

Classification: Open	Date: 28 June 2011	Decision taker: Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Report title:	Implementation of free, healthy school meals for children attending Southwark primary schools programme	
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All	
From:	Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATION

1. To agree the commencement of the rollout of the programme to all the borough's primary schools from the first day of term in September 2011, in accordance with the schedule in paragraph 20.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. This report sets out for consideration the proposal to implement the free healthy school meals programme.
3. This priority is underpinned by two key drivers:
 - A commitment to reducing local levels of childhood obesity
 - Ensuring that all children have a healthy meal during the day regardless of their financial background, which can contribute to improving ability to learn and raising attainment
4. Following careful consideration of the logistical, financial and reputational risks raised by proceeding to a full rollout of the programme to all schools in the short term, the decision was taken to conduct a pilot programme in a cross section of ten primary schools. The pilot commenced in January 2011 and will run until the end of July 2011. Evaluation of the pilot is informing the programme plan.
5. The funding envelope was agreed during the budget setting process, enabling a phased rollout over three academic years. The intention is to commence rollout at the beginning of the September 2011 term with reception and year one children, extending to include year two, three and four from September 2012 and year five and six from September 2013.
6. With this model, year 1 pupils in the pilot schools that accessed a free healthy meal from January to July 2011 will move into year two in September 2011 and so would cease receiving a free school meal for one year. It has been agreed that special provision should be made to continue funding free healthy schools meals for this cohort for the academic year 2011-12. These pupils will be included in the rollout from September 2011.
7. There are additional capital costs to ensure effective implementation as the physical capacity in schools is key to the successful rollout of the programme. A proposal

has been submitted as part of the capital refresh programme to provide appropriate resources.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Policy implications

8. The programme has been developed to reflect and contribute to a range of existing council policies. The programme also supports the achievement of a key borough priority, as outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan, which commits partners to encouraging children and families to be a healthy weight.

Contribution of the programme to reducing rates of childhood obesity

9. National data on overweight and obese children in reception and year 6 obtained through the national weighing and measuring programme show Southwark has among the highest rates nationally.

Data obtained through the National Weighing and Measuring Programme 2010 shows:

National data

33.4 per cent of year 6 children nationally are either overweight or obese (Southwark= 40.2%)

23.1 per cent of reception children nationally are either overweight or obese (Southwark=29.8%)

Local data

Year 6 obesity 25.7% (0.9% decrease from 2009 putting Southwark 3rd in national rankings with Tower Hamlets)

Year 6 overweight 14.5% (1.3% increase from 2009)

Reception obesity 14.8% (0.6% increase from 2009 putting Southwark 1st place in national ranking

Reception overweight 15% (1.1% increase from 2009)

10. There is clear evidence that obese children are far more likely to grow into obese adults and will have much poorer health.
11. Locally, action to address this issue is coordinated through the Healthy Weight Strategy with promotion of healthy eating being an important contributor to achieving a healthy weight. Healthy meals help children to achieve a balanced diet by including plenty of fruit and vegetables, starchy foods, some protein-rich foods, some milk and dairy foods and only small amounts of foods high in fat, salt and sugar. The provision of free, healthy school meals will make a contribution to the Healthy Weight Strategy and the Children and Young People's Plan. The provision of universal free healthy school meals provides an opportunity to strengthen our engagement with parents and schools to better promote healthier eating messages, to support a whole-school approach (for example, integrating healthier eating into the curriculum and school policies) and tackling the related environmental issues (for example, active school travel and the proliferation of unhealthy fast foods).
12. Food provided to pupils in schools maintained by the council must meet the statutory 14 national nutrient-based standards and 11 food-based standards. This function is generally discharged through the contract agreed with the caterer. The

standards ensure that school meals include a variety of foods containing all the nutrients a growing child needs.

13. Ensuring that school meals are healthy and the standards are met are important considerations of the programme. This will be achieved through working with governing bodies, school leaders and the 24 school meal providers to support them in discharging their duties effectively. Training has been provided for school meals providers and catering staff on the nutrient and food-based standards. Governing bodies and school staff will receive additional support to help them fulfil their duties through the provision of a guidance document, part of the online package of support for schools and the community developed by the Southwark Communications team.
14. Evidence also suggests that healthier eating among school children can have positive effects on behaviour and concentration in the classroom. Having a free healthy school meal is likely to be of particular benefit to low income families that currently fall just outside the national criteria and low-to-medium income families with more than one child, as well as children from families with no recourse to public funds.

Key benefits and risks of the programme

15. Implementing the programme to all of the borough's primary schools from September 2011 will support the delivery of the targets set out in the Children and Young People's Plan.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance

Legal Implications

16. A local authority has a power to provide meals and milk at school under s.512 Education Act 1996 and where they are so provided, they must be free of charge to a child who is eligible under s.512ZB; the local authority retains a power to charge non eligible children.
17. The Local Authority's power under the Education Act 1996 ("the Act") is confined to the schools that it maintains. The Local Authority can, with the consent of the proprietor, make arrangements for providing meals and milk at schools in their area that are not maintained. This would include academies, which are not maintained schools under s.512 of the Act.
18. Furthermore, a local authority may rely on the exercise of the power under s.2(1)b Local Government Act 2000 ("the wellbeing power") to do anything to promote the social wellbeing of the area for the benefit of the area and its residents.
19. The nutritional requirements for the content of meals provided to children attending maintained schools are set out in the Education (Nutritional Standards and Requirements for School Food) (England) Regulations 2007.

Finance Director

Finance Implications (CS0160 AG/FH)

20. A growth bid of £1.145m was submitted for 2011-12, which includes £970,000 for school meal funding and £175,000 for management and delivery costs. The funding envelope agreed includes a recurring annual management cost and the costs below for the payment of the meals.

Financial Year	FHSM rollout model	90% take up (£m)	Delivery Costs (£m)	Total (£m)
2011-12	Sept 2011- all schools, reception and year 1	0.97	0.175	1.145
2012-13	Sept 2012 – above, plus years 2, 3 & 4	2.384	0.175	2.559
2013-14	Sept 2013 – above, plus years 5 & 6	3.97	0.175	4.145

21. The funding envelope agreed for 2011-2014 was calculated on the basis of 90% uptake of meals using pupil numbers collected in the January 2010 census. Increases in the meal price paid or the pupil number take up may result in a future budget pressure.
22. The current economic climate may also, however, result in more families meeting the statutory criteria for free school meals, which would reduce the financial demands of rolling out the programme on the core budget.
23. The decision to continue provision of free school meals to pupils attending the 10 pilot schools entering year 2 in September 2011, for the academic year 2011-12 has resulted in an additional cost of £112,452. This will be met from a combination of programme running costs and contingency over the financial years 2011-12 and 2012-13.
24. An audit of kitchens is being undertaken to enable the accurate costing of capital costs generated as a consequence of the programme and to ensure that school kitchens comply with statutory requirements. A proposal for £500,000 of 2011-12 capital funding has been made.
25. Note, all maintained and Academy schools receive funding for those pupils eligible for the government's Free School Meals (FSME) through the school funding formula via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The table at paragraph 20 refers to the additional funding from the Council's core budget, to extend free school meals to all pupils in year groups Reception to Year 6 in primary schools.

Community impact statement

26. The programme has the potential to benefit all families in the borough, in regard to those that choose a Southwark primary school for their children. Equality and diversity are central to the development of the programme, which is universal in its development and application. As the programme is rolled out, further work will be undertaken to ensure that no group is disadvantaged by its implementation.

Consultation

27. The Children's Services Department equalities adviser has been consulted and has no additional comments.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Christine McInnes, Assistant Director, Children's Services	
Report Author	Christine McInnes, Assistant Director, Children's Services	
Version	Final	
Dated	28 June 2011	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	Yes
Finance Director	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
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