

# Fforwm Ysgolion Powys / Powys Schools Forum

Notes of a meeting of the Powys Schools Forum held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at County Hall, Llandrindod Wells.

**Present:**

**Primary School Headteachers:**

No representatives

**Secondary School Headteachers:**

Jim Toal, Welshpool High School

John Williams, Gwernyfed High School (from 10.30 a.m.)

**Special School Headteacher:**

Julie Kay, Ysgol Penmaes

**Teaching Union Representatives:**

No representatives

**School Governor Representatives:**

Graham Taylor, Rhayader C in W School (**Chair**)

Eira Jones, Llangors C in W School

Maurice Thorn, Llandrindod High School

David Malcomson, Builth Wells High School / Irfon Valley Primary School

**Diocesan Representative:**

No representative

**Observers:**

**Cabinet Portfolio Holders:**

No representatives

**Scrutiny Committee:**

Councillor Pete Roberts

**Officers:**

Gareth Jones, Senior Manager: Central Support Services

Richard Waggett, Schools Finance Manager

Catherine Cottle, HR Schools Business Partner

Helen Hinton, Employee Relations Case Worker

**Apologies:**

Michelle Humphreys, Llandinam Primary School

Linda Crockett, Rhayader C in W Primary School

Sarah Chandler, Llangedwyn and Llanfechain Primary Schools

Jackie Parker, Crickhowell High School

Ionwen Spowage, Ysgol Calon Cymru

Hugh Pattrick, Ysgol Maesydderwen

Katie Moffat, Welshpool High School

Susan Hill, Maesyrrhandir Primary School

Councillor Kath Roberts-Jones, Brynlllywarch Hall School  
 Neil Butler, NASUWT  
 Deidre Hanson, National Education Union (NEU/NUT)  
 Paul Williams, GMB  
 Councillor Aled Davies, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside & Transport  
 Ian Budd, Director of Education  
 Jane Thomas, Head of Financial Services  
 Marianne Evans, Senior Manager: Schools Transformation  
 Rachel Hudson, Schools HR Manager

		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. As the meeting was not quorate it was agreed to meet in informal session.</p> <p>Apologies were received and noted as above.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Schools Service Budget 2018-19</b>	
	<p>Gareth Jones, Senior Manager: Central Support Services, provided an update in respect of the 2018-19 Schools Service budget from which it was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The only efficiencies with a significant impact that had yet to be realised were in relation to ALN provision and the change in age of admission (£300k in total) and plans were in place to address both of these issues</li> <li>• Any savings not achieved in 2018-19 would be rolled forward to 2019-20</li> </ul> <p>Reference was made to the decision by Welsh Government to withdraw funding for Servoca, the independent investigation service which supported schools where a child protection allegation was made against a member of staff and which was free to schools to access.</p> <p>Catherine Cottle, HR Schools Business Partner, explained that discussion was taking place within ERW concerning the possibility of a reciprocal arrangement being put in place between the constituent Local Authorities. Forum Members stressed the need for suitable investigation services to be available to schools, whether this was at direct or indirect cost.</p> <p>It was agreed that an update be provided on the outcome of discussions with ERW.</p>	

<b>3.</b>	<b>2018-19 School Budgets</b>	
	<p>Gareth Jones, Senior Manager: Central Support Services provided the following update in respect of 2018-19 school budgets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft budget information had been received from all schools;</li> <li>• Financial surgery sessions had taken place</li> <li>• Meetings had been held with secondary schools in financial difficulty</li> <li>• The forecast collective deficit on school balances at the end of the 2017-18 financial year was £3.7m, which posed a significant financial risk to the Council</li> <li>• Draft budgets for 2018-19 showed a forecast collective deficit of £3.65m; schools had been asked to identify their preferred budget option so it was anticipated that this level of deficit would reduce.</li> </ul> <p>It was acknowledged that there had been a lack of robustness in challenging secondary schools around reorganisation in the past due to a lack of knowledge regarding curriculum requirements but this was now being addressed. Forum Members were reminded that if, following advice from Local Authority officers, a Governing Body did not make appropriate changes to effectively manage its budget within the requirements of the Scheme for Financing Schools, the budget would not be licensed. The Authority also had the option to withdraw delegation from a Governing Body and manage the budget itself.</p> <p>It was pointed out that Powys schools received the lowest level of funding per pupil across Wales. The level of delegation to schools was also low at 73%.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>School Budgets 2019-20</b>	
	<p>It was reported that all Council Services had been asked to identify 20% efficiency savings for 2020-21 and an additional 25% savings over the next 3 years. The impact that efficiencies in other Service Areas may have on school budgets was raised and it was agreed that any proposals should be brought to Forum at an early date. The Chair agreed to ascertain what and when proposals around efficiency savings could be shared with Forum.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Charges for Centrally Provided Services</b>	
	<p>Gareth Jones, Senior Manager: Central Support Services, reported that he was not aware of any new proposals to increase charges for centrally provided services which would impact on school budgets. It was acknowledged that efficiency savings in Service</p>	

	<p>Areas should not be met by transferring responsibility to schools; where any such proposals were being considered, an impact assessment needed to be completed to identify the impact on other services, including delegated school budgets.</p> <p>The role of technology in schools particularly at post 16 was mentioned; there was an acknowledgement by the Local Authority that a significant investment in technology was required to support any developments e.g. video-conferencing, Skype.</p> <p>It was pointed out that the Council had been able to set a balanced budget in 2018-19 because it had used £7m from reserves but this funding would need to be re-instated.</p> <p>The Chair pointed out that the School Organisation Plan did not take account of the current financial position of the Council. It had been acknowledged that the current Council structure was unaffordable and would have to change.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Education Improvement Grant</b>	
	<p>It was reported that the overall funding to schools had been maintained at 2017-18 levels despite a total reduction in funding of £750k across the ERW consortium. In 2018-19 85% of the funding was delegated direct to schools.</p> <p>It was reported that the MEAG and Gypsy-Traveller Grant was now included in the Education Improvement Grant. The possibility of retaining funding to deliver a 'pooled' or 'shared' service to support English as an Additional Language (EAL) was raised. It was acknowledged that there were incidences where it was not cost effective for schools to make their own arrangements where a collaborative approach on a strategic level would be the most appropriate way forward.</p> <p>It was agreed that the possibility of adopting a collaborative approach for low incidence/specialist need be included in the review of the school funding formula currently underway.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>WAO Education Finance Review</b>	
	Richard Waggett, Schools Finance Manager, agreed to bring the updated version of the action plan to a future meeting.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Review of the Schools Funding Formula</b>	
	Susan Fielden, Finance Consultant, updated members on progress with the review of the schools funding formula. She acknowledged	

	<p>that progress had not been as rapid as planned but a period of intensive work was planned for May to develop detailed formula options. A report setting out broad principles was due to be considered by Cabinet in July and the aim was still for formula proposals to go out to schools during September/October for consultation. The importance of the ALN and Inclusion Transformation Programme dovetailing with the funding review was stressed.</p> <p>Although the review focused on 5-16 year olds, the need for post-16 funding to be scrutinised as well was mentioned.</p>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>ALN and Inclusion Transformation Programme</b>	
	<p>An update was provided on plans for the ALN and Inclusion Transformation Programme and the following next steps were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement of the business case and resourcing;</li> <li>• A consultation/stakeholder event to be held to identify workstreams and membership;</li> <li>• Preparation of a full project outline to go to Cabinet in July.</li> </ul>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>WG Additional Funding</b>	
	<p><b>(a) School Repairs and Maintenance</b> It was reported that Powys had received £645k additional funding from Welsh Government in 2017-18 to support schools with repairs and other maintenance requirements. The letter sent to schools with individual school allocations was received and noted.</p> <p><b>(b) More Able and Talented</b> It was reported that Welsh Government had announced that £3m was being provided over two years to support a new national approach for identifying and supporting more able learners. The funding was not being passed on to individual Local Authorities but would be used to support a range of activities to drive improvements, including the development of comprehensive new guidance and expanding the Seren Network, which supported Wales' brightest sixth formers to gain access to leading universities, to target younger learners.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Revised Home to School Transport Policy</b>	
	<p>It was reported that a revised home to school transport policy had been produced and approved for consultation. The main proposals related to:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of nearest suitable school</li> <li>• Provision for Statemented pupils</li> <li>• Post-16 charging</li> </ul>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Review of SLAs to schools</b>	
	<p>An update was provided on the review of both traded and non-traded services to schools. It was explained that revised SLAs would be available by October half-term which would give schools sufficient time to make decisions regarding whether or not they wished to purchase SLAs from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.</p>	
<b>12.</b>	<b>School Organisation Policy and Delivery Plan 2018</b>	
	<p>A copy of the SOP – Vision 2025 and SOP Delivery Plan 2018 were received for information. It was noted that the Delivery Plan would focus on delivering the following priorities up to 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transforming the delivery of support for pupils with additional Secondary schools to become ‘all-through schools’, or part of multi-sited arrangements</li> <li>• Small primary schools<sup>1</sup> to be part of formal collaborations / federations / amalgamations</li> <li>• Remove infant / junior split by creating ‘all-through’ primary schools</li> <li>• New Welsh-medium provision to be established</li> <li>• Improvements to the Powys schools estate, either as part of the Welsh Government’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme or as part of the Council’s Asset Management Programme</li> <li>• A new model for delivering post-16 provision to be implemented</li> <li>• learning needs</li> </ul> <p>and would also build on the on-going School Organisation Programme that had been underway for a number of years.</p> <p>It was agreed that updates on progress with the Delivery Plan should be provided at future Forum meetings.</p>	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Welsh Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020</b>	
	<p>A copy of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020 was received for information.</p>	
<b>14.</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Capital Programme</b>	

	<p>An update was provided on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Capital Programme. It was noted that new projects under Band B funding for implementation in 2019-2025 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement of Brynllwarch Hall School</li> <li>• Replacement of Ysgol Cedewain</li> <li>• New secondary Welsh medium provision in North Powys</li> <li>• Investment in Newtown and Brecon primary schools</li> <li>• Investment in Welsh-medium primary provision in the Mid Powys area</li> <li>• Remodelling and improvements to a number of other schools</li> </ul> <p>Regarding the proposal for new secondary Welsh-medium provision in North Powys, Forum Members asked that they be consulted on proposals at an early stage.</p> <p>It was reported that the Schools Service Asset Management Plan was currently being reviewed and the revised Plan would be considered by Cabinet in September 2018.</p>	
12.	<b>Schools HR Update</b>	
	<p>Catherine Cottle, HR Business Partner, provided the following update:</p> <p><b>VSS</b>  41 applications had been received - 16 voluntary early retirements; 10 voluntary reduction in hours and 13 voluntary redundancies  39 had been approved – 17 primary, 19 secondary and 3 others  The deadline for business cases to be approved by Governing Bodies was 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018  Decision letters would be sent to staff by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018  A number of late applications had been received and a decision was awaited as to whether they could be considered  Catherine confirmed that the process had worked more efficiently this year, mainly due to the decision to hold joint HR, Finance and Schools Service meetings to consider applications.</p> <p><b>Staffing</b>  Helen Hinton had been appointed as Employee Relations Case Worker and would be managing the schools generic e-mail Inbox.  Rachael Smith had been appointed as HR Administrator  Justin Lingard had left the Schools HR Team</p> <p><b>Sickness Absence Policy</b>  The revised Sickness Absence Policy and Guidance would shortly be issued to schools.  Training on the new policy had taken place in late February, with 19 delegates attending.</p>	

	<p><b>Occupational Health</b> There was no progress to report on revised Occupational Health arrangements</p>	
<b>13.</b>	<b>General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</b>	
	<p>A brief update was provided on support available to schools to support compliance with the new GDPR which came into force on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018, replacing the Data Protection Act 1998. It was noted that many of the main concepts of GDPR would not differ from the DPA however there were some areas of change that will require schools to introduce changes to the way things were done, particularly around the retention and storage of data. One of the most significant changes within GDPR was accountability, with schools being responsible for demonstrating and evidencing that they were compliant with the principles contained within the regulations.</p>	
<b>14.</b>	<b>Repairs and Maintenance Scheme – Primary Schools</b>	
	<p>An update was provided on the operation of the Property Plus (R&amp;M) Scheme for primary schools during the 2017-18 financial year. It was explained that details of spend during 2017-18 would shortly be available from the Heart of Wales Property Service (HOWPS) and the Service had been advised that any underspend from 2017-18 could be carried forward to 2018-19.</p>	
<b>15.</b>	<b>3 Year Old Settings</b>	
	<p>An update was provided on outstanding issues regarding the operation of 3 year old settings in schools, including the need for clarification from Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) regarding the process for registering management arrangements.</p> <p>It was explained that a meeting was planned with Headteachers and Setting Leaders, following which clarification would be provided to those schools with 3 year olds settings.</p>	
<b>16.</b>	<b>Supply Insurance Scheme</b>	
	<p>An update was provided on progress with establishing Supply Insurance Scheme arrangements with Pembrokeshire Local Authority. It was noted that the new arrangements were expected to result in a reduction of 10% in premiums.</p>	

<b>17.</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018 and any matters arising</b>	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2018 were noted. There were no matters arising.	
<b>18.</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	It was noted that the next meeting would be held at 10.00 a.m. on 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2018.	

**Graham Taylor  
Chair**