

Decision Maker: EDUCATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

**For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Education Policy
Development and Scrutiny Committee on 30th January 2014**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL FOR FREE SCHOOL LUNCHES
FOR KEY STAGE 1- IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LOCAL
AUTHORITY AND SCHOOLS

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Chief Officer: Executive Director of Education, Care & Health Services

Ward: All

1. Reason for report

To update Members on the recent announcements regarding the extension of free school meals to all reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (infant) pupils and the implication for the Council.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 That Members note the Government's decision to introduce universal free school meals for infant age pupils from September 2014.
- 2.2 That Members note the implications including the need to review and enhance catering facilities to cope with additional demand for school meals at Bromley schools and the potential impact on pupil premium.
- 2.2 That the Portfolio Holder for Education notes Bromley's Universal Free School Capital Allocation of £386,780 for local authority maintained schools and agrees the development and delivery of a targeted programme of capital investment that targets insufficiencies in infrastructure and the capacity of school kitchens and serveries.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: New Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost
 2. Ongoing costs: Non-Recurring Cost
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Universal Infant Free School Meals Capital
 4. Total current budget for this head: £386,780
 5. Source of funding: DfE Universal Infant Free School Meals Capital Grant
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 2
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 30
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement no published guidance
 2. Call-in: Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 11,481 pupils in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in Bromley State Schools.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 On 17 September 2013 the Government announced that every child in reception, year 1 and year 2 in state funded schools would receive free school lunch from September 2014. The Government estimates that 1,550,000 more infant pupils nationally will benefit.
- 3.2 On 5 December 2013, as part of Autumn Statement, the government announced that it will be making available revenue funding of £450 million in 2014/2015 and £635 million in 2015/2016 to support the extension of Free School Meals. On 18 December 2013 the Government announced £150 million capital fund for 2014-15 to ensure that schools can build new kitchens or increase dining capacity where necessary.
- 3.3 School catering in Bromley is devolved to schools. Most infant, junior and primary schools are part of the Bromley Primary School Catering Consortium, although some schools have individual contracts. The consortium has been established for over a decade and includes over 50 infant, junior and primary schools and for the purpose of these contracts. Responsibility for kitchen facilities, equipment and buildings will reside with the individual schools and/or the Council.
- 3.4 Funding has been allocated using pupil numbers from the January 2013 school census. Pupils counted for this funding are those in year groups Reception, 1 and 2, or aged 4-6 as at 31 August 2012 in all maintained primary and secondary schools, special schools, pupil referral units, academies and free schools. Pupils at maintained nursery schools, direct grant nursery schools, independent schools and general hospital schools are not included. Pupils are counted on a full-time equivalent basis, with part-time pupils counted as 0.5 FTE.
- 3.5 The £150 million Universal Infant Free School Meals Capital has been split across the local authority, voluntary aided and academy sectors and split nationally as below.

LA Maintained School	£102,742,203
VA Schools	£26,401,641
Academies	£20,856,157
Total UIFSM	£150,000,000

- 3.6 Within Bromley £417,603 has been allocated to LA maintained and VA Schools with the Council being awarded £386,780 for LA maintained schools and VA schools £30,824.
- 3.7 A weighting is applied to the counts of pupils at voluntary aided schools to reflect the fact that the governors of voluntary-aided (VA) schools raise 10% of capital costs and, therefore, only 90% of the allocation is provided for these schools by DfE. However, as VA schools do not have access to any VAT refund scheme for their capital costs, the calculation includes an element of funding for VAT.
- 3.8 The Academies Capital Maintenance Fund element of the universal free school meals capital funding has been calculated to include many of the new academies that, as of December 2013, the Government expect to be established in the coming months. The Government expectation is that the LA capital allocation should support schools not on that list but will convert to academy status by September 2014.
- 3.8 The Government have left the decision on how best to allocate the Universal Infant Free School Meals Capital to local authorities.

- 3.9 Officers are developing an allocation programme for the Universal Infant Free School Meals Capital that will involve a review of existing premises and distribution of funds based on the suitability of premises. Monies will be targeted at dealing with infrastructure and capacity issues, such as ensuring improvements to M&E services and ensuring there is sufficient space to prepare and serve meals.
- 3.8 There is risk that with the introduction of Free School Meals from September 2014 that some parents may not register their child for Free School Meals. This will impact on the Pupil Premium received by Bromley schools. The amount of Pupil Premium schools receive in the financial year 2014 to 2015 will depend on how many eligible pupils are registered for Free School Meals on the day of the school census in January, although pupils are included if they have ever been eligible within the past 6 years, regardless of whether or not they are currently eligible.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Government announcement means that from September 2014 a free school meal must be offered to all Bromley pupils of infant age. The local authority is responsible, in partnership with local authority maintained schools, to ensure schools are able to deliver this new requirement.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Bromley has received an allocation of £387k to fund this project. Expenditure will have to be contained within this resource. Although nationally there has been a commitment from central government to fund the revenue aspects of this, there has as yet been no formal announcement of specific allocations of revenue funding for Bromley

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of free school meals is a government initiative as yet no formal regulations or statutory enabling instruments have been published.

The funding for this initiative would seem to be in place for three years via direct grant and subsequently amended DSG, it is not known if further funding will be made available to continue the scheme once this period has expired.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	