

SCHOOLS' FUNDING FORUM

SUBJECT:	Universal Infant Free School Meals from September 2014
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SUMMARY OF REPORT:

To provide Forum members with an overview of the revenue and capital funding allocated to the LA for Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM), and to highlight a number of issues and seek views of Forum members on these.

FOR:	Information & Comment
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1. Background

- 1.1 Following the [announcement in September](#) 2013 that every child in reception, year 1 and year 2 in state-funded schools will receive a free school lunch (hot) from September 2014, the Government confirmed in December 2013 the funding available to support this initiative.
- 1.2 It is unlikely that all infant pupils will take up this offer, but based on current experience, it could increase from 34% to 80% of the infant roll. It is estimated that 22,500 extra meals will be served every day. The Authority is aware of the impact this will have on schools regarding the logistical challenges of feeding more children, including managing longer queues, extra time needed to eat a hot meal, capacity in the school hall, impact on the school day, lack of equipment and the need to upgrade the servery or kitchen.
- 1.3 Revenue funding for this policy will be allocated in 2014-15 at a flat rate of £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.
- 1.4 In April 2012, school catering was one of a range of services delegated out to all schools. Schools can make their own arrangements for school food or have the option to buy back support through EduKent.

2. Capital Funding

- 2.1 KCC has been allocated £2.7 million capital funding for Local Authority schools. Academies and Voluntary Aided (VA) schools have a separate capital funding allocation that will be allocated by the Foundation or Trust.

- 2.2 To identify the priorities and consider options and best use of the capital resources, in January schools were asked to complete an online survey. Based on the results of this survey and using local knowledge, it has been identified that the allocated funding is not sufficient to complete all the capital works needed to deliver the proposed changes.

Of those who responded to the survey	Foresee problem with cooking or receiving meals	Foresee problem with hall capacity	Foresee other issues eg budget	Need more cooking equipment	Want support from KCC	Possible convert servery to kitchen	Need transport boxes
Servery = 90	61	12	1	N/A	58	52	90
M kitchen = 58	37	4	1	46	45	1	N/A
Kitchen = 123	40	15	9	85	76	N/A	N/A
Total = 270	138	31	11	131	179	53	90

- 2.3 Kent has 140 schools without onsite cooking facilities. The majority of these schools have hot meals transported in from other local schools. A very small number use a contractor to deliver meals from a central production unit in East Sussex.
- 2.4 These servery schools and their mother kitchens will be most affected by the higher take up. The main issues are:
- Insufficient cooking / storage equipment such as ovens and refrigeration
 - No facilities to keep food hot / cold during the extended service time
 - Insufficient transport boxes
- 2.5 A number of other schools have raised concerns that their kitchens and dining rooms are not able to cope with the additional meal take up. Some schools who rent village halls to serve the meals will have additional pressures on their budgets due to extended rental fees.

3. How to allocate the £2.7 million grant?

- 3.1 Option 1 - Equally divide the funding between each of the 317 schools affected. Each site would be given approximately £8,500.

Advantages	Disadvantages
KCC does not have a statutory responsibility to provide meals and this is a 'simple and fair' way to allocate monies, especially with the	This money is not ring fenced so schools may not use the allocation for its intended purpose and does not target schools that are

timescales involved.	in most need.
Allows each school to choose to purchase one piece of heavy equipment to suit their needs e.g. a cooker / dishwasher / fridge plus some light equipment or furniture.	Adding additional cooking equipment may necessitate improved ventilation or electrical supplies which the £8500 would not be sufficient to cover.
Responsibility would be with schools to ensure meals are provided under this initiative. If significant projects are not taken on, then this money will be sufficient for schools to purchase light equipment without the need to use other school funds. KCC could provide routes for acquiring equipment via Kent County Supplies.	This amount of money on its own without a school contribution would not allow schools to convert their servery into a kitchen or significantly increase capacity so some schools may no longer have a local school capable of providing meals for them. These schools would need to make new arrangements possibly resulting in increased costs for the school and reduced income for EduKent.
The uptake of free school meals is unknown in Kent and therefore KCC may not wish to commit to build new kitchens with their associated ongoing revenue costs. Cooking on site will improve quality so take up may increase regardless of this initiative.	If no serveries are converted to kitchens, then many of the 140 serveries will require additional transport boxes.

3.2 Option 2 - Ask schools to bid for funding. KCC would need to set some criteria so schools know what they can bid for.

Advantages	Disadvantages
KCC does not have a statutory responsibility to provide meals and the onus will be on schools to meet this Government initiative and may have to look at alternative ways to provide meals.	Schools would receive the allocation and use it as they think is most appropriate. Most schools do not have the catering knowledge to know what will be necessary to enable the additional meals to be produced / served. Although advice could be provided, within the time available to submit bids, Headteachers may not be aware of current H&S legislation.
Successful schools would be responsible for procurement of the services and management of works (if required).	Successful schools would be responsible for procurement of the services and management of works (if required) but may need to purchase support from Client Services and/or Property, meaning the funds are spent on advice and support not capital items.
Responsibility would be with schools to ensure meals are provided under this initiative. If significant projects are not taken on, then this money will be sufficient to purchase light equipment or furniture.	Schools that are not used to writing bids may lose out on the opportunity or not submit a successful bid.
	KCC would be required to make a decision on where the money is allocated (as it is unlikely there will be funding available to do

	everything bid for). This may lead to political involvement should schools not receive monies or smaller amounts than requested.
	Some schools may not be aware their current production kitchen is not able to provide for them, may not put in a bid and therefore have no service in September.
	Schools may use this grant for improvements which are a school responsibility e.g. shutters, flooring, or general decoration.
	Time would be an issue as schools would need to gather information and quotes before bidding for the funding.

3.3 Option 3 - KCC to determine how and where the funding is used. This will require a joint approach between Client Services and Property.

Advantages	Disadvantages
KCC will make decisions based on local knowledge of schools and results from the survey undertaken to try and make best use of the monies available	KCC will take responsibility by making decision on allocation of monies. There may be political involvements from those schools who do not receive projects they feel are required as all works cannot be funded from the allocation given.
Client Services have local knowledge of many of the schools and have in depth school meals experience allowing them to identify specific equipment needed for this initiative.	Once projects are identified, KCC will likely need to take responsibility to deliver and manage the delivery of schemes. This will involve services from Client Services, Property and design consultants, with associated costs being borne from the Government grant leaving less money for proposed kitchen works.
Property have had discussions with a delivery partner who are interested in delivering this programme of works, but successful delivery will be based on a programme of works rather than individual projects	Once projects are identified, KCC will likely need to take responsibility to deliver and manage the delivery of schemes and there maybe capacity issues for the delivery of the programme within KCC, there is potential for political involvement should some schemes not be completed by September 2014, bearing in mind the timescales involved in a kitchen extension or new build kitchen.
	We cannot allow this grant to be used for improvements which are a school responsibility e.g. shutters, flooring, or general decoration. However, there is a risk that we would not receive building control signoff if elements are not upgraded, e.g. fire proof shutters that the school cannot or will not fund.

	For those schools who receive a new kitchen or additional cooking equipment, there will be an increased budget pressure as no additional money goes in the school budget for repairs and ongoing requirements for H&S checks once the warranty expires.
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4. Dining Hall Capacity

- 4.1 The grant is not to be used for any hall extensions or associated buildings as this would take an excessive percentage of the funding. KCC does not have the grant conditions issued by the DfE but believes the funding is for the provision of free school meals for all infant school children. Over 30 schools identified that they foresaw problems with hall capacity. AEO's will need to work with schools to suggest practical solutions in school timetabling.

5. Light Equipment

- 5.1 If options two or three are chosen, then the LA would not use the grant for any dining room furniture or light equipment. All schools may have a need for additional dining room furniture, plates, cutlery etc. Due to the limited funding, schools would not be permitted to purchase these items from the grant. Therefore schools would need to either purchase this from their own budget or expect the catering contractor to provide the necessary items (in this case the contractor is likely to take them away at the end of the contract).

6. What criteria should be used?

- 6.1 If school roll is used, it will leave the small rural school with very little funding and these are the very ones who will not be able to find other local schools to provide a meal service for them. The criteria will depend on the option taken above. The criteria will in effect be set to ensure that only projects go-ahead within the £2.7m available.

Possible criteria

- Infant roll number
- Free meal entitlement
- Infant only schools
- No onsite cooking facilities
- No local primary school able to provide for them
- Relieves an additional problem for another school
- Outcome has significant impact on service improvement
- Room to increase capacity without the need to apply for planning permission
- School management team supportive of the initiative and willing to contribute to necessary work outside of the grant conditions

7. **Smalls schools transitional funding**

- 7.1 The announcement on the 6th March included details on the small schools transitional funding. This funding is one off and is for schools with a roll of up to and including 150 pupils. Each eligible school will receive an amount per eligible pupil or a lump sum of £3,000 whichever is the greater. Funding will be a lump sum paid to schools in June and schools can choose how this is spent in support of their implementation policy.

8. **Should schools be asked to contribute?**

- 8.1 This would make the grant go further but what if a school is not able to provide the meal service and has no available money to contribute.

9. **Recommendation**

- 9.1 Members of the Schools Funding Forum are asked to:

- a) **Note** that the LA's preferred option is number 3 (paragraph 3.3 above) which is for KCC to determine how and where the funding is used.

This is an example of what could be achieved –

Example allocation of 2.7m	Cost £	Sites	Total £
Convert servery to kitchen or major mother kitchen project	100,000	15	1,500,000
Transport boxes x 4	1,000	80	80,000
Cooking equipment	5,000	160	800,000
Cooking + ventilation	30,000	10	300,000
			2,680,000

- b) **Comment** on the proposals in this paper

