

Monmouthshire County Council
Call for Evidence

Q1) The Funding Process – do you feel you understand the processes involved in how schools are funded?

- a) What information would you find useful to help you understand the process – and why?

The forum expressed a view that they did not fully understand the process and could not understand why Monmouthshire always had a raw deal as it stood to reason that it costs the same amount of money to educate in Monmouthshire.

- b) If you have any views on the legislative framework governing the funding of schools in Wales, please include in your response.

It was the view of the forum that although the 70% pupil lead factor of the funding was clear and rational the 30% factor was rather ambiguous and open to interpretation.

Q2) Access to information including the provision of information on the web – do you feel you have ready access to the information you would like on how your school, and other schools are funded?

- a) What information would you like – and in what form – and why?

It was raised by the forum through discussion that the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) website was very difficult to navigate. The Audit Commission's website was said to be very user friendly.

- b) The Assembly Government is developing a school funding section on the main Assembly Government website, including a dedicated e-mail address for enquires, to provide accessible information on school funding.

- i) What information would you like to see on the dedicated area of the website?

The comparison tool found on the Audit Commission's website was especially practical. It was raised by the forum that a similar function for the Section 52 would be useful.

- ii) How would you like to be kept up-to-date with current information?

It was suggested that a central e-mail account for the schools budget forum should be set up.

Q3) Additional funding – where additional funding is made available, perhaps through a grant from the Assembly Government e.g. money for the free breakfast initiative or RAISE funding; do you receive useful information at the appropriate time?

- a) How could the flow of information be improved?

It was suggested that if a central e-mail account was set up then the flow of information could pass through it.

Q4) Investment in school buildings – do you think information on school building investment at the local level is clear?

- a) How could information on the source and amount of funding on capital programmes (specifically buildings) be clearer?

The issue of private partnerships was raised and it was agreed that clearer guidance and clarity was needed on PPP.

Q5) School budget fora – do you think these are operating effectively?

- a) What outcomes would you like to see from the Welsh Assembly Government review of school budget fora?

The forum discussed how we had no information on how other LEAs operated. The possibility of an all Wales forum was discussed and it was agreed that if they joined together would have a more powerful voice. It was also suggested that a WAG representative be part of the all Wales forum. It was realised that the forum could be a lobbying group to WAG and could give more weight to the budget fora.