

1 Ysgolion

- 1.1 Mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn nodi eu bod wedi gwarchod grant Llywodraeth Leol er mwyn sicrhau gostyngiad llai na gweddill y gwasanaethau yng nghyllidebau ysgolion. Y rhagdybiaeth yw mae'n debyg y byddem wedi gweld gostyngiad uwch na'r 4.4% pe na fyddent wedi rhoi'r warchodaeth yma i ni.
- 1.2 Hyd yma, ein hymagwedd ni tuag at hyn yw parhau i gynllunio ar sail yr hyn y byddai'r Cyngor yn dymuno ei wneud ar gyfer ysgolion gan fesur hynny wedyn yn erbyn bwriad Llywodraeth Cymru ac ystyried a oes angen addasu unrhyw beth er mwyn cydymffurfio a'r addewid.
- 1.3 Eleni mae'r rheol yma yn golygu fod angen sicrhau fod ysgolion yn cael cynnydd arian o +0.45%. Fel y nodwyd y llynedd, mae hyn yn codi cwestiynau sylfaenol ynglŷn â pha mor rhesymegol yw hi i'r Cyngor barhau i wireddu dymuniad Llywodraeth Cymru pan fyddwn yn gorfod torri ar wasanaethau eraill er mwyn talu amdano. Ni wyddom wrth gwrs beth fyddai effaith peidio â gwireddu'r dymuniad o ran ymateb Llywodraeth Cymru na'r ysgolion.
- 1.4 Dengys y ffigyrau sydd yn y gyllideb a nodir uchod (sy'n cynnwys sicrhau fod ysgolion yn derbyn y cynnydd angenrheidiol yn eu cyllidebau i gwrdd â chwyddiant a.y.b) ynghyd a'r camau eraill a argymhellir yn y rhan yma ein bod am gwrdd â'r addewid eleni.
- 1.5 Yn wahanol i wasanaethau eraill felly, am y drydedd flwyddyn yn olynol, ar y cyfan ni fydd y gyllideb ysgolion yn wynebu arbedion yn 2014/15 heblaw i wynebu'r addasiadau arferol sy'n deillio o newidiadau yn niferoedd disgyblion, gyda rhai ysgolion yn elwa a rhai yn colli.
- 1.6 Fodd bynnag fel cyd-destun i'r sefyllfa yma rhaid bod yn fyw i'r hyn sy'n digwydd oherwydd sefyllfa grantiau a roddir yn uniongyrchol i'r ysgolion gan Lywodraeth Cymru.
- 1.7 Yn 2014/15 bydd ysgolion Gwynedd yn elwa bron i £900,000 yn y cynnydd yn y grant amddifadedd y bydd ysgolion yn ei dderbyn gyda thua £520,000 yn mynd i'r sector gynradd a thua £374,000 yn mynd i'r sector Uwchradd. Wrth gwrs fe fydd dyraniad hwn i ysgolion unigol yn ddibynnol ar y nifer o blant sydd gan ysgolion unigol sydd yn gymwys ar gyfer cinio am ddim ac i'w ddefnyddio i wella canlyniadau ymysg plant o gefndiroedd difreintiedig.
- 1.8 Yn erbyn hynny fodd bynnag bydd y sector Uwchradd yn wynebu gostyngiad o tua £500,000 yn y grant ôl 16 a grant rhwydwaith 14-19.

- 1.9 Gyda'r gostyngiad o £840,810 yn ei gyllideb oherwydd lleihad yn y niferoedd plant a nodir yng nghymal 3.9 uchod, a'r lleihad yn y grantiau yma, mae'r sector uwchradd yn mynd i fod yn dioddef yn sylweddol eleni gyda'r gostyngiadau yn tynnu at £1m.
- 1.10 Yn wyneb y gostyngiadau grant annisgwyl mae'r Gwasanaeth Ysgolion am gynnig £160,000 ar sail unwaith ac am byth o'i adnoddau ei hun er mwyn cynorthwyo'r sector i ddygymod gyda'r gostyngiad mewn grantiau.
- 1.11 Wedi dweud hynny wrth edrych ar y sefyllfa demograffi yn unig, mae'r gostyngiad mewn niferoedd plant yn golygu y bydd yna un ysgol yn disgyn o dan 260 o blant (sef y nifer lle mae yna wir amheuon ynglŷn â gallu ysgol i gynnal y cwricwlwm) ac felly awgrymir fod angen cynllun gwarchodaeth ar gyfer y sector uwchradd lle gwarchodir cyllideb ysgol uwchradd sy'n disgyn o dan 260 o blant tan y bydd modd dod o hyd i ateb mwy hir dymor ar gyfer ysgolion o'r maint yma.
- 1.12 Fodd bynnag, gyda dwy ysgol arall yn tynnu at y ffigur 260 o blant mae hyn yn tanlinellu'r angen i sicrhau ateb hir dymor i'r broblem. Byddai cynllun o'r fath yn costio £27,580 yn 2014/15.
- 1.13 Mae yna gwestiwn, o gofio blaenoriaeth y Cyngor o fewn y Cynllun Strategol o fod yn dymuno codi safonau addysgol plant a phobl ifanc a ddylid mynd ymhellach ac a ddylid ystyried y balans cyllido rhwng y sector gynradd (sy'n gweld cynnydd o tua £1m yn eu cyllidebau yn 2014/15) a'r sector uwchradd (fydd yn gweld gostyngiad cyffelyb yn eu cyllideb hyd yn oed ar ôl cymryd y camau a nodir uchod).
- 1.14 Efallai nad yw amser yn caniatáu gwneud hynny nawr ond rhaid bod yn fyw i'r ffaith tra bydd y sector uwchradd wedi cynllunio ar gyfer effaith lleihad demograffi, nid yw gorfod darganfod ffyrdd o ddygymod gyda'r gostyngiad am gynorthwyo'r sector i fod yn canolbwyntio ar gyraeddiadau addysgol.
- 1.15 'Rwyf yn argymhell y dylid helpu'r sector i ddygymod a'r lleihad drwy roddi mwy o amser iddynt ymgyswyo a'r sefyllfa gan ychwanegu at y swm y mae'r gwasanaeth addysg ei hun yn bwriadu cynorthwyo drwy ddefnyddio balansau i wneud cyfraniad pellach unwaith ac am byth o £250,000.

1 Schools

- 1.1 The Welsh Government have noted that they have protected the Local Government Grant in order to ensure a lower reduction in school budgets compared with other services. The implication presumably is that we would have seen a reduction greater than 4.4% had they not given us this protection.
- 1.2 Our approach towards this to date has been to continue to plan on the basis of what the Council would wish to do for schools then measuring that against the Welsh Government's proposals and consider whether there is a need to adjust anything in order to comply with the promise.
- 1.3 This rule means that there is a need to ensure that this year, schools receive an increase of +0.45%. As noted last year, this raises the basic question as to how logical it is for the Council to continue to deliver the Welsh Government's wishes when we will have to cut other services to pay for it. We do not know of course what the effect would be of not complying in terms of Welsh Government response and the response of the schools themselves.
- 1.4 The figures in the budget shown above (which include ensuring that schools receive the necessary increase in their budgets to meet inflation etc) along with other actions noted in this section, mean that we will fulfil this requirement this year.
- 1.5 Therefore, unlike other services, for the third year in a row, overall the schools budget will not face having to find savings in 2014/15 other than to face the usual adjustments that arise from the change in pupil numbers, with some schools benefiting and some losing out.
- 1.6 However in order to understand the overall context, it is important that the Cabinet is aware of what is happening with grants given to schools by the Welsh Government.
- 1.7 In 2014/15 Gwynedd schools will benefit nearly £900,000 due to increased deprivation grant that schools receive with about £520,000 going to the primary sector and about £374,000 going to the secondary sector. Of course the distribution to individual schools will depend on the number of children in individual schools eligible for free school meals and it must be used to improve results amongst children from less privileged backgrounds.
- 1.8 However against this increase, the secondary sector will face a reduction of about £500,000 in post 16 and 14-19 network grant.
- 1.9 With a reduction of £840,810 in the budget due to a decrease in the number of children noted in paragraph 3.9 above, and these grant reductions, the

secondary sector is going to suffer substantially this year with the reduction approaching £1m.

- 1.10 In view of the unexpected grant reduction, the Schools Service is offering £160,000 on a one off basis from its own resources in order to assist the sector to acclimatise to this reduction in grant.
- 1.11 However, if we look at the demographic position on its own, the reduction in the number of pupils means that one school will fall below 260 pupils (which is the number whereby there are real doubts on the ability of a school to deliver the curriculum) and therefore it is suggested that we need a protection scheme for the secondary sector whereby the budget of secondary schools that fall under 260 pupils is protected until it is possible to find a longer term solution for schools of this size.
- 1.12 However, with two other schools nearing the figure of 260 pupils, this underlines the need to ensure a long term solution to the problem. Such a plan would cost £27,580 in 2014/15.
- 1.13 Taking into account the Council's priority in its Strategic Plan of improving children and young persons' educational standards, there is a question as to whether we should go further and consider the funding balance between the primary sector (which will see an increase of nearly £1m in its overall budget) and the secondary sector (which will see a similar reduction in its budget even after taking the above steps into account).
- 1.14 It may be the case that time does not allow us to consider such a policy now, but we must be alive to the fact that whilst the secondary sector will have planned for the demographic reduction, finding ways of dealing with the total reduction is not going to do anything to help the sector concentrate on educational attainment.
- 1.15 I recommend that we assist the sector to acclimatise to the reduction by giving them more time to cope with the situation and add to the sum that the education service itself plans to use to assist, by using balances to make a one off contribution of a further £250,000.