

**SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM
(DRAFT MINUTES – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE SCHOOL BUDGET
FORUM)**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the School Budget Forum held on Tuesday, 23
November 2021 at 2.00 pm

EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES

<p>PRESENT</p>	<p>Councillor C Leyshon (Vice-Chair) Councillor A Morgan Councillor M Webber Councillor M Norris Councillor R Lewis</p> <p>Ms S Mitchell – St Johns Mr P Morgan, Glynhafod Juniors / Cwmaman Infants Ms. L. Bailey, Tonysguboriau Primary Ms K Retallick, Ysgol Nantgwyn Mr S Roberts, Maesybryn Primary Mr D Mogford, Maesgwyn Mr A Roberts, Parc Lewis Primary Ms B Cheetham, Y Pant Comprehensive Mr R Evans, Y Pant Mr Coole, Darran Park Mr D Jenkins, Ty Coch</p> <p>Ms C Jones – NUT Rep</p>
<p>IN ATTENDANCE</p>	<p>Ms G Davies Mr P Griffiths Ms C Edwards Ms S Davies Ms E Randall Mr C Flynn</p>
<p>APOLOGIES</p>	<p>Councillor J Rosser (Chair) Mr C Bradshaw Ms A Richards Mr D Davies Ms G Powell</p>

No	Discussion / Action	Action	By Who
28.	<p data-bbox="320 232 847 264">BUDGET CONSULTATION 2022/23</p> <p data-bbox="320 309 999 595">Following the School Budget Forum receiving an overview of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25 as per the previous agenda item, with the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, the Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services provided Members with an update in respect of the Council's Budget Consultation 2022/23.</p> <p data-bbox="320 640 999 999">The Service Director presented a series of PowerPoint slides covering the Budget Consultation 2022/23 and feedback was requested on a number of areas. Forum Members were informed that their feedback would be considered by Cabinet, alongside feedback received from all other stakeholders that engaged in the Phase 1 process, as part of Cabinet developing a proposed Revenue Budget Strategy for the 2022/23 financial year.</p> <p data-bbox="320 1043 999 1111">Forum Members were requested to provide feedback on the following questions.</p> <p data-bbox="320 1155 552 1187">School Budget</p> <p data-bbox="320 1187 999 1335">Do you think the Council should provide sufficient resources to fully cover increased pay and non-pay cost pressures in our schools?</p> <ul data-bbox="320 1379 999 1816" style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum Members agreed that the Council should continue to provide sufficient resources to cover increased pay and non-pay pressures. • Forum Members also referenced: <ul data-bbox="344 1559 999 1816" style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The extra pressures that schools have faced as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, and noting that such pressures will continue into the future. ○ Recognising that a good quality education is one of the key ways of taking people out of poverty. <p data-bbox="320 1861 496 1892">Social Care</p> <p data-bbox="320 1892 999 1995">Do you think the Council should continue to prioritise social services as a key area for additional investment?</p> <ul data-bbox="320 2040 999 2074" style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum Members agreed that social care 	Noted	Paul Griffiths

should be prioritised by the Council as a key area for investment.

- A Forum Member also highlighted the specific need for on-going investment in Children's Services, with the work of schools and social services being intrinsically linked as part of ensuring appropriate support is in place for vulnerable learners.

Council Service Priorities

The Council provides a wide range of important services – which do you think should be most protected and prioritised for additional resources in 2022/23?

- A Forum Member provided specific feedback in respect of the Council's Youth Service, indicating the positive range of work the Service undertakes.

Council Tax and Efficiency Savings

Do you think the Council should:

Maintain as many services at the current level as possible even if it means a reasonable increase in Council Tax and the on-going delivery of efficiency savings to contribute towards closing the budget gap?

OR

Reduce service levels to close the budget gap and keep any increase in Council Tax / delivery of efficiency savings to a minimum?

- Forum Members fed back that the Council should maintain as many services as possible at the current level even if it means a reasonable increase in Council Tax and the on-going delivery of efficiency savings to contribute towards closing the budget gap.

Council Reserves (The continuation of a strategy whereby the level of general reserves will be kept under on-going review and replenished going forward, as appropriate, and taking into account the financial risks the Council faces).

Do you think the Council should continue with such a strategy?

- The Forum agreed that the Council should

continue with its strategy in respect of Reserves.

General Comments

- Forum Members commented on the additional pressures placed on schools as a result of the pandemic and the importance of on-going support to enable the continuation of good quality education services.
- Forum Members also noted their appreciation for the support already being provided by the Council and welcomed on-going joint working to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Following discussion, Forum Members **RESOLVED** to note the 2022/23 Budget Consultation and for their comments to be incorporated into the Phase 1 Consultation feedback.