

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
24th January 2019**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor James Gibson-Watt

Could the Portfolio Holder outline what measures she is currently taking, other than the current review of the Fair Funding Formula for Schools, to address the rapidly worsening delegated schools budget position in Powys schools?

Response

Education continues to be a very high priority in Powys in what are very demanding financial times. Under this Cabinet, education gross expenditure per pupil has risen last year by 4.9% to the highest in Wales. Net expenditure (that not supported by specific grant) rose by 2.2%, which is also above the Welsh average of 1.6%. School funding per pupil (not including central expenditure on additional learning needs and school transport) stands at 10th out of the 22 Welsh Authorities in 2018-19.

Implementing the new formula means that the Authority will be allocating funds effectively to individual schools in future, based on a clear rationale/ operating model. Implementing the new formula means that there is transparency wherever Governing Bodies spend above our notional operational model on leadership or any other heading.

The evidence is largely that available funding is not managed effectively by some governing bodies, but also that the Authority has previously been allocating available funds ineffectively. Interestingly, the recent activity-led funding formula model does not advocate any significant transfer in funding to the secondary sector.

The schools finance team work closely with schools and assist them with responding appropriately with financial pressures. HR professionals provide essential support to Head Teachers and Governing Bodies in remodelling schools and delivering efficiencies in their school. Curriculum advice is available from challenge advisors. The different professional groups now act as a single team supporting a school through transformation.

As an Authority we now appropriately use warning letters and notices. These normally secure compliance where governing bodies have not acted appropriately through their own actions or following initial advice. We are also using statutory powers of intervention where governors do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities following warning letters or notices.

Support for ALN pupils also remains a priority and the review of our current provision and developing schools' ability to deliver on the ALN bill in Wales remain a priority. All of these in conjunction with the Fairer Funding Formula will allow our schools to continue to flourish and face future challenges.