

Report

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Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	27 June 2018
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) and Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	School Clothing Grants
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- propose an increase to the level of school clothing grant from August 2018

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that a grant of £100 per eligible child is agreed and implemented from August 2018

3. Background

- 3.1. School clothing grants are currently fully funded by local authorities with the level paid varying between £40 and £120 per eligible child. In the context of child poverty, there has been renewed focus on the variability of grant levels across Scotland.
- 3.2. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 could require an education authority to pay a minimum grant of a specified amount (s23), but this provision has never been enacted. In addition the Scottish Government has recently published *Every Child, Every Chance: the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-22* which contains a commitment to ensure a new minimum level for school clothing grants.
- 3.3. The Council meeting of 28 February 2018 agreed to increase the level of clothing grant award from £50 to £75 per child. The financial implications of this were built into the revenue budget strategy from 2018/19.

4. Scottish Government Funding Position

- 4.1. In order to provide financial assistance to local authorities, a proposal was developed by the Scottish Government to provide additional funding to support the initiative. This identified a nationwide funding requirement of £6m and the Council has received confirmation by letter of its share of the allocation.
- 4.2. The funding requirement will not be ringfenced, therefore local authorities can choose how to use these funds as long as they deliver the minimum entitlement of £100 per eligible child. Local authorities are starting from various positions but there is no expectation that councils pay more than the £100 minimum as that will be left to

local discretion. However, if a local authority is currently paying more than the £100 minimum there is an expectation that this will be maintained.

- 4.3. The new level was agreed at the COSLA Leaders meeting on 25 May 2018 and would come into effect from the start of the academic year 2018/19. Local authorities would continue to set local eligibility criteria and would be free to set a grant level higher than the minimum. In addition it was agreed that the level of funding will be monitored to ensure adequacy.
- 4.4. Nationally, an estimated 120,000 families will benefit from a new £100 national minimum school clothing grant in Scotland.

5. South Lanarkshire Position

- 5.1. It is proposed that the level of £100 per eligible child for a school clothing grant is provided, in line with the eligibility criteria and that this commitment is delivered from August 2018.
- 5.2. The Council currently issues around 9,840 clothing grants per year. From 2018/19 the Council is implementing an auto enrolment process utilising information already held on Council systems to capture families who are entitled to receive the grant but do not apply. Through this process the volume of clothing grants issued is expected to increase by 1,700 to approximately 11,540.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. None.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. An increase of £25 for each of the estimated 11,540 grants (increasing the grant from £75 to £100) results in an estimated funding requirement of £0.289m. This increase can be accommodated within the additional amount provided by the Scottish Government for this purpose.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. None.

9. Equalities Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. There is no requirement to carry out an impact assessment in terms of the proposals within this report.
- 9.2. Consultation with Education Resources has taken place in the development of the proposal and the preparation of the report.

Paul Manning

Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Tony McDaid

Executive Director (Education Resources)

8 June 2018

Link(s) to Council Values/Improvement Themes/Objectives

- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ◆ Ambitious, self aware and improving
- ◆ Focused on people and their needs

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Council meeting 28 February 2018

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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