

APPENDIX A6

Extract of the minutes of the Schools Budget forum held on 26th January 2017

To receive the budget presentation 2017-18 from County Cllr P. Murphy.

We thanked County Cllr. P. Murphy for attending our meeting and for his presentation. From this we understand that central services have saved £18m over recent years, this has mainly been done through the budget mandate savings, this has resulted in services being maintained and new ways of working explored.

We understand that when the initial MTPF was developed, we were modelling for a 2.3% reduction, our settlement was better than this, and we effectively had a standstill budget.

We are still the lowest funded authority in Wales, and we were provided with details on the budget assumptions and the ways to meet the gap. We understand that this meeting was also asking for our input into closing that gap and with any ideas to make further savings.

We understand the current assumptions in the budget there is a 3.95% increase in council tax. We are meeting the living wage, and under the current model there is a £243k gap which is still to be explored.

We were provided updates on our future schools programme and the City Deal.

There is an assumption that we will get an additional £515k in income from council tax relating to new house builds in Monmouthshire. Details of the budget savings were outlined in the presentation and it was agreed that this presentation would be circulated to all members.

We understand that the proposal is to flat cash line school budgets, and this will result in a pressure for schools of £160k. There is an additional pressure for all services areas of the new apprenticeship levy, this has been introduced from 1st April by central government.

We were then asked for questions and comments.

We are concerned that schools have had cuts in real terms over the last 3 years, and today we have learnt of an 8% cut to post 16 education. While there are grants available to schools, more must be done to ensure that this money gets to the classroom. It is difficult to raise standards on ever shrinking budgets.

We discussed the number of teaching posts that have been lost across Wales, and how this equates to pupils. We also raised the issue of increasing exam fees.

We were concerned regarding the number of pupils that move to out of county schools during transition from KS2 to KS3 and what we can do to improve this.

We thanked the Cabinet member for his presentation and agreed to invite him to future meetings.