

From: Cllr Charlie McCoubrey <cllr.charlie.mccoubrey@conwy.gov.uk>
Sent: 12 June 2023 12:04
To: TKBTC Clerk
Cc: Rhun ap Iarthur; Jenny Williams; Jaci Doran; Elicia Mills; Christina Jackson (Services to Children); Cllr Michael Priestley; Dr Lowri Brown; Cllr Julie Fallon; Cllr Charlie McCoubrey
Subject: School Budget 2023 - 2024

Dear Mr Thomas

Many thanks for your email, we fully accept and acknowledge the challenges facing our schools which are compounded by an increase in the needs of children, young people and their families following the pandemic. We would always encourage Head teachers and Governing bodies to plan effectively and take steps to reduce expenditure in order to set a balance budget in future years where appropriate.

Whilst we accept that this may not be the desired response, the following information responds to each of the points raised within your email and is based on factual information and actual events.

The Town Council for Towyn and Kinnel Bay would like a better understanding of the counties budgetary approach to our schools. Governors in our community attending at Ysgol Y Foryd for example have voiced concern for the impossible budgetary pressure being applied to our outstanding infant's school Ysgol Y Foryd.

At the finance meeting on 1 March, it is confidentially reported that with a healthy carry-over the school budget offered by CCBC fell below any prospect of the school being able to operate. This budget is offered late and without any operational explanation to the governing body. This situation continued through the full governors meeting on 16th March 2023.

Head teachers and Governing Bodies have been informed of and updated on the Local Authorities budget pressures since September 2022 via the School Budget Forum, Strategic Head teacher groups and Conwy's Governor Association meetings. In September 2022, the following statement was shared during the School Budget Forum which includes representation from all sectors and governors; possible cuts to the ISB of 4% as a minimum, but might increase towards the top end of the scale which is closer to 8-10% if the savings are shared across all services evenly'.

Representatives of the School Budget Forum were invited to attend an Education budget working group in late November 2022 in the presence of Officers and Elected Members. School representatives were given the opportunity to share their financial challenges and also were involved in debates around the level of reduction expected from each service area, including schools.

WG provided the provisional Local Government financial settlement to Conwy in December with the final settlement confirmed on 1 March 2023. Whilst the allocation was shared with schools in early February, work was already underway, whereby LA finance officers worked closely with individual schools to compile a draft position to ascertain whether a balanced budget was achievable on the 1st of April 2023.

The Strategic Director for Finance & Resources presented the LA's financial position at the Conwy Governors Association meeting 19th January, clearly outlining the position.

The Council set the budget for 2023/24 on Thursday March 2nd 2023. Conwy's Scheme for Financing Schools dictates that all schools must achieve a balanced budget by May 1st.

In 2023/24, the Council faced pressures of circa £36m mainly due to pay and price inflation, however were only provided with an additional £15m from Welsh Government. Subsequently the remaining £21m shortfall had to be found from reductions in services and an increase in council tax. In Conwy we have a long

standing history of protecting school budgets compared to other services and schools have actually received an increase of 6.3% in funding this year.

We appreciate that this has been an extremely challenging climate for schools and we anticipate that the coming year will be equally difficult. Consequently we encourage all schools and their governing bodies to work closely with the LA to appropriately plan.

Kind regards

Charlie

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From: TKBTC Clerk <clerk@tkbtc.co.uk>
Sent: 29 March 2023 11:50
To: 'elicia.mills@conwy.gov.uk' <elicia.mills@conwy.gov.uk>
Cc: Rhun ap Iwan <rhun.apgareth@conwy.gov.uk>; 'cllr.charlie.mccoubrey@conwy.gov.uk' <cllr.charlie.mccoubrey@conwy.gov.uk>; Cllr Geoffrey Corry <g.corry1@tkbtc.co.uk>
Subject: School Budget 2023 - 24

Good Morning

The members at the full Town Council meeting on 27/03/2023 resolved that:-

16. School Budgets 2023-24

Resolved that: - The clerk writes to the Head of Education/The Chief Executive and the Leader of Conwy CBC to request an explanation as to why there has been such a shortfall/impact on the budgets for 2023-24 for Ysgol Y Foryd, and why Conwy CBC are putting schools through such pressure/the timing has been so last minute. These cuts will have a negative knock on effect on staffing and the quality of the Children's learning.

Resolved that: - Cllr B Griffiths will assist the Clerk with the wording of the letter to Conwy CBC, to ensure that all the relevant points are covered.

Please see below some background/further information regarding our request:-

Ysgol Y Foryd Budget 23/24

A Community Request for Discussion

The Town Council for Towyn and Kinmel Bay would like a better understanding of the counties budgetary approach to our schools. Governors in our community attending at Ysgol Y Foryd for example have voiced concern for the impossible budgetary pressure being applied to our outstanding infant's school Ysgol Y Foryd.

At the finance meeting on 1 March, it is confidentially reported that with a healthy carry-over the school budget offered by CCBC fell below any prospect of the school being able to operate. This budget is offered late and without