

# **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **Report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services**

**Council: 17 January 2007**

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### **Subject: The Schools Fund 2006-07 – Additional Allocation of £407,000**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** To inform Council of the second additional allocation of funds made available by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) for school building improvements in 2006-07.
- 1.2** To seek the approval of Council to proposals for the disbursement of these additional funds.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** Reference is made to the previous paper to Council of 25 October entitled “The Schools Fund 2006-2007 – Additional Allocation”.
- 2.2** In November 2006, SEED announced a second additional allocation of funds to all Local Authorities for the current financial year. In the case of West Dunbartonshire Council, this additional allocation amounts to £407,000.
- 2.3** The conditions which apply to this new allocation are that it requires to be spent by 31 March 2007. Whilst the allocation of project types was not specific, reference was made in the offer letter to consider improvements to areas such as:
  - staffrooms and bases;
  - pupil toilets and changing rooms
  - play areas and playgrounds.

#### **3. Main Issues**

- 3.1** The unexpected announcement of the additional funding is obviously welcome. However, the extremely tight timescale presents the Council with challenges.
- 3.2** It is essential that funds should be allocated to:

- address areas of greatest need;
  - maximise impact;
  - ensure best value.
- 3.3** In addition to this new allocation, an underspend of £200,000 will occur from the initial allocation. Following recent surveys where the presence of asbestos was discovered adjacent to window openings, part of the window renewals project at St. Joseph's Primary, namely the installation of the windows, was suspended until the summer holiday period. The actual windows should be purchased as agreed previously. The Chief Executive has written to the Scottish Office requesting that approval be given to carry this money over into 2007/2008. A response is still awaited. In the event that permission is not granted to carry the monies forward, additional provisional projects have been added to the proposals.
- 3.4** With regard to staffrooms, staff toilets and bases, Knoxland Primary and Our Holy Redeemer Primary were seen to be priorities in terms of Health & Safety and have therefore been included in the proposals.
- 3.5** With regard to the pupil toilets, extensive toilet upgrades have been carried out in recent years to many schools, and of those areas still to be improved Christie Park and Knoxland Primaries were considered to need upgrading most of all. These have been included in the proposals. Our Lady of Loretto Primary has been listed as provisional.
- 3.6** With regard to improved play areas and playgrounds, Goldenhill Primary was recognised as being in a state of disrepair. However it has been deselected meantime due to Council's decision in December to approve a new build. St. Mary's (Duntocher) and St. Ronan's playgrounds were disregarded because of the need for design input and, in the case of St Mary's, the works would be best suited to be carried out during a holiday period and could not therefore be included in a spend in the current financial year. Improvements to the drainage in the area surrounding the blaes football pitch at Our Lady and St Patrick's High School are urgently required. Christie Park and Haldane Primaries' playgrounds are in need of resurfacing, whilst Carleith and Whitecrook Primaries' car parks need to be improved/extended. Our Holy Redeemer Primary car park extension is listed as provisional.
- 3.7** In terms of health and safety projects, the most urgent need is for the replacement of some windows and the entrance screen at Our Lady of Loretto Primary. The timber frames are seriously rotted and the result is that glazing is in danger of falling out. The existing timber framed windows are also extremely inefficient in terms of heat retention. External weatherboarding has also rotted and needs replacement. The cost of replacing the weatherboarding, screen and windows that are in the worst

state would be £60,000 and the work could be completed by 31 March 2007. Other projects are as follows:

- Safety glazing throughout all schools (£125,000);
- Our Lady of Loretto Primary security fencing at burn (£20,000);
- Safety coverings to metal ramps – various schools (£20,000);
- Renew damaged floor coverings at Our Lady of Loretto and other schools (£34,000); a further sum of £73,000 has been provisionally listed;
- Improved ventilation to the computer room in St Patrick's Primary (£15,000) has been provisionally listed;

**3.8** If the proposal to replace the windows in St Joseph's Primary School is approved, this would leave £325,000 to spend on energy efficiency projects across the schools estate.

**3.9** The Department of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services has identified the following as priority projects for energy efficiency in schools, all of which could be completed by the end of March 2007:

- installation of thermostatic radiator valves to 3 schools: £27,000 (this is in addition to 15 schools previously approved) ; a further 2 schools have been provisionally listed (£17,000);
- Upgrade of room sensors in 6 schools to improve control of school heating systems: £10,000;
- Fit automatic low energy lighting in gymnasias to 2 schools: £40,000; an additional school has been provisionally listed (£20,000);
- The energy efficient lighting at Our Lady and St. Patrick's HS will cost an additional £20,000 over and above the sum of £60,000 previously approved

**3.10** Decoration projects have been identified where major building works have recently been, or are due to be, completed, namely Carleith Primary (roofworks), Knoxland Primary (heating, electrical, fabric refurbishments and upgrades) and Our Holy Redeemer Primary (disabled toilet adaptations).

**3.11** The success of the STAND Dance Studio is such that higher specification finishes are required, at a cost of at £80,000.

**3.12** St. Ronan's Primary shelter is included as there is no area for sheltering from the weather for children.

**3.13** For information, a list of potential projects, with costings, is provided as Appendix 1 (6pages). These are projects which the Department of Education and Cultural Services hopes to tackle as funds become available. Of these, some could not be carried out during term time and

many could not be completed within the time available and are therefore discounted as a result.

#### **4. Personnel Issues**

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** The main financial implications are outlined in 2.2 and 3.3 – 3.12 above.
- 5.2** In the longer term, the proposals will result in financial savings for the Council through increased energy efficiency. The precise scale of these savings cannot be quantified at this stage.

#### **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1** This additional specific grant from the Scottish Executive is welcomed, although the tight timescale involved creates challenges for the Council.
- 6.2** Having considered various options, the projects listed in 3.4 to 3.12 above would not only fulfil the criteria laid down by the Scottish Executive, they would also represent significant improvements to the schools estate. Moreover, if implemented, they should result in significant long term financial savings for the Council.

#### **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1** Council is asked to approve the allocation of the additional School Fund grant for 2006–07 of £407,000 to the projects outlined in 3.4 – 3.12 above and to instruct officers to commence the planning, tendering and implementation of these projects as a matter of urgency to ensure that the full grant is spent by 31 March 2007.
- 7.2** Council is also asked to delegate authority to the Director of Education and Cultural Services, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Head of Finance and the Convener of Education and Cultural Services, to approve the expenditure of the provisional projects listed above in the event that the Scottish Executive does not approve the carry forward of £200,000 for the underspend on the St Joseph's Primary windows replacement contract.



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**Background Papers:** Report to Council 25 October 2006 "The Schools  
Fund 2006-07 - Additional Allocation"

**Wards Affected:** All