

Report

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	25 August 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	School Clothing Grants
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise of the action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 36(c), because of the short timescales involved in making payment to eligible households prior to the new academic year, to increase the level of the school clothing grant award to £150 for secondary school pupils, in line with the new minimum level set by the Scottish Government, and to maintain the award for primary school pupils at the current level of £130

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 36(c) by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, to increase the level of school clothing grant award for secondary school pupils to £150 and maintain the primary school pupil award at £130 from August 2021 be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. School clothing grants are awarded to pupils on the basis of low household income. The Scottish Government as part of its 'First 100 days plan' has committed to increase the current minimum grant value of £100 per eligible pupil with the new minimum value set at £120 for primary and £150 for secondary school pupils.
- 3.2. Councils have the flexibility to set the award level of school clothing grant at the national minimum or at an amount that meets local needs and circumstances. South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) currently pay £130 to all eligible pupils. This value was approved by Executive Committee on 27 February 2019 to help mitigate the impact of poverty on children and young people. This currently benefits over 13,000 school children in South Lanarkshire with the total value of awards in 2020/2021 being £1.738m. The council funded £1.356m of this with the Scottish Government funding £0.382m.

4. Scottish Government Funding Position

- 4.1. The Scottish Government has agreed to the introduction of the new national minimum of £120 for primary children and £150 for secondary children.

- 4.2. The Scottish Government has committed to ensure that the national minimum school clothing grant award for primary and secondary pupils is increased annually, in line with inflation, and to provide the necessary funding to achieve this.
- 4.3. The Scottish Government has confirmed an allocation of £0.678m to support the costs of providing clothing grants including an additional £0.296m to fund payments at the new minimum levels.
- 5. South Lanarkshire Council Position**
- 5.1. Based on the revised Scottish Government position outlined in Section 4, it is recommended the council maintains the grant award value to primary pupils at the current amount of £130, which remains £10 above the new minimum award level and increases the secondary pupil award value to the new minimum level of £150. The increase in the secondary school pupil award would benefit around 5,500 pupils.
- 5.2. Payment of the award was made on 9 July 2021 directly into the recipient's bank account, where we hold their bank details or, alternatively, by cheque. We currently pay around 90% of payments by bank transfer. After the start of the new academic year, newly eligible cases will be paid on a weekly basis thereafter.
- 6. Employee Implications**
- 6.1. None.
- 7. Financial Implications**
- 7.1. The increased allocation from the Scottish Government is sufficient, combined with the Council's existing budget for this purpose, to fund an increase in the level of payment to recipients to that proposed by the council in this report.
- 8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**
- 8.1. There are no implications for climate change, sustainability or the environment in terms of the information contained in this report.
- 9. Other Implications**
- 9.1. There is a risk that the award of clothing grants and subsequent uptake are in excess of the available funding. This risk will be managed through the effective monitoring of the budget position.
- 10. Equalities Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**
- 10.1. There is no requirement to carry out an impact assessment or consultation in terms of the proposals within this report.

Paul Manning
Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

22 July 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions /Objectives

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

Previous References

- ◆ Executive Committee Report 27 February 2019 – Overall Position of Budget 2019/2020, Savings Proposals and Council Tax

List of Background Papers

- ◆ COSLA Leaders Paper – June 2021 – Reference LD/21/130

Contact for Further Information

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

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