

# **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

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

**Council: 25 October 2006**

---

### **Subject: The Schools Fund 2006-07 – Additional Allocation**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report informs Council of the allocation of additional funds made available by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) for school building improvements in 2006-07 and seeks the approval of Council to proposals for the disbursement of these additional funds.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** West Dunbartonshire Council, in common with all other Scottish Local Authorities, has, for the last three years, been in receipt of monies from the Scottish Executive in the form of annual School Fund allocations which require to be spent on school building improvements within the financial year during which the monies were allocated. In the current session, the Schools Fund allocation for West Dunbartonshire Council was £2.061 million. The predicted spend of these monies is detailed in the table provided as Appendix 1.
- 2.2** In September 2006, SEED announced an 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 £610,000.
- 2.3** The conditions which apply to this new allocation are that it requires to be spent by 31 March 2007 and that it must be used to fund one or more of the following initiatives within schools:
- energy efficiency measures;
  - improved canteen facilities to encourage healthy eating;
  - the installation of cashless payment systems in school canteens;
  - enhanced sports facilities and playgrounds.

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

- 3.1** The unexpected announcement of the additional funding is obviously welcome. However, the extremely tight timescale and the other conditions placed on the allocation present the Council with challenges.

- 3.2** It is essential that funds should not only comply with the criteria outlined in 2.3 above, but should be allocated to:
- address areas of greatest need;
  - maximise impact;
  - ensure best value.
- 3.3** With regard to improved canteen facilities, the Council has already taken steps to promote healthy eating through the Hungry for Success initiative. In addition, the new schools planned through both PPP and conventional funding will include state-of-the-art canteen facilities. Given these factors, and the fact that it would be impossible to design, tender and complete major kitchen adaptations in the time available, this is not seen as a priority area for major investment at present.
- 3.4** The possibility of rolling out the cashless payment system to canteens in Primary schools across the Council was considered. However, given the fact that several other Councils are already attempting to introduce these systems into their schools during the current financial year, it is unlikely that suppliers would be able to supply and install the equipment required before the end of March 2007.
- 3.5** With regard to improved sporting facilities, consideration was given to the possibility of further all weather pitches. In addition the Department of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services has reported that it would not be possible to tender for and install a synthetic pitch in the time available. It should also be noted that the Council will be investing significant sums in enhanced sporting facilities through the schools' PPP project and through the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. It is considered important to await the development of this council wide strategy to ensure best use of funds.
- 3.6** In terms of major energy efficiency projects, the most urgent need is for the replacement of the windows in St Joseph's Primary School. The present windows are in a very dilapidated state and many of the glass windows were in such a dangerous condition that they have been replaced with plastic panes. The present windows are also extremely inefficient in terms of heat retention. This work was previously identified in the CiPFA Property Condition Studies. The cost of replacing the present windows with double glazed units would be £285,000 and the work could be completed by 31 March 2006.
- 3.7** 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.

- 3.8** With reference to the CiPFA Property Condition Studies together with more recent issues that have arisen and have been highlighted by the Schools Estate Team, the Department of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services has identified the following as priority projects for energy efficiency in schools (list of schools to be confirmed at a later date), all of which could be completed by the end of March 2006:
- installation of thermostatic radiator valves to 15 schools: £100,000;
  - extension of Building Energy Maintenance Systems (BEMS) controls to school heating systems in 15 schools: £115,000;
  - improvement to boilerhouse pipe insulation in 15 schools: £14,000;
  - improvement to cavity wall and/or loft insulation in 11 schools: £33,000;
  - completion of project to install energy efficient lighting to Our Lady and St Patrick's High School: £60,000.
- Total: £322,000.

- 3.9** For information, a list of potential projects, which were identified from the CiPFA Property Condition Studies together with more recent issues that have arisen and have been highlighted by the Schools Estate Team, is provided as Appendix 2. These are projects which the Department of Education and Cultural Services hopes to tackle as funds become available. Of these, most do not fit the criteria outlined in 2.3 above or would be impossible to complete in the time available. Of the remaining items on the list, the projects outlined in 3.6 and 3.8 have been identified as having the highest priority and as being achievable within the current financial year.

#### **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 3.6 – 3.8 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 and the conditions placed on the grant create challenges for the Council.

- 6.2** Having considered various options, the provision of new windows for St Joseph's Primary School and the various energy efficiency projects described in 3.8 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 £610,000 to the projects outlined in 3.6 – 3.8 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.

---

Liz McGinlay  
Director of Education and Cultural Services

---

**Person to Contact:** Terry Lanagan, Head of Service, Schools Estate Unit,  
Braidfield High School, Queen Mary Avenue,  
Clydebank G81 2LR. Tel: 0141 952 5140.  
E-mail [terry.lanagan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:terry.lanagan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:** CiPFA Property Condition Studies

**Wards Affected:** All