

School Budget Forum

Date	10/10/2022
Time	10.00 to 11.30
Location	Microsoft Teams
Members	Mark Hatch (MH) - Dinas Bran, Helen Vernon (HV) - Bodnant, Colette Owen (CO) – Diocese, Neil Foley (NF) – Prestatyn High, Nicola Griffiths (NG) – Pendref, Rona Jones (RJ) – Emmanuel, Rhona O’Neill (RO) – Tir Morfa, Glen Williams – Denbigh High (AW), Dafydd Davies (DD) - Ysgol Twm or Nant, Shannon Gage (SG)– Vice Chair, Amanda Preston (AP) – Christ the Word, Lindsey Davenport (LD) Vice Chair – Secondary School Governor rep, Leah Crimes (LC) - St Brigids, Cllr Gill German (GG) – Lead Member for Education, Sian Alwen (SA) - Ysgol Glan Clwyd, Teleri Llwyd – Borthyn, Bethan Fell (BF) - Gwernant
Non-members	Craig Joyce (CAJ) - School Funding Manager, Cathy Howatson (CH) (Notes), Chris Speed (CS) – Assurance Finance Manager, Kevin Mowbray (KM) - Rep for the Business & Finance Managers, Paul Senior (PS) – Senior Finance Assurance Officer, Jamie Groves (JG) - Denbighshire Leisure Services, Steve Gadd (SGADD) - Head of Finance
Apologies	Claire Armistead (CA) Chair - Rhyl High Geraint Davies (GD) – Head of Education,

1. Welcome

1. Lindsey Davenport (Vice Chair) welcomed the group. The group welcomed new Headteachers Glen Williams, Denbigh High and Sian Alwen Ysgol Glan Clwyd.

17 members were present at the meeting to make it quorate.

2. Matters arising and actions of last meeting 05/07/2022

No matters arising. The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed by forum.

3. Budget Update 23/24 – Steve Gadd

Steve attended with an updated position of next year’s budget.

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We are currently looking at around £5.4m overspend in 2022/23, which is reduced to around £3m after using cash savings and remaining Covid funding. Pay inflation has got worse since the last SBF but the reduction in N.I does kick in at the start of November.

There are £19m worth of pressures for 2023/24. A 3.8% council tax rise is proposed but there are huge pressures in social care /children's and transports services. Last year we were told to expect a 3.3% increase in the settlement from WG, but inflation is at 10% so effectively it is no-where near enough.

With all this in mind there is potentially a £10m gap for 2023/24. Services have been asked to look for 1% savings target and DCC is also asking schools for 1%.

Despite this, all expected pay pressures will be given to schools and we are also expecting a pension saving next year. The final settlement is due mid-December and meetings are taking place between now and then to finalise potential savings.

Cash reserves are likely to be needed for 2023/24, circa £2m.

At this current moment in time 2024/25 is a huge concern but there are many political decisions to be made before we reach that point.

4. Denbighshire Leisure Partnership

Jamie Groves, Managing Director of Denbighshire Leisure attended the meeting. He presented a power point. Copy to be sent to members.

ACTION - JG will contact Secondary Heads individually to meet regarding LPA sites.

5. Pressures

CAJ – We will cover costs of pay increases, NNDR and Leisure for next year. He asked the group if there are any pressures schools think could also be looked at for next year, but the reality is it is unlikely they can be funded with the budget we are likely to receive from WG. No further pressures were raised.

6. Surplus Balances

CAJ – A document has been created and will be shared with schools over the next week. Welsh Government have previously asked for information on schools carrying healthy surpluses. We will meet schools that carry a surplus over 5%. This will give us a baseline and further information if we are audited and asked for information again in the future from WG.

SG wanted to address what will happen to schools who cannot get out of deficit, will there be a cap on surplus balances? Every child in Denbighshire should be entitled to the same education whichever school they attend. CAJ responded that whilst that was in an ideal world, each governing body is responsible for managing their own school

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budget and decisions and DCC cannot move funds around schools with surpluses and deficits.

ACTION - CAJ will speak to Geraint Davies to meet SG separately.

7. Pooled Schemes

CH has taken over the pooled sickness scheme recharges from Paul Senior. Currently we are looking at a £70k overspend at the end of March, this is only based on 4 months of data so far. Last year the scheme was over by £190k at the end of year.

A discussion took place on not covering staffing costs during school holidays. Apart from a couple of schools with long term contracts to cover sickness it was agreed by the forum.

Agreed by forum – no sickness cover to be given out during school holidays unless there are long term sickness contracts in place.

8. Matters arising from clusters

None. The Chair wished good luck to all schools with Estyn visiting.

The meeting ended at 11.20am

Date of next scheduled meeting – January, 2023 on Microsoft Teams.