

Schools Forum 2 June 2009

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services

Free School Meals Pilot

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to Schools Forum on the outcome of the bid to deliver a Free School Meal pilot programme in Dudley.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. Yes 19 May 2009.

Action for Schools Forum

3. To note the outcome of the bid to deliver a Free School Meal pilot programme.

Attachments to Report

4. Appendix A – response from DCSF.

Rachel Cooper
Senior Principal Accountant
18 May 2009

Schools Forum 2 June 2009

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services

Free School Meals Pilot

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Schools Forum on Dudley's bid to deliver a Free School Meal programme.

Background

2. In January 2009 the Local Authority (LA) and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) were invited to submit a joint bid to deliver one of three Free School Meal pilots. The DCSF and the Department of Health have together allocated £20m to the pilots over two years and participating LAs and PCTs were expected to contribute the same value in matched funding.
3. Two of the pilots would offer a free school lunch to all primary school children across a local authority area. It was expected that the two pilots would be part of wider plan to encourage healthy eating although each pilot may differ in terms of what those plans are.
4. The third local authority would extend the current Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility rules to include both primary and secondary pupils in families on Working Tax Credit where annual income does not exceed £16,040 (the new figure for income testing for Child Tax Credit announced in the pre-budget report), so that a larger group of families on low incomes are entitled to FSMs.
5. Dudley submitted a bid to deliver the pilot offered to Primary school children. On 30 April 2009 Dudley was informed that it had been unsuccessful in it's bid. Further information is appended at A.

HTCF – Budget Working Group

6. Budget Working Group on 19 May 2009 noted the report.

Finance

7. The funding of schools is prescribed by the DCSF through the School Finance (England) Regulations 2008.
8. Schools Forums are regulated by the School Forums Regulations 2002 as already amended by the Schools Forums (Amendment) Regulations 2004 the Schools

Forums (Amendment) 2005 Regulations and the Schools Forums (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

9. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct DCSF grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

10. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equality Impact

11. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

12. Schools Forum to note that Dudley MBC was unsuccessful in its bid to deliver a Free School Meal Pilot programme.



Jane Porter

Interim Director of Children's Services

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30th April 2009

FREE SCHOOL MEALS (FSM) PILOT PROJECT

Thank you for your bid to run a pilot to trial free school meals to all primary school children in your area. We received eight bids to pilot universal FSMs in primary schools. In order to ensure that we have identified the best bids we have assessed each against a set of criteria that will need to be in place to ensure the successful operation of the pilot. These include the size of the pilot, type of pilot proposed and availability of matched funding, as well as value for money, quality of plans and the capacity of the authority and of schools to manage the pilot.

We are sorry to say that your authority has not been selected to run a FSM pilot. We have noted the authority is unable to match fund the pilot. I am afraid that it is a requirement of the pilot that participating authorities should provide half the costs of the pilot and others were able to make a firm commitment to this matched funding.

We know that this must be disappointing for you, but we are very grateful to you for taking the time to put in a bid and for taking an interest in the pilot project.

With thanks. Yours sincerely,



Noreen Graham
Deputy Director
Pupil Well-being, Health and Safety Unit