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**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**Executive Board**

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

**Subject: School Clothing Allowances**

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**Specific Implications For:**

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

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**1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 To update Executive Board on action taken following a Council decision to increase the School Clothing Allowance budget.

**2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 At the Council Meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2006 it was resolved unanimously that:-
- a) the budget for the school clothing award scheme 2006-07 be increased by £400,000
  - b) this increase be met by a virement from the Council's contingency budget; and
  - c) in the light of these determinations, the Executive Board is requested to revoke the decision of the Director of Corporate Services made on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2006 with respect to that scheme.

**3.0 Update on action following the Council decision**

- 3.1 It was felt important and necessary to make any changes to the scheme as soon as possible so that eligible parents who could benefit from an increase in the budget for the school clothing allowance scheme could be contacted quickly.

3.2 The Director of Children's Services, therefore, following the necessary consultation, used her delegated powers to approve changes to the school clothing allowance scheme. The delegated decision in this regard was made on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006. The decision was made exempt from call-in due to the urgent need to amend the scheme and contact eligible parents with a view to making payments in time for parents and carers to purchase school clothing ahead of start of the school year.

3.3 As a result of that delegated decision, school clothing allowances will be paid as follows:-

- £27.50 for Reception Class
- £20.00 for years 1-6
- £37.50 for year 7
- £30.00 for years 8-11

The decision retains the commitment to increase payments for reception class and year 7 pupils, re-instates the 2005-06 scheme for the other years whilst harmonizing the year 6 payment with the values for years 1-5.

3.4 It is estimated that 17,700 pupils will now qualify for payments under the Leeds School Clothing Allowance scheme.

3.5 Immediately following this Delegated Decision, Leeds City Council wrote to claimants updating them on the changes and outlining what money and support will be available this year and the intended timetable for making these payments.

3.6 Whilst this additional expenditure will be initially funded from the Council's contingency budget, it will be necessary to identify a more specific funding source and the Director of Corporate Services will report back to the September Executive Board meeting with proposals.

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

4.1 Executive Board is asked to note the action that has been taken as a result of the Council decision to increase the School Clothing Allowance budget by £400,000.