

Schools Forum

10 March 2015

Update on Universal Infant Free School Meals Funding

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide schools forum with an update on the current position regarding capital funding for the implementation of Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM), and request approval for the proposed process for further bids from schools to utilise these funds.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Schools Forum note the current position regarding funding and approves the methodology for further bids.

3. Background

- 3.1 Schools Forum received a report on 5 February 2014 that outlined the funding of £591k that Walsall had received to support the implementation of UIFSM, and the process that would be followed for allocating this
- 3.2 The national policy regarding UIFSM does not insist on a hot meal, but strongly recommends it, and Walsall has stated that it will do all it can to ensure that schools are able to serve a hot meal (within available funding).
- 3.3 A further conversation was held at Schools Forum on 23 September 2014 where it was confirmed that for any remaining balances a process for further bids from schools by would be put in place by the end of the year.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 As at the end of January 2015 the remaining funding from the initial allocation the Council received for the implementation of UIFSM is currently £110k, however 5 schools are still to invoice for reimbursement for their costs, with an associated value of up to £36k, therefore the balance remaining and available for investing in further works is likely to be in the region of £74k.
- 4.2 As an initial round of bidding for funding was completed during 2014 to support schools to implement UIFSM, and a limited amount of funding remains, it is proposed that any further bidding should only be in support of the following (in priority order):

1. Schools who are still unable to offer hot meals
2. Schools who were not successful in receiving any financial support in the first round of bidding
3. Schools who are now experiencing health and safety or other legislative issues in connection with operating the UIFSM offer
4. Schools who are experiencing operational difficulties issues in connection with operating the UIFSM offer

Bids that do not meet the above criteria will not be considered.

4.3 The bidding process would involve:

- A short bid compiled by relevant schools outlining what is required and an estimated cost (standard form to be provided). This should clearly outline how the bid will help overcome issues being experienced in operating the UIFSM offer
- Bids should be compiled with support from catering contractors to inform and sign off the need for the bid
- Bids should include the amount of funding the school will contribute
- We will not consider bids where the school is responsible and has not fulfilled its obligations e.g. appropriate ventilation
- We will look favourably on extreme cases based on the priority order set out at 4.2 above

4.4 The proposed timeline associated with the bids is set out below:

- Send form to schools to compile bids – by 20th March 2015
- Schools submit bids – by 3rd April 2015
- Evaluate bids – by 17th April 2015
- Respond to schools asap after that date with outcome

4.5 It is proposed that the bids are evaluated by a team comprising the following:

- Assistant Director Access & Achievement (or nominee)
- Head of Educational Standards and Improvement (or nominee)
- Senior Finance Manager Schools (or nominee)
- Property Services representative
- Chair of Schools Forum (or nominee)
- Chair of PNS (or nominee)

4.6 Only maintained non VA primary schools are eligible to bid for this funding (Academy and VA schools received funding to support the implementation of UIFSM separately).

5. Financial implications/Value for Money

- 5.1 Any bids that are approved need to be contained within the financial resources that are available to support UIFSM implementation (as set out in the report).

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Only maintained non VA primary schools are eligible to bid for this funding (Academy and VA schools received funding to support the implementation of UIFSM separately).

7. School Improvement

- 7.1 The bids that this funding will support should aid schools in achieving Walsall's aim of doing all that it can to ensure that schools are able to serve a hot meal.

8. Members eligible to vote

- 8.1 All elected members with voting rights are eligible to vote on this matter.