

School Budget Forum

Date	01/05/2024
Time	9.30 to 11.30
Location	Microsoft Teams
Members	Claire Armistead (CA –Rhyl High), (Chair) Mark Hatch (MH) - Dinas Bran, Helen Vernon (HV) - Bodnant, , Nicola Griffiths (NG) – Pendref, , Glen Williams – Denbigh High (AW), Geraint Davies (Head of Education), Lindsay Davenport (LD) Vice Chair – Secondary School Governor rep, Cllr Gill German (GG) – Lead Member for Education, , Sian Alwen (SA - Ysgol Glan Clwyd, Rona Jones (RJ) - Emmanuel, Dafydd Davies (DD) – Twm or Nant, Leah Crimes (LC) – St Brigids, Neil Foley – Prestatyn High, Teleri Llwyd (TLL) – Borthyn
Non-members	Craig Joyce (CAJ) - School Funding Manager, Cathy Howatson (CH) (Notes), Liz Thomas (LT) - Head of Finance, Kev Mowbray (KM) – Rep B&F network, Daisy Pierce (DP) Finance & Assurance Officer
Apologies	Bethan Fell – Gwernant, Bernadette Thomas – CTW, Rhona O’Neill - Tir Morfa, Trefor Jones Brynhyfryd, Colette Owen – Diocese

1. Welcome

CA welcomed the group.

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

2. Matters arising and actions of last meeting

No matters arising. The minutes from the previous meeting 25/01/24 were agreed by forum.

3. Budget Update 2025/26 – Liz Thomas

LT attended the meeting and provided a presentation which has also been given to cabinet, including pressures and where we are looking to reduce costs and overspend in key areas across the LA.

A proposal has been mentioned in the document of a 3-5% savings for schools in 2025/26. This is not yet confirmed but in all likelihood it will be in this ballpark.

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We have uncertainty regarding the Council budgets as a whole there are a range of uncertain pressures. More savings will need to be made in 25/26 as we predict a further shortfall using **middle** pressures of circa £21m. There has been some misquoting of the financial position in the press.

GD – There are pressures and challenges for the year ahead. Some of these are currently unknown and we will be looking at the delivering of services which has not been easy. Education are grateful for the support for Schools from Cllr Gill German.

Discussions took place.

CA respects and understands that there is not enough money. Even so, another cut cannot be sustained and we cannot fill gaps anymore, also Health have pulled back funding.

GD could not disagree with the risks it will all have a knock-on effect.

NF thanked Cllr Gill German and Geraint Davies for everything they do around the budget pressures and keeping schools up to date.

CA has pupils writing to the UK government. If any other schools have pupils who want to do the same email CA.

RJ – There is a worry of the safety elements and concerns. There is an increase in behaviour and violence in addition to pupils with complex needs.

LT thanked the group for their comments.

3. Grants

DP – There were some changes to the way grants are being distributed this year as discussed in previous forums. The Post 16 transition grant will be released when changes have been approved.

4. SIFD and School Balances

CH has begun meeting schools forecasting a deficit for 2024/25. Deficit licenses signed by Heads and COG's plus recovery plans need to be submitted to CH by Friday 24th May. A meeting will take place on 5th June to go through applications with Head of Finance and Head of Education with a view to licenses being agreed for the start of the new term in September.

As per the previous forum, it has also been agreed that the following text be added to the Challenge & Intervention Framework:-

5. Pooled Schemes

CAJ sent out a report to the forum prior to the meeting with information of the pooled scheme overspend. Savings of around £200k were made with the changes to the

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sickness scheme. One cluster did report some concerns with the sickness scheme around the extra costs direct to school budgets.

Maternity & Investigation scheme costs also increased.

There is an option to increase the contribution to the scheme.

ACTION – agreed by forum to run the changes to the sickness scheme for another 12 months.

6. Cluster matters

None raised.

7. AOB

Ruth Thackray attended with a request to review the transition pot and more specifically the criteria and clarity of the funding. There is possible proposal to look at allocations by cluster.

ACTION – Agreed by forum

The chair informed the forum that she is leaving her post as Headteacher of Rhyl High School in August. A new chair will need to be elected. We will discuss at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.30am

Date of next scheduled meeting –Tuesday 9th July on Teams