £218,319 required for Docking Station, Monitor, Keyboard & Mouse, but not reflected for sustainability as these should outlast technology refresh cycle

The programme's sustainability cost would therefore be £537,976 for both sectors, with **£280,939 from the primary and £257,038 from secondary.**

For a primary school with around **100 pupils, they would be expected to contribute around £3,250**, a school with around **200 pupils £5,900** and around **300 pupils £9,500**.

The table explains the estimated sustainability cost for the secondary schools (doesn't include sums for support staff).

Financial implications for schools in 2020/21

We don't foresee that there will be any Financial obligation on schools to contribute towards the sustainability of the programme in the next Financial year.

Up to £800,000 is available for devices this year. Without commitment to the sustainability of the grant, we cannot benefit from the grant.

YSGOL / SCHOOL	Total
Arduwy	12,723.13
Botwnnog	17,022.62
Bro Idris (Ysgol 3-16)	11,612.64
Brynrefail	24,428.27
Dyffryn Nantlle	14,186.52
Dyffryn Ogwen	16,213.59
Eifionydd	15,052.72
Friars	44,842.83
Glan y Môr	19,266.51
Syr Hugh Owen	28,662.73
Tryfan	13,058.23

As a sign of the Council's commitment to the Digital Learning Strategy and our commitment to our pupils' digital skills, the Education department wish to invest in the sustainability of this project.

Any investment by the department will reduce the sustainability commitment for the schools.

Tywyn	13,418.84
Godre'r Berwyn	13,234.61
Y Moelwyn	13,314.43