

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	19th March, 2014
3.	Title:	Universal Infant Free School Meals All Wards
4.	Directorate:	CYPS

5. Summary

The Universal Infant Free School Meal scheme will provide free meals to all pupils in Year 2 and below. This report shows the Capital funding and the per meal funding announced by the Department of Education to support the provision of additional equipment and the meals.

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet note the announcements and the action being taken to provide meals for our eligible pupils.

7. Proposals and Details

From September 2014 all pupils in receipt of full time education up to Year 2 will be eligible to receive a free school meal under the the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme. It is anticipated that an additional 2,900 meals will be supplied per day to Rotherham pupils.

The increase in meals supplied by individual kitchens will vary between 10 and 150 meals per day. Education Catering Services are assessing which schools require new/additional ovens (including extraction canopies), servery counters, dining furniture, etc. Headteachers are being consulted.

The financial information to support the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme has been provided as reported to Cabinet on 5th February. Capital sums will be provided for the Local Authority, £600,152 and Voluntary Aided Schools, £70,739 with Academy schools receiving individual allocations.

The assessment of the kitchen and dining facilities and the forecast of additional meals at each school will be used to allocate the capital funding to ensure that schools can meet the food production, service and dining requirements. Schools with low additional meal requirements will not receive any investment. Headteachers should be aware of the investment for their school by the end of March 2014.

The Voluntary Aided and Academy schools will be advised on the investment necessary to meet the increased meal provision.

The increase in the number of meals supplied will also require an increase in the crockery, cutlery, cooking containers and utensils which is not funded through the capital allocation. Education Catering Services will work with the schools to ensure that these are financed through the Service Level Agreements and the charges levied for meals.

The finance for the meals supplied under this scheme is to be made direct to schools at the value of £2.30 per meal. Schools will be financed based on take up as recorded at the January 2015 Schools' census.

8. Finance

The capital sum of £600,152 will be provided for Local Authority schools. Additional sums will be provided to Voluntary Aided and Academy schools.

Schools will receive £2.30 per meal for meals supplied under the Universal Infant Free Meals scheme.

The funding for free school meals as determined by Revenues and Benefits is to be maintained at current levels

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There is a risk that the capital funding available will be insufficient to meet all the needs for equipment, furniture.

The number of meals to be provided is estimated therefore equipment needs have been calculated to meet the maximum take up.

Charges to schools for meals and additional light equipment costs have to be agreed.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

This action assists with the corporate priority of Making sure no community is left behind, by increasing the provision of free school meals.

The provision of school meals contributes to the welfare of a child. Healthy meals provide nutrients essential for growth and lay the foundations for healthy lifestyles; assisting in improved attainment as it is medically acknowledged that better fed children attain more and generally improve their life chances. School meals benefit all children, especially those from deprived backgrounds by enabling accessible meals.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Universal infant free school meals – DfE Letter to Headteachers (23 January 2014)

Universal infant free school meals – DfE Letter to Directors of Children's Services (23 January 2014)

Cabinet Report: Schools Capital and Revenue Funding 2014/15; 5th Feb 2014

Financial Services have been consulted on this report.

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