

Cllr C Weaver
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

cc. Cllr S Merry

2nd January 2019

Dear Councillor Weaver,

Changes for Cardiff 2019/20 Budget Proposals

I write on behalf of the Cardiff Schools Budget Forum in response to your invitation to comment on the Council's proposals for the 2019/20 budget.

As a School Budget Forum, we welcome the Council's continued commitment to protecting front line services and the reforms that you are suggesting to target scarce resources at preventative provision. As representatives of schools, we would remind you that investing in a high quality education provision in high quality school buildings is the best form of preventative investment that a Council could make.

Whilst we applaud your continued efforts to protect schools delegated budgets from general efficiency savings the impact of a 30% Cap on inflationary pressures being faced by schools will mean a 'Real Terms' cut of £3.5m to schools across the City. The real impact of this will be an overall reduction in staff in schools and in classrooms.

We also welcome your efforts to increase Foster Care provision in the City as this would have a real impact on the life opportunities for this vulnerable group of children across the City and have a positive impact on the numbers of young people having to be educated in Out of County Educational Placements.

Whilst we welcome your proposals to increase the number of safe walking routes to schools any proposals must be shared with schools before implementation and as much as possible be developed with the voice of the young people affected included.

The Council's continued commitment through the Band A and now Band B 21ST Century Schools Investment programme and recent increases in the Asset Renewal programme for schools to invest in the school estate is welcomed. Our cautiousness as a School Budget Forum is the extent to which existing and future Schools Delegated Revenue budgets are now being committed to finance this capital expenditure. As a Forum we would welcome the opportunity to examine and discuss the financial model for this significant investment programme.

In relation to the specific savings proposals that will impact on the Education Directorate we offer the following comments;

- Delegation of EIG contribution – we understand the basis for this proposal but would ask that further detail is provided as to the potential impact on individual schools.
- Reduction in contribution to the Central South Consortium – whilst further reduction to the funding contribution is welcomed the School Budget Forum would welcome further work to be done to fundamentally review the funding basis for these arrangements which take

account also of the significant Welsh Government grants that now are received and distributed.

- Income generation – the School Budget Forum agrees that there should be an opportunity for these services to generate additional income our concern would be if there was a detrimental impact on the existing service provision to Cardiff schools.
- Central Staffing savings – as a School Budget Forum we are aware of the significant savings that have been made by the Education Directorate over the last few years by reducing the central staffing compliment. We would request a sustained period of stability in the service to enable schools to adapt to service changes.

Finally, whilst not appearing in this budget strategy, as a School Budget Forum we would urge you to continue to seek greater clarity regarding the continuation of funding from Welsh Government for Minority Ethnic Achievement and Travellers Education provision as it is still the expectation from schools that this additional funding will end March 2020.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. J. Griffiths', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sarah Griffiths
Chair, Cardiff Schools Budget Forum