

Schools – Q1 Do you agree with the proposal.

In principal yes we agree, new builds should not require the same amount of funding as older schools as there are warranties, etc. in place and the new build should need very little maintenance over a five to ten year period if looked after.

However, the savings that are made should be allocated to schools with premises that are now becoming harder to maintain to be able to carry out works to improve these schools as the allocation allowed for emergency repairs is not sufficient to carry out improvements or renovations to areas. The current figure in the budget is not enough and is not in line with market pricing for repairs and maintenance.

In principle we agree that new builds should have lower building maintenance costs and therefore would require less funding. However, if funding was reduced there would need to be clear agreements as to who is responsible for any costs arising during the 10yrs that are related to build, including any systems such as heating, IT, security etc. Whilst buildings themselves are usually covered for 10yrs other internal systems often have a shorter guarantee time.

Not entirely – the 100% reduction would not provide funding for the schools to pay for their yearly core annual service costs that would still need to be undertaken e.g. PAT testing, service of fire alarm system etc.

Ensure all of the schools are funded with the amount to cover the annual core service costs as determined by Property services.

Caldicot School does not agree with the proposal and feels it is based on assumptions and not financial evidence as it is not available at this early stage. Caldicot School is the first new Secondary school that has been built by MCC & has only been open for two months.

The new buildings may be covered by a number of guarantees however there are stringent servicing regimes that have to be met to ensure these are validated. These servicing requirements will be additional costs in comparison to the old buildings.

MCC are currently unable to provide an agreed maintenance/servicing cost for the new school and, with the information currently available, it is estimated that the new school maintenance costs will be more than double the cost of the old building.

The new Caldicot School is a major investment by MCC and it requires that maintenance schedules be continued otherwise, with the heavy usage that the school experiences with 1,300 pupils there will be a significant negative impact on the school building.

Yes I agree with the proposal

Yes

Our Governors met to discuss the proposal and don't agree with the proposal.
As a 'new build school' our governors don't agree with the proposal and would offer the following reasons.
During the initial snagging period (one year) the building maintenance costs were reduced. During this time this was offset by a number of other associated costs – leadership costs (both prior to opening and for the first year), administrative costs associated with time consuming snagging reports and follow up meetings and visits for repair and key holder / H/t time costs whilst waiting for example, when windows wouldn't close.
During this time there were disputes over issues such as alarms and entry systems where the cost was disputed and resulted in more 'admin' time.
Following the snagging period costs for maintenance of automated systems such as automatic doors, rainwater harvesting, solar panels, sprinkler systems, CCTV etc are more expensive than traditional builds. This cost increases when these malfunction and costs are reflected in additional hours for staff rather than in building maintenance costs. Many of these systems are affected by the weather (storms) and power cuts which can set off the alarms and result in call outs at all hours (additional hours not reflected in building maintenance again).
Governors feel that these costs need to be considered.
Additionally, walls still get scuffed, toilets break, lights need replacing etc. Some of these things are rectified internally rather than through Property Services so will be included in additional hours.

Totally - there should be fewer issues and many covered by guarantee etc - the older buildings will have more issues and should have more of the pot

Proposal seems fair and sensible way to distribute funding.

Following discussion by the King Henry VIII School Governing Body Finance Sub-committee on 16 October 2017, the governing body was generally in favour of the proposed changes, but feels that some provision should be retained within the funding formula to account for STATUTORY MAINTENANCE CHECKS REQUIRED BY LAW. These must be carried out irrespective of the age of the premises, and would still be incurred by new-build schools. Some examples of these might include:

- ◆ PAT Testing
- ◆ Testing of boilers and pressure vessels
- ◆ LEV and Fume cupboard testing
- ◆ Emergency lighting testing

Yes. This seems fair given the investment.

No – please see below for rationale - below

Whilst the requirement for reactive and proactive repair should not be necessary in a new school, and we agree that this should be the case for a period of years as covered by guarantees from constructors (you suggest 5) there are annual servicing costs required to equipment to comply with Health and Safety legislation and site management costs irrespective of the age and condition of the school buildings.

For example here at Monmouth Comprehensive School annually we currently incur the following costs not related to maintaining the condition of our buildings:

Servicing of:
Fire extinguishers
D&T equipment and gases
Kilns

Pat Testing
Fire Alarm Systems
Security Alarm Systems
Boilers
LEV/Fume Cupboards
Ventilation Systems
Sprinkler Systems
Air Conditioning

Current Total Annual Servicing costs £20,900

Waste/refuse removal - £10,000

Gritting the site - £500

Pest Control - £500

Health and Safety Training of staff - £1,000

Consumables – replacement light bulbs etc. - £500

We are not aware that any guarantees provided by constructors would extend to cover the areas detailed above?

As you are aware, the Phoenix Building is remaining and will be subject to a 'face lift'. This building was built in 2001, while some of the internal classrooms are being refreshed this does not include communal areas. The toilets through age require continual maintenance, as indeed do some of the floor coverings in corridors and stairwells, fire doors, blinds etc. The external rainwater systems require regular maintenance/repair. The approximate annual cost for this maintenance would be £2,000.

Current baseline funding required for servicing costs is £36,000

We would agree that funding received that exceeds the baseline funding requirement could be retained by MCC to service borrowings for years 1-5. However, the baseline funding requirement may be different for servicing requirements in the 'New' School and we would expect this figure to reflect actual costs once known.

We would then agree with the reintroduction of funding to support buildings maintenance from years 6-10 at 50% with a condition weighting of 1 – this funding would be in addition to the baseline funding as detailed above.

I appreciate the need to cut costs but as a former governor of a new build school there are some maintenance costs that can occur after an initial warranty period that will not be covered throughout the five year period. This is something that should be considered, however as a head of a school that was mostly built in the late 60's school building maintenance costs will increase as the general stock gets older and I certainly feel this may be a way of diverting some funds, which I as one could greatly benefit from.

In principle we agree that new builds should have lower building maintenance costs and therefore would require less funding. However, if funding was reduced there would need to be clear agreements as to who is responsible for any costs arising during the 10yrs that are related to build, including any systems such as heating, IT, security etc. Whilst buildings themselves are usually covered for 10yrs other internal systems often have a shorter guarantee time.

Yes on the basis of existing guarantees being in place for many aspects of the new build and the reduced likelihood (I assume) of maintenance issues in the first 10 years. It no longer seems appropriate for monies to be allowed to accrue in reserve when the purpose for their delegation is reduced / significantly reduced compared to other, older, more needy buildings.

While we accept that there will be a short timeframe in which recipients of a new build have reduced premises costs due to the snagging period associated with new builds there is never a time when these costs are nil. During the snagging period toilets flood, walls are chipped and sockets fail in these new builds with the same regularity as in older buildings.

There are also enormous costs in terms of leadership and admin time during the 'consultation' and planning period and the lengthy disputes during the snagging period when the builder and the client argue over whether certain flaws e.g. leaky roofs, provision of adequate storage and malfunctioning fire alarms are the responsibility of the builder or the client. The responsibility for the collation of issues regarding the new build falls with the school, not the client and demands much of the leadership and admin team whose priorities should be school improvement, safeguarding and the attainment of pupils. Along with the proposal to reduce premises costs during the snagging period, we feel it is appropriate to increase funding for leadership and additional hours for admin staff in order to meet the demands of snagging alongside the delivery of our core educational purpose.

As soon as the short snagging period is over, around a year in Thornwell's case, costs begin to rise immediately. New builds contain numerous modern features that are prone to malfunction and costly to repair. Automated windows and doors are a good example. Automated doors and those with electronic door closures malfunction very regularly, they cause an immediate safeguarding risk and are expensive to fix. We had lengthy disputes with our builders even within the snagging period about who should pick up these costs and since that time, of course, we have borne all of them. With our new build we have significantly higher annual utility bills and increased annual expenditures on security associated with CCTV.

We accept that proportionately reduced income for premises during the snagging period is appropriate but feel that as soon as that period is over we should be funded appropriately given that we continue to bear the costs as outlined above. There also needs to be some financial recognition of the countless days school staff spend in planning, consultation and snagging meetings associated with new builds.

I agree with this proposal related to the reduction of maintenance funding for new schools.

I don't agree that this proposal considers the appropriate distribution of maintenance costs across the range of ages of the schools in Monmouthshire.

No, I do not agree with this proposal.

My previous school was a new build and many guarantees / warranties on some basic building maintenance fittings were only 3 year. I can recall we had some difficulty funding many building maintenance issues in the early days.

However, I do not think the building maintenance sum for new builds should be a large sum.

Other

This appears reasonable and fair given that these schools have been recently built.

Summary for Question 1:

19 Responses:

- 10 agreed
- 4 disagreed
- 2 Responses said statutory maintenance should still be funded. This would be the case; this part of the formula remains unchanged.
- 3 agreed, but said the funding should be redistributed to schools and not used to fund the borrowing.

Question 2 – if you do not agree with this proposal, do you have any other suggested methods of reducing schools budgets to make the saving outlined in appendix 1?

A high percentage of the saving would still be in place. Could the shortfall in saving be made up by extending the reduction period by adding a further tier for say 2 years of possibly 25% reduction?

Capital improvements should be funded from a capital funding stream and not by reducing revenue budgets intended for schools.

Building maintenance has health & safety elements which must be adhered to. If funding is withdrawn, or significantly reduced, it will have a negative impact on pupils as funding will have to be diverted from learning to elements of maintenance.

Governors would like a breakdown of the AWPU to discuss / further consider this – is it fair that learners in new builds receive 'less' per learner than other Monmouthshire schools. They would suggest that expensive build option to satisfy BREAMM ratings might be looked at in the future as these appear to cost more in maintenance and repair than traditional build and seem to malfunction more frequently (or in the case of the automated windows still don't function properly). They would like to see longer snagging periods built into the build scheme for future new builds. Should this proceed the Governors are concerned that there should be contingency funding for new schools 'just in case' or possibly take what is left in the building maintenance at the end of the financial year (as a new build we can provide details of any extra hours for internal maintenance). Consider a more localized building maintenance service possibly via Clusters which will save on lost 'travelling time' for current building maintenance. Consider a more planned building maintenance programme. Consider localized contractors possibly via Clusters which will save on lost 'travelling time' for current contractors and could be more competitive with quotes being sought.

I feel school budgets are already as tight as they can go. As an authority I feel the question is why can't WAG give equal budget shares for education to all LA in a similar region. Some neighbouring authorities evidently are given a greater grant share while in a similar economic region. Surely this is the main issue that the LA should be addressing first.

Could you investigate charging those families who can afford it for Breakfast Club by only running free breakfast clubs for schools who serve postcodes with flying start provision and for FSM pupils elsewhere?

There may be a range of 10 to 20 years age where the maintenance is fairly standard, however, as the school then gets older than 20 years there are additional issues related to various parts of the fabric of the buildings eg the insulation, the windows / doors, internal built in furnishings and decoration.

I am not sure how the weighting is defined for a specific school between 1.0 and 1.4 but the range of weighting available to be used in the formula does not appear to allow sufficient differentiation to reflect the over 20 year old schools.

I also believe there are additional opportunities for savings in new schools funding ;

1. Funding for Energy due to the increased efficiency of heating systems and insulation in new schools as well as alternative energy options.
2. Charges for water where grey water use is in place in new schools.

I'm not quite sure if this is the correct opportunity to share my ideas on saving money as an authority but working in a school in Caerphilly has taught me that having a staff suspension scheme saves a considerable amount of money.

The cost of having staff suspended or deployed at Ysgol y Ffin has had a significant impact on our deficit budget. This issue received huge challenge during our recent ESTYN inspection.

Experience in my previous school tells me that the staff suspension scheme saved a total of approximately £50,000 over a period of 3 years. By not having such a scheme at Ysgol y Ffin, effectively the school was paying for two headteachers at one point and took a hit of around £20,000. In very recent times we find ourselves in a situation where we are paying approximately £100 a day to cover a member of staff on suspension. With Safeguarding processes taking a considerable time for all professionals to meet, the daily hit on the budget is a concern. With a suspension scheme, this concern would be nullified.

I appreciate Caerphilly is a much larger local authority and that the cost was spread between many more schools the MCC.