

RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

Key Decision ✓

SUBJECT: Support for the School Uniform Scheme following the removal of the Welsh Government Grant

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning to continue support for the School Uniform Scheme until further clarification is received from the Welsh Government on the terms and conditions of the Pupil Development – Access Grant. The scheme will continue using revenue resources within the Education Group's budget approved by Council 28th February 2018.

DELEGATED DECISION:

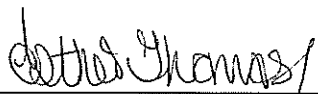
To approve the continuation of support for the School Uniform Scheme offered by the Council which has been previously funded by a hypothecated Welsh Government Grant.

Background Information:

The School Uniform Grant scheme up until March 2018 was intended for pupils entering year 7 of secondary school and Pupil Referral Units who are claiming free school meals (FSM). The award was a one off payment of £105 per eligible pupil.

The Council's Finance department informed schools of the details of pupils in receipt of free school meals and entering year 7 of secondary school. Only upon this confirmation could secondary schools award the £105 grant in the form of a cheque, uniform pack or voucher to a nominated uniform supplier. Schools could "top up" the award with additional resources from the school budget to ensure the child has appropriate clothing. It is proposed to continue with this process until further information is received from Welsh Government.

Failure to inform schools that the funding is to continue will result in confusion and potential hardship for some families.



Print Name ESTUER THOMAS

Date 28.06.2018

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

CONSULTATION

Jay Bosse

27/6/18

CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

DATE

CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE

DATE

CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

NO

Reason for urgency:.....

If deemed urgent - signature of Mayor or Deputy Mayor or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:

.....
(Mayor)

.....
(Dated)

NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.

FOR CABINET OFFICE USE ONLY

PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

PUBLICATION

Publication on the Councils Website:- 28th June 2018

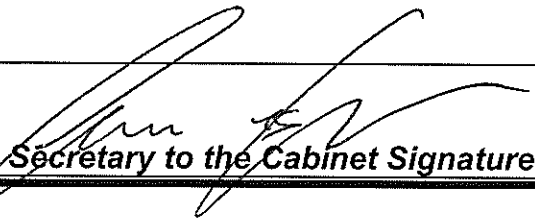
DATE

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Subject to Call In the implementation date will be 4th July 2018

DATE



Secretary to the Cabinet Signature

CHRISTIAN S S HANAGAN
Print Name

28/6/18
Date

Further Information

Directorate:	Education & Lifelong Learning
Contact Name:	Esther Thomas
Designation:	Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Tel.No.	01443 744001



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCHOOL UNIFORM SCHEME

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER OF EDUCATION, COUNCILLOR J ROSSER

**AUTHOR: Stephanie Davies, Head of Finance, Education &
Financial Reporting (01443) 680560**

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval to continue financial support for the school uniform scheme until the Council receives clarification regarding the terms and conditions of the Pupil Development Access Grant from Welsh Government. The school uniform scheme offered by the Council was previously funded by a hypothecated Welsh Government Grant but this arrangement ceased this year March 2018.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members approve the adoption of the School Uniform Scheme funded from budget within Education until clarification is received from Welsh Government.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that pupils entering secondary schools from families entitled to free school meals are not disadvantaged and continue to benefit from the scheme withdrawn by Welsh Government.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The School Uniform Grant scheme up until March 2018 was for pupils entering year 7 of secondary school and Pupil Referral Units claiming free school meals (FSM). The award was a one off payment of £105 per eligible pupil.

4.2 The Council's Finance department informed schools of the details of pupils in receipt of free school meals and entering year 7 of secondary school. Only upon this confirmation were secondary schools award the £105 grant in the form of a cheque, uniform pack or voucher to a nominated uniform supplier. Schools could "top up" the award with additional resources from the school budget to ensure the child has appropriate clothing.

4.3 Free school meals are available to children whose parents or guardians are currently receiving one of the following benefits:

- Child Tax Credit – where total annual income is also less than £16,190
- Income Support (with responsibility for children)
- Income Based Job Seekers' Allowance (with responsibility for children)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee element of state Pension Credit
- Employment Support Allowance (Income Related) ESA(IR))
- Universal Credit
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' - the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

4.4 The expenditure over the last 5 years has been as follows:

2017/18	65,830
2016/17	69,715
2015/16	67,745
2014/15	74,375
2013/14	71,600

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 After 11 years of the funding, 2018/19 saw the removal of the School Uniform Grant from Welsh Government hypothecated grants.

5.2 WLGA sought clarity on the funding position from Welsh Government who responded:

- *Our intention is that after 11 years, the School Uniform Grant will no longer be available as a hypothecated grant from April 2018.*
- *As shown in the specific grant tables of the Settlement, the grant is proposed to be closed.*
- *In closing the grant we are making the full budget available to Local Authorities within the Settlement.*
- *As the money in the Settlement is unhypothecated, it will be up to Local Authorities to decide if they wish to continue to provide a school uniform grant or not - and if they do what form it takes, in taking*

account of their statutory responsibilities and such things as the non-statutory guidance for governing bodies on school uniform and appearance policies.

- 5.3 The grant was not specified as a “transfer in” to the Revenue Support Grant in the final Local Government Settlement information provided by Welsh Government.
- 5.4 ADEW (Association of Directors of Education in Wales) has been canvassing local authorities to find out whether they are to continue with the scheme despite the withdrawal of the grant. To date, there has been a variety of responses with some local authorities removing the scheme and some continuing for 2018/19.
- 5.5 Previous data would suggest that the scheme will cost approximately £70k. The value varies with eligible pupil numbers and Members are requested to approve the allocation of this value for the purposes of the scheme to be implemented prior to the 2018 school summer holidays. There is no intention to change the value, eligibility criteria or process of administering the scheme.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared in relation to the proposal to continue the School Uniform Scheme. This exercise has concluded that the proposal will enable the previous arrangements in place up to March 2018 to be maintained until further clarification from WG and will continue to have a positive impact; therefore a full equality impact assessment will not be necessary. The screening form can be accessed by contacting the author of the report or the Cabinet Business officer.

7.0 CONSULTATION

No consultation required

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The estimated cost of continuing the School Uniform Scheme under the current terms of the grant is £70k and would be funded from existing Education budget.
- 8.2 On the 7th June 2018 Kirsty Williams the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced that the Welsh Government were making an additional financial award in the form of a Pupil Development – Access Grant.

- 8.3 On June 20th the Council received notification that a sum of money totalling £173,452 is available for 2018-2019 to support disadvantaged pupils but we have not received further details regarding the terms and conditions of the grant. It is anticipated that this grant could be used wider than for the purpose of purchasing a school uniform.

9.0. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no legal implications of the proposals within the report.

10.0 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 The continuation of the School Uniform Scheme will contribute to the Council's Corporate Priorities:
- "Economy" : Ensuring barriers are removed to prevent children from attending school due to lack of access to uniform.
 - "People" : Supporting families to access Education.
 - "Place" : Supporting the identity of schools within our communities.
- 10.2 The continuation of the scheme also supports the wellbeing goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 of :
- A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities

11.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 This report recommends that the Cabinet approve that the Council continues to support the School Uniform Scheme until further clarification is received from Welsh Government on the terms and conditions attached to the PDG – Access Grant following the removal of the Welsh Government Grant.
