

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

12

Report of Director for People to People Scrutiny Committee

on
8th April 2014

Report prepared by:
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Capital

Universal Infant Free School Meals Executive Councillor: Councillor James Courtenay *A Part 1 (Public) Agenda Item*

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update members on the progress of schools in meeting the requirement for providing Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) from September 2014.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Deputy Prime Minister's announced in September 2013 that all reception, year 1 and year 2 pupils in state funded schools should receive a free nutritional lunch from September 2014. This in line with the School Food Plan and is aimed at improving: health, attainment and social cohesion.
- 3.2 The Government announced £150 million for capital works to assist with the free provision. Southend's share of the allocation is £389K for maintained and £55K for VA schools. Academy schools will receive funding direct from EFA.
- 3.3 The Chancellor has announced £450 million revenue for 14/15 (free meals from September) and £635 million for a full year. The allocation equates to £2.30 per meal taken, based on actual take-up by newly eligible infant pupils, which will be measured in the schools census from next year. This funding will be available from Government in Summer 2014 based on an 87% take up.
- 3.4 As the funding would be insufficient to provide a great deal of investment for building or extending new kitchens or dining spaces. A meeting of headteachers and other school representatives took place on 12th February 2014 to consider how the allocation of this capital could be made. The group agreed that an 80% take up of UIFSM should be used as a measure in determining the greatest need for capital investment. The second measure would be those requiring extensions to kitchens.

4. Progress to Date

- 4.1 Capital bid forms were issued to eligible schools with a return date of 31st March 2014 for Community and Foundation schools and a return date of 1st May 2014 for Aided schools. At time the writing, 10 schools have submitted bids that can be met from the grant funding.
- 4.2 Hamstel Infants, The Federated Thorpe Greenway schools have potentially the greatest increase in hot meal numbers. As both schools are proposed for expansion, both need to have increased facilities to meet the greater number of pupils and these will be met through the expansion projects. This would also be sufficient to meet the increased meals arising from UIFSM. Sacred Heart and St. Helen's schools would also be met through the expansion proposals.
- 4.3 A catering framework is being explored through Procurement so that a number of schools could access high quality, healthy meals and achieving best value for money.
- 4.4 An analysis of facilities and needs indicates that those with greatest need will be supported through capital improvements, whereas those with less need, without alteration, would meet the requirement from September 2014. An oral update will be given at the meeting.

5. Corporate Implications

- 5.1 **Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities**
Research has shown that a nutritious meal at lunchtime helps to improve concentration and performance in the classroom. The provision of free school meals to infant pupils allows pupils within the Borough to access to quality learning opportunities to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children.
- 5.2 **Financial Implications**
There are revenue and capital implications that are being met through additional funding as outlined in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3.
- 5.3 **Legal Implications.**
The Children and Families Bill places a legal duty on state-funded schools in England to offer a free school lunch to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2.
- 5.4 **People Implications**
None
- 5.5 **Property Implications**
None.
- 5.6 **Consultation**
None
- 5.7 **Equalities and Diversity Implications**
None

5.8 Risk Assessment
None

5.9 Value for Money
None

5.10 Community Safety Implications
None envisaged.

5.11 Environmental Impact
None envisaged.

6. Background Papers

6.1 None

7. Appendices

7.1 There are no appendices to this report