

Item No. 19.	Classification: Open	Date: 16 July 2019	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		The implementation of Free Healthy Nursery Meals	
Wards or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Members:		Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health; and Councillor Jasmine Ali, Children, Schools and Adult Care	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR EVELYN AKOTO, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH, AND COUNCILLOR JASMINE ALI, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND ADULT CARE

Southwark Council is one of the first boroughs to provide Universal Free Healthy School Meals to all our primary schools. We know this makes a difference to our young people and our families. We are proud that all our primary age children are entitled to a free nutritious lunch and over 92% of our pupils take up this offer.

Building on this success, we are now extending the meal offer to all maintained nurseries and school nursery classes. We want to support families in Southwark, at a time when we know many are struggling. A healthy meal supports concentration and attainment. We also know that good habits start young. In addition to a free nutritious meal, we will be working closely with nurseries and schools to promote water only schools and fruit and low sugar yoghurt, instead of sugary desserts. This is part of our wider commitment to creating a healthier Southwark.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the cabinet:

1. Agrees the implementation model for free healthy nursery meals (FHNM) in all maintained nurseries and nursery classes within primary schools in Southwark.
2. Notes that work will be taking place alongside the introduction of free healthy nursery meals to support nurseries and schools to provide a healthier offer. This will include the introduction of water only policies and a reduction in sugary desserts.
3. Requests a report back in twelve months time to provide an update on free healthy nursery meals (FHNM) and the impacts.

BACKGROUND

4. There is evidence that the provision of meals within early years settings can promote healthy eating, improve behaviour and increase educational attainment and school readiness.
5. Early years is an important time for healthy weight interventions and to establish good behaviour, preventing children becoming overweight or obese as adults.

6. One in four children in Southwark are already overweight or obese by the time they start school in reception (National Child Measurement Programme 2017-18). The introduction of healthy meals within nurseries will be part of a whole systems approach in addressing childhood obesity within the borough.
7. In Southwark, 1 in 4 children live in low income families and one in three London children have problems concentrating at school because of hunger. The provision of free, healthy meals within nursery classes will further reduce childcare costs for families as well as helping to tackle food insecurity within the borough.
8. The council's successful free healthy school meals (FHSM) programme was first piloted in January 2011 and has been a universal offer since September 2013. Free healthy school meals (FHSM) are for all primary school students in Key Stage 2, supplementing the state-funded free school meals.
9. The Council Plan 2018-2022 commits to extending FHSM to school nurseries. This is part of the council's approach in supporting all children in the borough to have a healthy and active start in life.
10. Southwark will be one of the few boroughs in the country to provide free healthy meals in nurseries. Through working with local and national early years dieticians, we aim to set a high standard for early years meal provision.

Delivery of the Free Healthy Nursery Meals (FHNM) programme

11. A total of 62 nurseries will be part of the free healthy nursery meals (FHNM) programme. The 62 nurseries comprise of the five maintained nursery schools and the 57 nursery classes that are part of a primary school within the borough. The primary schools include academies and free schools.
12. There are over 2,800 children currently attending the 62 nursery settings in Southwark and will all benefit from a free, healthy meal offer. These children will then continue to benefit from free meals, as once in reception class all children will be in receipt of universal infant free school meals.
13. Schools, finance and local and national early years dieticians have been engaged to develop the principles and assumptions of the FHNM programme.
14. The FHNM programme is based on five key principles:
 - Nutrition and quality of the meals
 - Positive meal times (child-focused)
 - The eating environment
 - Food sustainability
 - Achieving best value.
15. The nurseries will have flexibility to implement the FHNM model, to best meet the needs of their children. The model has been developed to maximise the number of free meals a child receives in a week, whilst reflecting attendance, portion sizes and funding patterns. The model include the following assumptions:
 - If a child is receiving 15 funded hours per week they will be entitled to three meals per week
 - If a child is receiving 30 funded hours per week they will be entitled to five meals per week

- School nursery classes and maintained nurseries are only open during term time, 38 weeks of the year
- Calorie consumption for nursery aged children

The above assumptions will be tested throughout the phased implementation year.

16. We know that every nursery will provide healthy and good quality food differently, to best meet the needs of their children, attendance patterns and on-site facilities. It is the responsibility of each nursery to decide how this funding is used for lunches, breakfasts or to provide healthy snacks throughout the day.
17. The '91% rule' of free healthy school meals will be tested and applied to free healthy nursery meals. This takes into consideration the setting's average attendance, factoring in sickness and those who choose to opt out of meals.
18. There will be a phased implementation of the FHNM offer. This will allow for best practice and learning to be shared across the different settings, whilst providing support to address any challenges in delivering FHNM meals.
19. The five maintained nursery schools are the first in the borough to pilot free healthy nursery meals. This began in the summer term (April 2019). Learning from the maintained nurseries will support the wider roll out.
20. FHNM will be implemented in school nursery classes in three waves during the academic year September 2019 to July 2020 (Appendix 1). Schools have been prioritised based on levels of excess weight and deprivation, as well as ensuring that each wave is representative of the borough geographically and in terms of the different school types, for example academies and community schools (further information is provided in Appendix 1).
21. To support the sharing of best practice, Cookwise Ltd is conducting a study of the quality of free healthy school meals and any meals already provided to school nursery classes. The study is across a sample of schools.
 - Best practice identified will be shared with all schools to support the implementation of free healthy nursery meals and to ensure that free healthy school meals are even better.
22. Support will be available to all maintained nurseries and school nursery classes during the implementation year. This will be provided by the public health division and the education department. Support will include:
 - Provision of clear guidelines and the evidence-base on early years nutrition and creating positive meal times. This will incorporate the food and drink guidelines for early years settings and recommendations from the healthy early years London awards, soil association and early years nutritionists from Evelina London
 - Support all schools and nurseries to be water-only settings, with only water or milk provided as part of the free healthy nursery meals offer
 - Some nursery classes are already engaging in best practice and providing healthy alternatives to desserts. Work will take place to develop clear dessert policies with schools, that reduce the amount of cake and sugary options in a week and instead promotes fruit and low sugar dairy options

- Provision of funding opportunities for equipment and resources to support the delivery of the FHNM. This is being made available through the Southwark healthy pupils capital fund (sugar levy) and through the support of Guy's and St Thomas' Charity
- Development of a staff training offer to ensure a whole nursery approach to positive meal times
- Exploration of and support for the establishment of voluntary clusters for the commissioning of caterers and procurement of ingredients. This is to increase schools' purchasing power.

Engagement with schools

23. A workshop for Headteachers was held on Thursday 21 March 2019. Early years nutritionists from Evelina London and the Soil Association presented evidence on meal nutrition and how to create positive meal times within nurseries. All schools with nursery classes and maintained nurseries were invited to attend the meeting. At the workshop:
 - The five key principles of FHNM were developed
 - Best practice was explored among those who attended and the challenges settings identified in implementing FHNM.
24. Ongoing engagement and the sharing of learning and best practice will be essential for maximising the education and health outcomes of FHNM. We will continue to hold workshops with nurseries, catering teams and national experts, prior to each implementation wave.
25. Free healthy nursery meals was presented at the headteachers' breakfast briefing on 8 May 2019, to ensure all schools are kept informed.
26. We have discussed FHNM and the evaluation process with the national Public Health England team and the London childhood obesity taskforce, to further develop and share best practice.

Policy implications

27. Free healthy nursery meals supports Southwark Council's fairer future commitment of a great start in life.
28. The free healthy nursery meals programme operates within and supports the delivery of the health and wellbeing strategy, the healthy weight strategy, the food security strategy and the early years foundation stage framework.
29. Free healthy nursery meals has been developed and will be jointly implemented by the public health division and the education department. This has ensured that policy implications across both departments have been considered.
30. The procurement of the meals is the responsibility of each school. It is highly likely that nursery classes not already providing meals will source these as part of the school's current catering arrangements. The public health division and education

department will test the procurement and commissioning of meals and where possible provide support to schools to enhance quality and efficiencies.

Community impact statement

31. It is envisaged that this policy will have a positive impact on the youngest and most social – economically disadvantaged residents in Southwark who are also most likely to be from BAME groups. This policy will provide positive impact regardless of age, disability, faith, gender or sexual orientation. There are no specific equality implications arising directly from free healthy nursery meals.
32. School catering teams already ensure that meals meet special medical, dietary and religious requirements. The public health division and education department will support schools, where necessary, to ensure this is the case for nursery meals too. The flexibility of the free healthy nursery meals programme means that nurseries can tailor meal provision to best meet the needs of all their children.
33. Free healthy nursery meals aim to improve the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of Southwark's children by providing nutritious meals and setting good food habits from an early age.

Financial and legal implications

34. To ensure the long term sustainability of the free healthy nursery meals and free healthy school meals offer, schools and the council work collaboratively to increase the uptake of the government's statutory free school meals.
35. Pupil roll forecasting will be essential to ensuring long term financial provisions.
36. A £200,000 contribution from the public health free healthy school meals (FHSM) allocation has been earmarked for this proposal in the 2019-20 financial year.
37. It should be noted that the phased implementation of the policy in waves means that actual costs in a full financial year are yet to be fully determined but this will be closely monitored and captured as part of the departmental revenue budget monitoring process.
38. BDO, an accountancy and business advisory firm, who work very closely with Southwark Council, are conducting a review of the finances, contracting and procurement arrangements of free healthy school meals within each primary school in Southwark. The findings will be essential to understanding how as a council, we can continue to support schools with the delivery of free healthy school meals and develop the free healthy nursery meals programme.
39. There will be an ongoing evaluation, using the work of BDO and Cookwise Ltd, to ensure best practice. There is the potential for a wider studies and evaluations with Guy's and St Thomas' Charity.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

40. Section 512 of the Education Act 1996 empowers the council to provide meals at schools maintained by them including for children who receive relevant funded early years education.
41. Section 513 of the Education Act 1996 empowers local authorities to provide meals at schools not maintained by them – i.e. in this case at academies and free schools.
42. These powers also include a power to charge for these meals except for children eligible for free school meals- and this includes all children in reception classes i.e. classes where the majority of the children will attain the age of 5 during the school year.
43. However, this new policy establishes that the power to charge will not be exercised for any nursery children in all those schools and nursery schools referred to in this paper who are being provided with school lunches.
44. Exercise of these powers is an executive function of the council which the cabinet will determine in accordance with the council's scheme of delegation.
45. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in making this decision, the cabinet must comply with the public sector equality duty which requires it to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
46. The community impact statement set out in the report indicates the positive impacts arising from this policy and also refers to specific matters potentially affecting those with particular protected characteristics that need to be taken account in discharging the Equality Act duty.
47. Whilst the council will fund the provision of free lunches, it is noted that individual schools will be responsible for procuring and providing the meals in accordance with this policy, and will need to do so in accordance with the requirements for School Food Regulations 2014, which include specific provisions relating to meals at nurseries. There is also Government advice relating to the exercise of these regulations that was updated in March 2019.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

48. This report is requesting approval of cabinet of the implementation model for free healthy nursery meals (FHNM) in all maintained nurseries and nursery classes within primary schools in Southwark.
49. The strategic director of finance and governance notes the £200,000 contribution in support of this model from the free healthy school meals budget in 2019-20.
50. It is further noted that this will be closely monitored and captured as part of the departmental revenue budget monitoring process.

51. Staffing and any other costs connected with these recommendations to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Healthy Weight strategy: Everybody's business 2016-2021	Public Health 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Jin Lim Jin.lim@southwark.gov.uk 020 7525 0281
Link (copy and paste into your browser): http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s63091/Appendix%201%20Healthy%20Weight%20Strategy%202016%20-%202021.pdf		
Eat Better Start Better Voluntary guidelines for food and drink in early years settings	Action for Children 3 The Boulevard Ascot Road Watford WD18 8AG	Action for Children
Link: https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/resources-and-publications/information-guides/eat-better-start-better-pack/		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Implementation waves for the academic year 2019-2020

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health; and Councillor Jasmine Ali, Children, Schools and Adult Care	
Lead Officer	Nina Dohel, Director of Education, and Kevin Fenton, Strategic Director of Place and Wellbeing	
Report Author	Georgia Pritchard, Early Years Advisor, and Becky Steele, Public Health Policy Officer (Obesity & Physical Activity)	
Version	Final	
Dated	26 June 2019	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		5 July 2019

APPENDIX 1

Implementation waves for the academic year 2019-2020

Wave 1	Started summer term (April 2019)	5 maintained nurseries
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Wave 1 settings:

- Ann Bernadt
- Dulwich Wood
- Kintore Way
- Nell Gwynn
- The Grove

Summary of five maintained nurseries:

- Already all providing meals (3 of the nurseries charge for the meals)
- A proven commitment to early years and children's health
- Schools are geographically across the borough
- The first five nurseries highlighted in the performance plan

Wave 2	Start autumn term (September 2019)	15 school nursery classes
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Wave 2 school nursery classes:

- Southwark Park
- Tower Bridge
- Snowfields
- Charlotte Sharman
- St Francis Catholic
- Crawford
- Robert Browning
- Goose Green
- Pilgrim's Way
- Rye Oak
- Camelot
- John Ruskin
- Ivydale
- Bellenden
- Cobourg
- Harris Academy Peckham Park

Criteria for selecting the 16 school nurseries:

- All types of primary schools in the borough are represented
- Prioritised schools with higher obesity levels
- Schools are geographically across the borough

Wave 3	Start summer term (January 2020)	18 school nursery classes
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Wave 3 school nursery classes:

- Alfred Salter
- Brunswick Park
- Comber Grove
- English Martyrs
- Friars
- Grange
- Heber
- Peter Hills
- Phoenix
- Rotherhithe
- St Anthony's Catholic
- St Francesca Cabrini
- St James the Great
- St Joseph's Catholic Borough
- St Joseph's Catholic (Gomm Road)
- St Jude's Church of England
- Townsend
- Victory

Criteria for selecting the 18 school nurseries:

- Prioritising schools with higher levels of childhood obesity
- Schools with currently greater financial challenges
- Ensuring across the first three waves there is a balance across the wards

Wave 4	Start summer term (April 2019)	24 school nursery classes
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Wave 4:

- Albion
- Angel Oak
- Ark Globe
- Bessemer Grange
- Charles Dickens
- Cherry Garden
- Dog Kennel Hill
- Goodrich Community
- Ilderton
- John Donne
- Keyworth
- Lyndhurst
- Michael Faraday
- Oliver Goldsmith
- Redriff
- Riverside
- St James' Church of England
- St Johns
- St Joseph's RC
- St Paul's Church of England
- St Peter's Church of England
- St George's Cathedral Catholic
- Surrey Square
- The Cathedral School of St Saviour at St Mary Overy