

# MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM

Terms of reference updated June 2014.

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## Section 1 – Constitution of the School Budget Forum.

### 1.1 Election and appointment of school members:

- 1.1.1 School members and non-school members must have their appointment and term of office confirmed in writing.
- 1.1.2 School members should represent primary and secondary schools proportionally, having regard to the total number of pupils in each sector.
- 1.1.3 For each of the categories of schools listed below there must be at least one school member:
  - Community Special Schools
  - Foundation Schools (not applicable to MCC)
  - Voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools.
- 1.1.4 At least one school member should be a parent governor.

### 1.2 Appointment of Non-School Members:

- 1.2.1 In accordance with section 47A of the School Forums (Wales) Regulations 2003, it is up to the LA to determine whether to allocate places on the forum to non-school members. The regulations provide for up to 25% of the forum to be made up of non-school members.
- 1.2.2 The only representative of the LA who has voting rights are those included as part of the non-school membership.
- 1.2.3 LA staff who provide advisory or administrative support to the forum do not have to be members of the forum.
- 1.2.4 Non-school members must be nominated by the relevant bodies. The final decision whether to accept the person nominated rests with the LA.
- 1.2.5 When appointing non-school members, the LA must give due consideration to appointing representatives of relevant Church in Wales or Roman Catholic diocesan authorities and teaching or other trade unions with members in Wales.
- 1.2.6 Schools should be notified when initially constituting the forum, and after the appointment of any replacement school members or non-school members.

### 1.3 Membership:

1.3.1 The membership of the Monmouthshire Schools Budget Forum as approved by Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014 is shown below:

Sector	Number of members	Headteacher of other staff representatives	Governors	Non-school representatives
Primary	7	4	3	
Secondary	6	2	4	
Special	1	1		
Pupil Referral Unit	1	1		
Union Rep	1			1
Diocesan Rep	1			1
Cabinet Member	1			1
Select Committee Rep	1			1
Chief Officer or Rep	1			1
Total	20	8	7	5

1.3.2 The term of office is two years from both school and non-school members.

1.3.3 Members must have their appointment and term of office confirmed in writing.

1.3.4 Membership may be terminated by the LA in advance of the full term if the member ceases to act in the capacity for which he / she was appointed. (i.e ceases to be a governor / headteacher).

1.3.5 A member, who, without the consent of the other members has failed to attend the meetings for a continuous period of six months with the date of the first such meeting he or she failed to attend, is, on expiry of that period, disqualified from continuing to hold office.

1.3.6 Where a member has sent an apology to the clerk to the meeting before a meeting which he/she does not propose to attend, the minutes must record the consent or otherwise to the absence and a copy of the minutes must be sent to the member.

## Section 2 – Meetings and proceedings of the School Budget Forum.

### 2.1 Frequency of Meetings.

2.1.1 For the tasks of the forum to be carried out effectively it is likely that meetings need to take place at least 4 times year.

2.1.2 The LA will arrange meetings so that the forum can be consulted on financial issues in sufficient time for its views to be taken into consideration. On

occasions, it might be necessary with the agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair to call an extra-ordinary meeting.

## 2.2 Location of Meetings.

2.2.1 Meeting venues will be agreed on by the members.

2.2.2 As school budget forums are intending to contribute to the transparency of the budget setting process, meetings will be open to the public.

## 2.3 Sub Committees.

2.3.1 Working groups or sub-committees of the forum will be constituted as necessary. The forum will agree the terms of reference of such groups and specify membership arrangements.

2.3.2 Sub-groups will be required to report to a full (quorate) meeting of the forum for approval of the finding before such findings are formally passed to the LA.

## 2.4 Administration.

2.4.1 Administration arrangements of the forum will be put in place by the LA. This includes calling meetings, issuing papers and clerking / recording meetings.

## 2.5 Conflict of Interest.

2.5.1 Members of the schools budget forum will be required to make a declaration of interest when relevant. For example there may be cases where a conflict of interest occurs when the forum is considering matters relating to service contracts.

## 2.6 Quorum.

2.6.1 The regulations specify a quorum of 50% for meetings (10 members). There is nothing to stop the school budget forum continuing to meet if it is inquorate but it will be up to the LA to decide whether or not to take into account any advice given to them by the School Budget Forum in those circumstances.

2.6.2 Substitute members will be part of the quorate.

## 2.7 Chair of the School Budget Forum.

2.7.1 In accordance with the regulations the first and subsequent chairs of the forum are to be elected by the school budget forum itself. The chair initially holds office for a period of one year but can be re-appointed.

2.7.2 The school budget forum will elect its own vice chair on an annual basis.

## 2.8 Observer Status.

2.8.1 Given their responsibility for post 16 funding in schools, the regulations state that the relevant Welsh Government Representative has the right to nominate an observer to attend all meetings of the school budget forum. Such an

observer is entitled to attend and participate in school budget forum meetings but does not have voting rights.

- 2.8.2 It is up to Welsh Government to decide who should attend on their behalf, and neither the LA or the school budget forum can exclude the observer from particular items.
- 2.8.3 The LA can invite other organisations or bodies to attend the meeting of the School Budget Forum as observers if it considers it appropriate to do so. Again, it will be up to the individual organisation or body to nominate the person they wish to attend.
- 2.8.4 There is nothing to preclude the authority from choosing to have LA officers, finance officers or others present as observers. As for other observers they do not have voting rights on the schools forum.

## Section 3 – Functions of the Schools Forum.

### 3.1 Consultation on Financial Issues.

- 3.1.1 The authority is required to consult the forum annually on the exercise of its functions in relation to the schools budget forum and changes to its financial schemes.
- 3.1.2 The authority may choose to consult schools budget forum on the financial implications of a number of areas, such as school transport, insurance, early year's education etc.

### 3.2 Consultation on revisions to the LA's Scheme for funding Schools.

- 3.2.1 The LA has to consult the forum on any proposed changes to its scheme for financing schools. The LA is obliged to take account of the views of the schools budget forum before making final decisions.

### 3.3 Consultation on the School Funding Formula.

- 3.3.1 The LA will consult the schools budget forum on any proposed changes to the factors and criteria to be taken into account, or the methods, principles and rules to be adopted, in relation to its formula for funding schools.
- 3.2.1 The school budget forum will also be consulted in the likely financial effects of any changes to the funding formula.

### 3.4 Consultation on Contracts and Service Level Agreements.

- 3.4.1 The LA will consult the school budget forum on contracts for supplies and services that exceed the prescribed threshold for procurement. The current threshold is £173,934. The LA will consult the school budget forum at least 3 months prior to the issue of an invitation to tender.
- 3.4.2 The LA will consult the school budget forum on service level agreements for the supply of goods and services by the LA to schools. The school budget forum must be consulted at least three months before the date on which the agreement is due to be finalised.

3.4.3 The above requirement relates to contracts and service level agreements funded from delegated budgets or from centrally retained funds within the schools budgets.

### 3.5 Feedback to Schools.

3.5.1 The school budget forum shall inform governing bodies and headteachers of the results of their discussions by the circulation of meeting minutes. The minutes will also be circulated to other groups represented on the forum.

## Section 4 – Expenses.

### 4.1 Member Expenses.

4.1.1 Travelling expenses of members incurred in connection with their attendance at school budget forum meetings will be reimbursed by the LA.