

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

PART A - SUPPLEMENTARIES

<p>1.</p>	<p><b>Councillors J W Jones, A M Day &amp; M H Jones</b> Will the Cabinet Member tell Council what are the predicted cuts to delegated school budgets for the financial year 2015/2016 and 2016/2017?</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Finance &amp; Resources</b></p> <p>The Medium Term Financial Plan approved by Council on 14<sup>th</sup> February (paragraphs 3.11 to 3.13) set out the challenging position with regards to Schools Delegated Budgets for the period 2015/16 to 2017/18.</p> <p>It is too early to specify any level of predicted cuts for the years in question which is entirely dependent on:-</p> <p>a) Any Ministerial guarantee afforded to Schools within the final settlement position. As stated in the MTFP (para 3.11) the Ministerial Guarantee for Schools relevant to the budget was not in place for 2015/16. Recent announcements suggest some form of guarantee may be asked for in respect of the period 2015/16 onwards but this may be in the form of relative protection in relation to other Council Services rather than any commitment to actual numbers</p> <p>b) Continued progress on the sale of excess School land to offset funding commitments implicit within the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools project.</p> <p>c) The overall level of funding that is provided by Welsh Government within the final settlement.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p><b>Councillors P M Black, C A Holley &amp; J Newbury.</b> Will the Cabinet Member outline the process by which applicants can appeal against refusal of a blue badge application?</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Finance &amp; Resources</b></p> <p><b>1. Process to Reviewing Blue Badge Decisions</b> There is no statutory appeal process to challenge a local authority's decision to refuse a blue badge.</p> <p>Welsh Government recommends that Local Authorities have a clear policy/procedure on how they will review Blue Badge decisions.</p> <p>In the initial refusal (decision) letter the applicant will be informed that they can request that their application be looked at again. They will be advised that their reasons will have to be in writing and that at this stage they should provide any supporting evidence/documentation. The applicant should also be informed that to request a review their letter should be received by the local authority within one calendar month of the refusal letter.</p> <p>Initial Review/Appeal The case should then be reconsidered by a member of the Blue Badge Team other than the person who made the original decision.</p>

If the original decision is upheld a further decision letter will be issued giving a further explanation.

#### Further Review

If there is a further challenge then the case should then be reconsidered by either the Blue Badge Team Leader (as long as he/she was not involved in the Initial Review decision), Principal Benefits Officer or the Revenues & Benefit Manager.

A decision letter will be issued to the applicant, however if the application is rejected again a further explanation should be provided.

If at any stage the applicant is unhappy about the way the process has been conducted they should be made aware of the local authority's complaints procedure

#### **2. Outcome of Appeals**

Approximately 23% of appeals are upheld (i.e. granted) as part of the review process.

#### **3. Outcome of Discretionary Blue Badge Applications.**

During 2013/14 some 77% of discretionary applications were approved including those granted via the appeals process.

**PART B – None**