

To: Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board

On: 6 June 2018

Report by: Director of Finance & Resources

Heading: Increase in the level of School clothing grants

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 COSLA Leaders agreed at their meeting on 25 May 2018 the proposal that a minimum level of £100 for school clothing grants is in place for the beginning of the 2018/19 academic year. The Scottish Government has provided a total of £6m of additional funding in 2018/19 in order to allow councils to make school clothing grants at a minimum level of £100 per eligible pupil.
- 1.2 Council agreed in March 2018 to set the level of grant for the 18/19 academic year at £70. The additional funding provided by the Scottish Government of £219,000 will be sufficient to allow the level of grant to be raised to £100 in Renfrewshire.
-

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 Note the additional funding provided by the Scottish Government to enable the Council to increase its financial provision for School clothing grants.
- 2.2 Agree to increase the level of school clothing grant to £100 per eligible pupil from the 2018/19 academic year; and

- 2.3 Note that there is no change to the eligibility criteria applied in Renfrewshire.

3. **Background**

- 3.1 School clothing grants are provided to qualifying parents or guardians to assist with the purchase of school uniforms. The amount awarded per eligible pupil was raised from £55 to £70 by the Council at its budget meeting on 2 March 2018.
- 3.2 The Scottish Government has proposed that a minimum level of grant of £100 is made to eligible pupils, and has indicated that additional funding amounting to £6.0 million nationally will be available to deliver this policy; of which Renfrewshire will be allocated £0.219 million. Funding is not ringfenced and will be included within general revenue grant.
- 3.3 This additional funding is sufficient to meet the additional cost of £30 per eligible pupil based on an estimated 6,000 – 7,000 eligible pupils. There is no change to the eligibility criteria proposed, which will remain based on the current financial conditions.
- 3.3 COSLA Leaders agreed at their meeting on 25 May 2018 to the Scottish Government proposal with regards a minimum level of grant, and also with regards to the distribution methodology. The minimum level of grant will be reviewed every 2 years.
- 3.4 The Scottish Government's announcement of additional funding for clothing grants represents a material change of circumstances that was not apparent at the time of the Council budget meeting when the grant of £70 per eligible pupil was approved.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – the additional cost of the increased level of grant will be met from the additional income provided by the Scottish Government.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - *none*
3. **Community/Council Planning** –

- *Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all* – school clothing grants provide support to families to address the costs of school attendance.

4. **Legal** - *none*

5. **Property/Assets** - *none*

6. **Information Technology** - *none*

7. **Equality & Human Rights** -

- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** - *none*.

9. **Procurement** – *none*

10. **Risk** - *none*

11. **Privacy Impact** - *none*

12. **Cosla Policy Position** – COSLA Leaders agreed the proposal that a minimum level of £100 per eligible pupil for school clothing grants is in place from the start of the 2018/19 academic year.

List of Background Papers

- (a) Background Paper 1 – minute of COSLA Leaders meeting 25/5/18

Author: *Alastair MacArthur, Ext 7363*