

<b>MEETING</b>	SCHOOLS' BUDGET FORUM
<b>DATE</b>	7 February 2022
<b>TITLE</b>	Result of consultation on change to Grounds Maintenance funding allocation to schools
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Result of consultation with schools
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<p>i) The Schools' Budget Forum recommends that the Cabinet changes schools' Grounds Maintenance funding allocation method from 1 April, 2022 onwards by taking the total existing grounds maintenance allocation for schools and redistributing it across all schools in proportion to the analysis of the core hours grounds maintenance needs of the individual schools.</p> <p>ii) The Schools' Budget Forum asks the county Grounds Maintenance Service (Highways and Municipal Department) to check schools' 'core hours' assessment regularly and when required.</p>
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## 1. Background

1.1 The Schools Budget Forum approved a consultation with schools on a proposed change to the method of allocation of school grounds maintenance funding for the financial year 2022-23.

1.2 Schools were consulted (see **Appendix 1**) on two possible models to change the current grounds maintenance funding allocation method:

**Model 1**

Take **existing grounds maintenance allocation by school sector** and **redistribute within the sector** in proportion to the analysis of the core hours maintenance needs of individual sites in the sector.

**Model 2**

Take the **total existing grounds maintenance allocation for schools** and **redistribute it across all schools** in proportion to the analysis of the core hours grounds maintenance needs of the individual schools.

1.3 A spreadsheet (see **Appendix 2**) was presented showing the per-school impact of using the two models above in comparison with the 2021-22 grounds maintenance funding allocation.

**2. Consultation Results**

2.1 Responses were received from 13 primary schools, 3 secondary schools, 1 all-through school and 0 special schools.

2.2 Here are the opinions noted, by sector:

<b>Sector</b>	<b>In favour of Model 1</b>	<b>In favour of Model 2</b>	<b>Against change</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
Primary	3	7	1	2
Secondary	1	-	1	1
All-through	-	-	1	-
Special	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

2.3 The following comments were received:

**Primary schools**

- Model 1 because it is fairer to other schools – i.e. less of a financial hit to them
- Against Model 1
- The Governing Body is against change. Especially when considering the 'hours'. The school has substantial areas of grounds, and the hours

do not agree with this, in comparison to schools' grounds that are known to the Governing Body

- No comments about the change in method but doubt the value for money of the service to schools at this time
- Whichever option that improves the provision to the primary sector since often there are no full-time caretakers on site. Comments – Happy with any option that offers better provision to the schools. At this time what is offered in the agreement does not meet the requirements, and the school has to employ extra local groundsmen to cut hedges trees/branches, must remind for assistance in using weedkiller, the grass cutting time is often not suitable. There was a need to employ extra groundsmen to deal with cutting ash trees last year. These were extra costs on schools with grounds. They do not come and get rid of the moles.

### **Secondary schools**

- I have no objection to either of the models as long as the cost of the SLA corresponds to the allocation.
- Of the opinion that a method based on a firm basis like this (Model 1) is much fairer to all
- Considering the two models the school loses money which means we will not be able to continue to maintain the grounds to the current standard. In considering the information provided, we are of the opinion that the core hours does not represent the current situation because: No hours assigned to clearing ditches, we have two long ditches here which are essential to the safety of the school site when it is wet and the tide is high. The core hours do not reflect the changes which have taken place within the site during the last year. We have fenced the site, the work not yet completed, but it is hoped to be by the new year which will mean more strimming work and it will not be possible to use large machines in a number of places.

### **All-through schools**

- Any change will have a substantial effect on Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn with a reduction in finance of either £6,297 or £7,405. The least allocation noted as £5,551 is not sufficient to pay for the grass-cutting contract, yet alone any other maintenance work. I must therefore question the method of recognising the required core hours and the amount determined for each hour.

2.4 It can be seen that 8 of the comments referred to the options for changing (or not changing) the Ground Maintenance funding allocation.

5 of the comments referred to the Grounds Maintenance Service Level Agreement – whether in reference to its content or its cost. Neither the content or cost of the Grounds Maintenance SLA were part of this consultation.

### 3. Conclusion

3.1 Of the 17 schools that responded, 11 were in favour of change to either Model 1 or Model 2.

3.2 The majority of those in favour of change favoured Model 2, namely **taking the total existing grounds maintenance allocation for schools and redistributing it across all schools** in proportion to the analysis of the core hours grounds maintenance needs of the individual schools.

3.3 The response of some schools suggested that they did not understand the basis of calculating the 'core hours' for their school. This suggests a need to check the 'core hours' assessment of schools when required.

### 4. Recommendation

4.1 The Schools' Budget Forum recommends that the Cabinet changes schools' Grounds Maintenance funding allocation method from 1 April, 2022 onwards by taking the total existing grounds maintenance allocation for schools and redistributing it across all schools in proportion to the analysis of the core hours grounds maintenance needs of the individual schools.

4.2 The Schools' Budget Forum asks the county Grounds Maintenance Service (Highways and Municipal Department) to check schools' 'core hours' assessment regularly and when required.