

Meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1

16 January 2025

Recommendations / Information requested.

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted:
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29			
Recommendation:			
5	Members requested more information on what other local authorities were doing to set a balanced budget which Officers advised once they had the wider Wales view they would be content to share with the Committee.	A School Budget Management Group (involving headteachers and officers) has been established. The group will provide feedback to Cabinet before the end of this (2024-2025) school year. This information will be shared with Scrutiny Committees in due course. By way of further information, the Corporate Director (Education, Early Years and Young People) will be chairing an all-Wales session on school funding on 08/05/2025. Feedback will be provided to Scrutiny Committees following this meeting.	Accepted

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6	<p>Members discussed the implications of Legal Services for schools expressing their concerns with more complex casework involving behaviour, attendance, health, and safety legislation.</p> <p>Headteachers advised they have external arrangements with legal services who are knowledgeable and are able to turn things around in a timely manner to support schools. Headteachers stated that the conflict came where the Local Authorities' legal team may not agree with the external legal advice which could be a challenge for the schools. The Committee requested that this is investigated further as to whether the external legal support was sustainable, manageable, affordable and whether the support was sufficient for today's demands on schools.</p>	<p>The Legal Services for Schools Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been in place for several years. Feedback from headteachers has generally been positive in respect of the current arrangements. The local authority has explored whether this function could be brought 'in-house' and, despite some effort to do so, we received limited interest from the market. In addition, the current arrangements offer an effective service which is provided on a cost-effective basis. The local authority would be happy to liaise with headteachers to explore alternative options following the expiration of the current contract with the Legal Services for Schools SLA.</p>	Accepted

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7	The Committee requested more information with regards to the Welsh Governments revenue support grant and other grants that might be forthcoming.	Information in respect of Welsh Government grant funding will be provided to Scrutiny Committees when available.	Accepted