

MEETING	SCHOOLS' BUDGET FORUM
DATE	02 December 2024
TITLE	Schools' Projections
PURPOSE	Presented for information and to raise awareness
RECOMMENDATION	To accept the report
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A 3 year financial forecast was provided to schools on 21 November 2024 based on the September 2024 pupil count -

1. **Primary** numbers have decreased by 182 pupils between September 2023 and September 2024 and lead to a reduction of £338 thousand in the funding that will be devolved in 2025/26. The schools themselves anticipate a further reduction of 144 pupils by 2025 and 134 by 2026. Therefore a reduction in primary numbers of 460 pupils worth approximately £1.2million over the period.
2. In the **secondary** sector the basis of funding is divided – KS3 and KS4 is funded by Gwynedd Council. A reduction of 75 pupils between 2023 and 2024 leads to a reduction in funding of £248 thousand in 2025/26. The schools anticipate an increase over the following two years, but we want to give the schools a further opportunity to review their forecasts considering what we are seeing in the primary with decreasing numbers. We will work with the schools to improve the basis of the forecasts and provide more reliable information in terms of planning ahead.

6th class is funded by the new body MEDR. A reduction of 23 pupils between 2023 and 2024 leads to a reduction in funding of £92 thousand in 2025/26. The schools anticipate an increase over the following two years, but as with KS3 and KS4 numbers we will revisit this.

The secondary schools face a financial reduction of £248 thousand and £92 thousand, a total of £340 thousand by 2025/26.
3. In **middle** schools' sector numbers are a combination of primary and secondary effects, with 32 fewer lifelong pupils between 2023 and 2024 leading to a reduction of £56 thousand in funding. We will revisit secondary age projections with the middle schools for the same reason as stated above.
4. We do not see an increase in the number of **special** pupils, as both schools are almost 'full' and there is not much additional capacity. Work is ongoing to review the severity of needs of pupils and this may lead to an increase or decrease in funding for 2025/26.

5. A summary of the impact of numbers on school allocations and grants for 2025/26 is attached (**appendix 1**) which shows a reduction of £1.177million including all information currently available to us –
 - Primary £848mil
 - Middle £144mil
 - Secondary £176mil
 - Special £10mil
6. When planning for 2025/26 and onwards, it must be considered that schools have used £3.784million to set budgets this year and this will also be a significant challenge to face if no staff/resource cuts have occurred in 2024/25. Besides a school anticipating an increase in pupil numbers to create more future funding, using balances only has the effect of postponing cuts. The use of balances is a one-off solution.
7. Neither the Council's settlement nor school grants for 2025/26 have been confirmed to date. There is no guarantee that all grants will continue or increase/decrease for the next year. The Welsh Government declares their budget on 10 December and the settlement to local councils will follow.

As a result of messages about the Council's financial situation it is inevitable that schools will face a cut in 2025/26. There is **NO** decision about the level of cuts at present.

Recommendation
To accept the information