

Report No.
ED15112

London Borough of Bromley

PART ONE - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: EDUCATION BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 16 October 2014

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: FREE SCHOOL MEALS UPDATE

Contact Officer: Robert Bollen, Head of Strategic Pupil Place Planning
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Chief Officer: Executive Director of Education, Care & Health Services

Ward: (All Wards);

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 To update Members on progress made within Bromley schools with regards the implementation of the Free School Meals for Infants programme.
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2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That Members note the progress of Bromley Schools in introducing Universal Free School Meals for infant age pupils from September 2014.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing 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: Education Capital Programme
 4. Total current budget for this head: £387,000
 5. Source of funding: Universal Infant Free School Meals Capital
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Staff

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

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Approximately 12,000
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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

Background

- 3.1 In September 2013 the Government announced its intention that all KS1 pupils in state funded schools should receive a free school lunch from September 2014. This duty has since been enshrined in legislation and capital and revenue funding provided by the Department for Education (DfE), including specific transitional funding for smaller schools, to enable implementation.
- 3.2 In Bromley responsibilities for the school meals have been devolved to schools for a number of years. Until 2013 the local authority had an in-house support service that oversaw the contracts for school catering and cleaning. Catering contracts are now managed either via a Bromley Schools Catering Consortium made up of primary and special school headteachers or through single school contracts.
- 3.3 Prior to the implementation of the new universal free school meals contract all Bromley schools have been able to provide a hot meals services. However, meals for Grovelands PRU have been provided via Midfield Primary School.
- 3.4 The contracts negotiated or entered into by the catering consortium or individual schools were not negotiated on the basis of the high levels of take up (85%+ in KS1) resulting from the introduction of universal infant free school meals. Similarly kitchens have not been designed, built and/or equipped to deal with such high levels of demand for hot school meals.

Implementation

- 3.5 The local authority has no direct control over the delivery of school meals at Bromley schools. However, from discussions with schools and the catering consortium it is understood that all eligible Bromley schools were able to deliver universal infant free school meals from the beginning of September 2014.
- 3.6 The local authority has undertaken suitability surveys at 40 schools where it, the CE diocese or the RC archdiocese had responsibility for supporting the implementation of infant free school meals. A consultant was commissioned to review the suitability of school kitchens to both deliver universal infant free schools places and comply with BB103, the latest guidance on school premises. These surveys were carried out during summer term 2014 and analysis and prioritisation is currently ongoing
- 3.7 The only exception to the above is schools within the delivery phase of the Council's Basic Need Programme and where it has been agreed that permanent expansion will take place. In these instances compliance with universal infant free school meals has been added to the requirements of school design and an additional budgetary allowance has been allocated from Basic Need Capital Grant.
- 3.8 Through negotiation with the catering consortium and school heads, the approach agreed in order to ensure implementation by September 2014, was that schools in dialogue with their catering contractor should purchase the equipment required to ensure delivery. Schools are able to fund this equipment through both equipment refresh clauses within their contracts (based on takeup) and the surplus funding available from the revenue allocation made to each school by central government. The local authority has set aside its funding to address infrastructure issue with school kitchens i.e. utility upgrades, ventilation and health and safety requirements.
- 3.9 Schools also led on negotiations with their catering contractors. This dialogue included catering contractors advising schools on additional equipment required in order to deliver universal infant

free school meals and ensuring that they had sufficient staffing levels to deliver the increased provision.

3.10 The Council has procured and appointed a mechanical and electrical consultant who will work with schools to deliver a programme of infrastructure works. However, it is unlikely that all works will be delivered via the £386,780 capital grant received from the DfE and major works may need to be programmed via other capital programmes such as the education planned maintenance programme.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 From September 2014 all schools with an infant/KS1 intake must be able offer pupils of infant age a free school meal. The local authority has been provided capital grant by the DfE for supporting schools in ensuring that kitchens are capable of delivering a school meal for all infant pupils.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Bromley has received a capital allocation of £387k to support maintained school in delivering this new initiative through kitchen improvements. Additional revenue funding has been announced for 2014/15 of £2.30 per pupil per meal who have become newly eligible for free school meals under the new legislation.

5.2 Provisional full year funding to schools was announced in June 2014 which provided funding for meals for the remainder of the 2014/15 financial year. The final allocation in the summer of 2015 will be subject to take up over the year. Funding beyond 2015/16 will be considered by Government as part of the next spending review.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 provides a legal duty by inserting new provisions in the Education Act 1996 on state-funded schools in England, including academies and free schools, to offer a free school lunch to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 from September 2014.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]